

**GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING: A CREATIVITY FOR PROMOTING  
SUSTAINABLE WELL BEING AND ADJUSTMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN NIGERIA.**

**Dr. John O.E. Egbo**

Department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The Nigerian education system adopted guidance and counselling as a school service programme meant to promote well being and optimal adjustment of learners. Its scope covers all aspects that enhance student's excellent academic performances, preparation for and adaptations into vocations, and abilities meant for use in resolving personal, social and psychological problems. It emphasizes self direction and clear definition of purpose meant to actualize life skills for growth and development of learners in and out of school. Its importance in schools cannot therefore be over emphasized. It follows therefore that among other counselling techniques used in group dynamism, peer group counselling technique appears to among others, be good modalities for championing the means of creating the sustainable students' well being and adjustment. Guidance and counselling should therefore be supported to cater accordingly for the stated purpose.*

**KEYWORDS:** Guidance, Counselling, Creativity, Students, wellbeing and Adjustment.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria regards education as a core instrument for national development. Hence, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education. Accordingly, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004) emphasizes that Nigeria's philosophy of education therefore is based on:

- ❖ The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.
- ❖ The full integration of the individual into the community and
- ❖ The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

Based on the above, there is need to tailor and restructure the education system to meet the standard desired of it. This has attracted views, ideas and ideals, but an outstanding model for introducing the desired quality and standard for giving footing to the wellbeing, growth, development and optimal adjustment is the school services programme called guidance and counselling. This is the crux of this opinion paper which emphasizes guidance and counselling as a tool in promoting excellence in championing students' academic performances in secondary schools as well as in fostering their wellbeing and adjustment in resolving vocational, personal, social and psychological problems. For the mere fact that guidance and counselling is a novelty in Nigerian education system, it can be described therefore as a creativity which is designed for enhancing quality in Nigerian education system.

## Meaning of Guidance and Counselling

Traditionally, guidance entails activities designed to induce positive functionalities into abilities, interest, attitudes, aptitudes, and at the same time, turn around weaknesses.. Guidance traditionally involves provision of direction or advice as in a decision or course of action, showing the way; setting and helping to drive, lead, assist, pilot and steer ideals into individuals by counselling professionals to enhance the achievement of goals. Denga (2001) defines guidance as a cluster of formalized services through which help is given to individuals in situations where adjustment, planning interpretation of information, and choice are needed. It involves rendering assistance to individuals or groups or group of people to enable them direct themselves and relate their needs effectively to requirements, demand and opportunities of social, educational, occupational and psychological situations.

Arbuckle, Peter and Farewell in Sani (2014) clarify the term guidance by pointing out the distinctive features implicit in the word as guidance is used as:

- (a) **A concept** (mental image)
- (b) **An educational construct** (intellectual synthesis) and;
- (c) **Services** (actions taken to meet a demand).

As a concept, guidance denotes the utilization of a point a view in order to help pupils understand themselves; and as a service, it refers to the procedures and process organized to achieve a helping relationship. In similar vein, Zera and Riccio in Egbo (2009) define guidance as a process, developmental in nature by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his abilities, aptitudes interest and altitudinal patterns in relation to his aspirations. As such, Olayinka (1993) asserts that guidance programme should help students in reaching rather two opposite goals: adjustment to society and freedom to act as unique individuals, failure of which, results in conflicts with the society which always punish various anti-social behaviours. The implication therefore is that guidance improves total education programme and information, which serves as the ingredients to take decisions in order to cope with the society as well as to solve individual problems.

In the context of this paper guidance is an organized helping relationship meant for student clients to re-define issues and use same to achieve full adjustment in and outside schools in order to be useful to selves and the society. It is both a process and procedure for achieving full adjustment among people for sustainable self development. It is a preventive measure used in forestalling dangerous antecedents on clients.

Counselling, on the other hand is an interactional process meant to enhance redefinition of stand for positive adjustment on particular issues of life. English and English in Sani (2014) define counselling as a relationship in which one person (a professional Counsellor), endeavours to help another ( a client, with problem) to understand the counsellor and solve his adjustment problems. They also point out that:

- (a) Areas of adjustment are often indicated, (example, educational, vocational and personal-social counselling)
- (b) Reference is usually to helping normal counselees, but creeps imperceptibility into the fields of psychotherapy

- (c) While everyone occasionally undertakes counselling, the word is preferably restricted to professionally trained persons.

The aim of counselling is always to assist clients to better understand oneself in relation to the present and future problems.

Counselling is an in-depth interaction between the professional counsellor and the counsellee students that focus basically on areas of nurturing and healing emotionality, problems management, decision making, crises management, and support and life skills training. Egbochuwku (2008) defines counselling as a facilitative two way collaborative exchange of ideas with a supportive relationship that enables clients to explore their problems.

Guidance and counselling therefore is a compound twin word that is used to describe situations where a trained counsellor strives to steer a troubled student clients out of the typified problems. It is a helping relationship meant to ensure a sustainable adjustment and development of the individual clients. Guidance and counselling therefore is used in schools to enhance the optimal development of the school children in areas of academic, vocational aspirations and in resolving personal social problems.

### **Principles of Guidance and Counselling**

One needs to understand the basic principles of guidance and counselling in order to enable him appreciate the emphatic need for the programmes in schools. Egbochukwu (2008) writes that the broom is comparable to the school guidance and counseling programmes. According to her, the broom is among the least prized possessions in the home but, the absence of the broom in homes, spell dirt and discomfort in the home. Invariably, the absence of school counselling programmes in schools spell ineffective adjustment of students in academics, vocational inklings and in resolving personal social problems.

Chauhan (2009) listed a nine point principles of Guidance:

1. Guidance is for all with less regards to race, age, colour, ethnicity etc.
2. It emphasizes on self direction
3. It is an interrelated activity in line with individuals' need in his cultural and social settings, using scientific techniques.
4. Guidance is a systematic and well organized activity
5. Guidance is a lifelong process
6. Guidance and counselling respects individual differences
7. Guidance is oriented towards cooperation and not compulsion.
8. It encourages individualization and democracy
9. On the whole, guidance deals with the whole individual as a man is a psychological organization in constant interaction with a complex array of environmental forces

Additionally, and as it is in the Nigerian Education system, it is also known that:

- i. Guidance services are aimed at preventing problems
- ii. Its' not out of coercion but voluntary
- iii. Guidance entails security and confidentiality.
- iv. The responsibilities are shared among the concerned individuals
- v. It respects and recognizes the dignity of man
- vi. Guidance is rendered on continuous basis
- vii. Guidance's is for the total development of the individual.

### **Scope and Functions of Guidance Counselling**

Every schools need the services of specialist counsellors. Complexities in the society have brought about properly organized school guidance services which are tailored to meet the need of the individuals, the environment and understanding of self, aptitudes, talents skills and ideas. Through these, the individual student clients set realistic goals for themselves. As such, the scope of guidance and counselling cover:

- ❖ Academic/Educational
- ❖ Vocational (and)
- ❖ Personal social problems of student

### **Academic Problems**

Here students are encouraged to help themselves by creating awareness, formation of good study rabbits, creating and respecting own timetable charts, developing own initiatives, developing realistic plans for the future choice of appropriate school subjects belonging to effective study groups, regular attendance to classes and schools, respect for teachers and love for study, etc.

### **Vocational/Career**

Happiness in adult life is partly dependent on the adjustment to and nature of occupation. Vocational counselling facilitates the choice of job, career development, preparing for and entering jobs, being aware of occupations, being aware of factors affecting the choice of jobs, availability and utilization of occupational information, interpretation of psychological tests relating to jobs, understanding the job environment of localities, increasing the relevance and choices for jobs, among others.

### **Personal Social Problems**

Personal and social counselling help the client to know himself, get along with others and adjust to norms, ethos and ethics of the society where he lives. It takes care of emotional and behavioural difficulties existent in life. Anxieties, interpersonal conflicts, adjustment needs, disillusionment, insecurities, societal problems, etc. are parts of issues that can be addressed under personal and social problems in counseling.

**Functions of counselling.**

Egbo (2012) writes that the school guidance services are useful in managing behaviours in schools. Accordingly, some of the guidance services are typically designed to prevent problems before occurrence while others are curative. He listed the school guidance services, which by implication, are the functions of guidance and counselling:

- i. Orientation
- ii. information
- iii. counseling
- iv. Appraisal
- v. Placement
- vi. Referral
- vii. Evaluation
- viii. Follow up
- ix. research ( and)
- x. Community services

All the functions of the counsellors are encapsulated in their provision of these school guidance services which are preventive and curative measures in functional secondary school guidance and counselling. They are designed to facilitate the adjustment programmes of students while in schools and enable them define themselves and related goals in self realization.

**Need For Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools**

The need for guidance and counselling in secondary school transcend across the stay in schools. Good school counselling programmes are tailored by professional counsellors to induce optimal adjustment in and outside schools among learners. This is because the counselling programmes in schools are seen to be as good as the professionals implementing them.

Thus, Emenogu in Egbo (2012) quotes the American personal guidance association (APGA) to have outlined six basic good qualities of the counsellor.

- ❖ A belief in each person as individual
- ❖ A commitment to individual human lives
- ❖ An alertness to the world
- ❖ Open mindedness
- ❖ Sell understanding (and)
- ❖ Professional commitment.

These qualities are transformed and used to encourage the students well being in very meaningful manners. Achebe (1986) writes that in order to achieve fully, the aims of education, within and outside the school system, guidance and counseling should go along with learning for maximum achievements. This is because, the collective and individual needs of the students are encapsulated to make the learners, wholesome and functional individuals in the society.

In **Section 10, No 83** of the National Policy on Education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria typified Guidance and Counselling as a school service programme designed to among other things, develop, assess and improve educational programmes; enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers, reduce educational costs and make learning more meaningful for

children. To re emphasis the essence of guidance and counselling in school system, this same Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:12) stats thus:

*“In view of the apparent ignorance of very 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”.*

This sums up the need for counseling in Nigerian secondary schools. In the same vein, the Federal Ministry of Education in Egbo (2012) outlined a 12 point need and objectives of guidance and counselling:

1. Encourage students to develops adaptive skills to cope with changes in family and home life
2. Equip the students with the skills of making appropriate and satisfying choices.
3. Enable the students to develop positive self image
4. Assist the students to effect smooth transition from one educational level to another.
5. Assist the teachers, other school staff and parents in understanding the needs and problems of each student.
6. Assist school administration in improving educational opportunities and programmes.
7. Mobilizes all the available resources of the schools home and community for the satisfaction of students’ educational, vocational and psychological needs.
8. Equip students with problem solving and decision making skills.
9. Encourage students to develop good interpersonal relationship.
10. Help students cope with examination anxiety
11. Tutor students for higher achievements
12. Assist students in developing adequate time management skills

The implication of the above points include that guidance and counselling in schools:

- i. Enhance optimal learning and academic excellence among students
- ii. Is a helping professional that assist the Nigeria nation in directing its youths to careers congruent with the manpower needs: (and)
- iii. Refining the characters and personalities of students in order to be fully adjusted wholesomely before personal social and psychological problems.

These are enough reasons, for which counselling has become a household name in Nigeria education industry. Counselling promotes students’ wellbeing and enhances over coming any obstacles to their growth and development in educational, vocational or psychological and personal social spheres. It prevents frustrations and negative stress, factors in students’ wholesome adjustments. Omebe (2005) writes that school counselling helps in the development of self, personal potentialities of effectiveness and self actualization and among others, helps the learners to adjust within self and others as well as with situational orders and realities. The above is why Ipaye in Egbo (2009), observes that guidance services in school counselling thing should be:

- ❖ **Developmental:** assisting student in develop understanding of processes of achieving one’s life goals.



- ❖ **Preventive:** Enabling students to identify areas of weaknesses and negative aspects of self and possible steering around same to positive build up
- ❖ **Curative:** Assisting people with problems to possibly resolve them (and)
- ❖ **Therapeutic:** Re-organizing priorities and effective behavioural modifications to the advantage of the clients.

### **Group Dynamism and Techniques used in Counselling Nigerian Secondary Schools Students**

Counselling students in groups save time, energy, resources and brings about useful adaptations to changes. Peer counselling appear to be very effective in the face of the fact that students inter-relationship is fundamentally gregarious. There is need therefore to get students well informed as to be able to handle their daily problems and targets.

One big challenge here is the devastating effect of both the social and mass media which often turn around the focus of the students. Incidentally, the social media are mainly westernized in culture and run counter to our traditional African beliefs. The mass media also preach some obnoxious beliefs and characters opposed to African hospitability, honour, decorum and tradition. Recently, some Western countries now campaign for gay marriage which is against the tenets of good behavior in Africa and in Nigeria, in particular. Pornography, sex and occultic characters are eulogized and students are made to be able to follow up or be described as social infidels. That is why peer counselling in Nigerian schools is an important factor in regularizing discipline, respect and followership in schools and the outside societies. Unfortunately too, cultism has filtered down from the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, through the secondary to the primary schools. It is even worsened by the fact that artisans and apprentices along the streets have joined the groups, such that it influences the activities of the so called "area boys" which has become lucrative, because politicians appear to use them to operate against political foes and during elections to achieve intimidations and favourable results.

There is need therefore to redefine peer group counselling technique to the favour of students, which in the view of Denga (2001) involves:

- ❖ Assessing the needs of the client population through surveys interviews, observation, etc. to determine whether the technique is very appropriate in determining and improving students psychological health.
- ❖ Involving and determining the assistance of teachers, parents and counsellors in observing the students.
- ❖ Training of the peer students to be done in phased and line with the needs of the students.
- ❖ Deciding a model of peer selection and training skills, such that they can volunteer to help others and themselves in solving their social personal and other related problems.
- ❖ Assignment of the trained peer counsellors with clearly defined instructions.
- ❖ Regular interaction between the counsellors and the peer counsellors for assessment and reevaluation of progress.

To successfully progress the student learner, the following other group counselling techniques should be applied, in the best of ways:

- ❖ **Sociometric Techniques:** Ifemnni (1997) believes that sociometry provides opportunities of understanding patterns for interpersonal relationships within a group by providing opportunities for individuals to express preferences for companies
- ❖ **Group Appraisal for Categorization:** Denga (2001) writes that counsellors should in association with teachers and other school staff, carry out need assessment of the students in order to determine areas that they need assistance.
- ❖ **Role playing Technique:** Bennett in Denga (2001) defines role playing as a device for developing skills and insights in the realm of human relations by acting situations which parallel real-life situations. Students act like other people by intimidating real life situations of others.
- ❖ **Group Appraisal Methods:** Appraisal materials must be performed and perfected by test experts, aptitude tests, aptitude scales, personality projection techniques, study habit inventories, achievement, etc. are some of the means of gathering a leader information for appraisal, placement and evaluation of the students.

### **The Case Studies Methods**

Information on case studies should be collected systematically and comprehensive enough to cover the identified problem areas of the students' interests. Case studies present real or hypothetical information usually depicting a problem so that a judgment or solution can be sought.

### **Discussion Techniques**

Discussing a common problem is an African way of finding solutions to the problem. Group discussion enhances listening skills, behaviour rehearsal, verbalization, communication skills and oneness in providing solutions to problems.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Wellbeing of students in classes is the major reason for which they are in schools. Galvanizing efforts in enhancing the full adjustment of students in academics vocational, personal, social and psychological realms of life is the reason for the counsellors presence in Nigerian secondary schools. It means that the importance of school guidance and counselling cannot be over emphasized. The counsellors make use of school guidance programmes that include orientation counselling, information, appraisal placement, referral, evaluation, follow up, research and community services to bring about excellent well being and optimal adjustment of secondary school students in and outside schools. These are the principal functions of the school counsellors. All hands should therefore be on deck among all stake holders to encourage good guidance and counseling practices in Nigerian secondary schools.



## REFERENCES

- Anagbogu, M.A. (2002) *Foundations of guidance and counselling for colleges and universities* Enugu: Academic publishing company.
- Chauhan, S.S. (2009) *Principles and techniques of guidance*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, PVT Ltd
- Denga, D. I. (2001) *Guidance and counselling in school and non- school settings* Port Harcourt: Double diamond publications.
- Egbo, J.O.E. (2009). Performance assessment of secondary school counsellors in Anambra and Enugu States. *An unpublished Ph.D Thesis, EBSU, Abakaliki*
- Egbo, J.O.E. (2012). Unlocking the potentials of secondary school students through guidance and counselling. *ANSU Journal of Integrated Knowledge* 2(1) 01-07.
- Egbochukwu, E.O. (2008) *Guidance and Counselling: A comprehensive Text*. Benin City: UNIBEN Press.
- Ifelunni I.Cs (1997) *Psychometric and ethical considerations in counselling* Enugu: Auto Century Publishing Company.
- Okeke, B.A. (2003) *Principles of guidance and counselling: An outline for beginners*. Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd.
- Olayinka M.S. (1993) *Guidance and Counselling for Nigerian Schools*. Lagos: Literamed Publications Ltd.
- Omebe, S.E. (2005). *Guidance and Counselling: A comprehensive approach*. Enugu: Cheston Agency Ltd.
- Sani, S. (2014) *Understanding guidance and counselling* Zaria: ABU, Press Ltd.