

Inadequacy of Professional Counsellors in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Causes, Effects and way Forward

Lawal Adijat Ohunene

adijatohunene@gmail.com

Bandekaji Chris Audu

bandekajichristopher@gmail.com

Amorha Ifeagacukwu

Amorhaifyzi2017@gmail.com

Niyi Jacob Ogunode

ogunodejacob@gmail.com

Abstract: *Guidance and counselling is a service is one of the educational services designed for the realization of education objectives in schools. It is a service that provide support and deal with every aspects of students' social, academic and career problems. There is no students in one time or the other that has never got a problem in the school. It is the duties of the trained Counsellors to provide these services to the students in the schools. It is unfortunate that most educational institutions in the country do not have the services of professional counsellors. This article discussed inadequacy of professional counsellors in Nigerian educational institutions: causes and the way forward. Secondary data were employed to provide empirical facts for the points raised in the paper. Inadequate funding, poor manpower planning, shortage of higher institutions offering Counselling programme and negative attitude of government towards development of counselling and guiding programme, poor motivation, political influence and Brain-drain were identified as the causes of shortage of professional counsellors in the Nigerian educational institutions. To address these problems, the government should formulate and come up with strategic plan on manpower development for educational sector which will specifically address the guidance and counselling programme etc.*

Keywords: *Counsellors Education, Guidance, Institutions.*

Introduction

Nigeria's educational system consists of three levels namely: Basic Education, Secondary and tertiary. Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education, however is segmented into ages 0-4 years, situated in daycare or crèches, fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services, whilst ages 5-6 are within the formal education sector. National policy on Education (2013), opines that Basic Education is to be provided by Government, it shall be compulsory, free, universal and qualitative. It comprises: 1-year of Pre-Primary, 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education and 3 years of Senior Secondary Education. At the tertiary level, the

system consists of a University sector and a non-University sector. Non-University sector is composed of polytechnics, monotronics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunities for undergraduate, post graduate, vocational and technical education (Ogunode, Okwelogu, & Ahaotu, 2021).

Lawal, Bandekaji & Ogunode (2021) observed that to achieve these goals of the educational institutions in Nigeria the National policy on education [NPE] (2013) states that the guidance and counselling services shall be provided. The policy further states that Government shall continue to make provision for the training of teachers in Guidance and Counselling; establish and equip: Counseling Clinics, Career Resources and information centres and Proprietors of schools shall provide adequate number of guidance counselors for their institutions (NPE, 2013) and the goals of educational support services shall be to: develop, assess and improve educational programmes; enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers; provide conducive environment for learning; make learning experiences more meaningful and realistic for children; make education more cost-effective; promote in-service education; enhance access to learning; develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools; and promote partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Development Partners (IDPs) to access resources (Ogunode, & Owobamigbe, 2021; NPE, 2013).

The goals of guidance and counselling in the educational institutions is to provide quality career services and social support services to children and students. The purpose of guidance and counseling services is to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive and preventive manner which ensures that all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development (Neyland-Brown, John, Jennifer, Kelly, & Nick, 2019). School guidance and counseling service prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. There are effective implementations of guidance and counseling in educational system of developed nations. The service of guidance and counseling at schools provide a good opportunity for students to cope with the demands of learning and personal development (American School Counselors Association, 1997). According to Iduwu, (n.d.) some reasons why schools children need counselling to include:

- (a) An individual's ability, Interest, aptitude are better tapped at the initial stages of life. The practice whereby counselling is not done at the very crucial stages of life is anathema to the development of the child. It has to start at the primary school level.
- (b) There is a need to provide special help for numerous primary school children. It is worth knowing that the Nigerian correction services, and Mental Health hospitals are inhabited by individuals who could have profited from guidance and help in early life. They live unproductive and unhappy lives because they were not properly guided from the beginning.
- (c) There is need to stem the tide of maladaptive behaviours in the school system and in the general public. Many vagabonds, drug abusers, drug peddlers, bullies, hooligans and pimps could have been helped to live better and more useful lives if they have been exposed to counselling services at youth.
- (d) There is need to hunt for gifted children in the society with a view to helping them develop their talents fully. This can only be done through counselling strategies.
- (e) The present pressure of the society demands the help of counselling and the counsellors.

Many homes are now breeding grounds for social problems. There is need for a change for the better.

(f) The impoverished homes demands the help of Guidance/Counsellors who should embark on outreach counselling.

(g) There is need to provide the child with a sound foundation for future, academic, psychological, and personal growth. The truth has to be recognised that life begins at birth and not at adolescence, in the secondary schools.

The realization of the guidance and counselling programme in the educational institutions depends on the availability of the various human resources in the school level.

Level of availability Counsellors in Nigerian educational Institutions

Nigerian educational institutions are faced with the challenges of shortage of professional teachers especially counsellors. Report from different scholars indicated that there is problem of shortage of professional counsellors. At the public primary schools Ogunode, & Owobamigbe, (2021) reported shortage of trained counsellors. At the secondary schools, Suleiman, Olanrenwaju, & Suleiman, (2019) concluded that inadequate professional counsellors is a major problems facing public secondary schools across the country while at the higher institutions, Owobamigbe, Ohunene, & Ogunode (2021) submitted that another challenge preventing effective guidance and service delivering at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria is shortage of trained Guidance and Counselling professionals. Many tertiary institutions in the country do not have adequate professional trained Guidance and Counsellor to manage the Guidance and Career Development Centres in their respective institutions. Ifelunni (2005) observed that in secondary school setting there are problems related with non-professionalization of counselors, low counselor/student ratio and the lack of recognition from the school administrators toward guidance and counseling services. Onuorah (2019), opined that lack of trained counsellors is a major problem.

Concept of Counsellor

School counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve students' success for all students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve students' outcomes. They lead, advocate and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of their professional body and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the professional body National Model: define, deliver, manage and assess (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], n.d.). Lawal, Bandekaji & Ogunode (2021) sees Counsellors as the pivot on which guidance and counseling process hang. They can influence the guidance and counseling process outcomes either positively or negatively because they determine the quality of guidance and counseling instructional delivery. The roles of the Counsellor in the school include the following according Iduwu, (n.d.):

- (a) The counsellor assists each child to understand and accept his uniqueness and liabilities.
- (b) The counsellor helps the child to develop a healthy self-concept.
- (c) The counsellor helps the child to grow and develop in all spheres of life.
- (d) The counsellor helps the child to deal with normal and interpersonal relationships.
- (e) The counsellor assists the child to cope with and alleviate personal and emotional problems (Iduwu, n.d.).

ASCA, (n.d.) outlines the functions of a professional Counsellors to include the following:

1. deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services directly to students or indirectly for students as a result of the school counselor's interaction with others.
2. use program focus and planning tools to guide the design and implementation of a school counseling program that gets results.
3. ensure equitable academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities for all students
4. work to maximize student success, promoting access and equity for all students. As vital members of the school leadership team, school counselors create a school culture of success for all

Factors Responsible Shortage of Counsellors in Nigerian Educational Institutions

The following are factors responsible for inadequate professional Counsellors in Nigerian educational institutions; inadequate funding, poor manpower planning, shortage of higher institutions offering Counselling programme and negative attitude of government towards development of counselling and guiding programme, poor motivation, political influence and Brain-drain.

Inadequate Funding

Educational funding in Nigeria is inadequate. For the past ten years now the funding of education in Nigeria is below the recommendation of 26% by UNESCO for developing countries like Nigeria. This is confirm by Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) who submitted that from 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 had N293 bn (7.19%), N393 bn (9.31%), N453 (9.15%), N499 (10.15%), N494 (10.54%), N434 (10.71%) and 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 with N4.31 (7.52%), N551 (7.41%), N605.8 bn (7.04%), N620.5 bn (7.02%) and N671.07bn (6.7%) the budgetary allocation for education for ten years is below the UNESCO 26% recommendation for education. The inability of Nigerian government to adequately fund education is responsible for shortage of teachers and counsellors in the various schools. Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) further explained that the factors responsible for shortage of funds in education include short fall in national revenue, compete from other sector, corruption, insecurity, natural disaster and lack of political will to implement UNESCO recommendation on education. The effects of underfunding of education according to Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) in Nigeria include inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, poor quality of education, poor capacity development, poor supervision and strike actions. Ogunode, & Owobamigbe, (2021) cited Ugwuoke (2020), observed that Guidance and counselling is not well funded today, the education enterprise has become a costly venture.

Poor Manpower Planning

Poor manpower planning in the educational sector is another factors responsible for shortage of professional counsellors in the Nigerian schools. Reilly (2003) avers workforce planning as a process in which an organization attempts to estimate the demand for labour and evaluate the size, nature and sources of supply which will be required to meet the demand. It is the work of the organization to determine its current and future manpower requirements that will help to meet its objectives. Therefore, owing to the pivotal role human resource planning play in the human resource management process by ensuring the preparation of an organization's current and future workforce needs by making sure that the right people are in the right place at the right time, it becomes necessary to undertake an examination of the human resources planning process utilized by organizations. Jacobson (2010) asserts, human resource planning plays a vital role in the human resource management process by ensuring the preparation of an organization's

current and future workforce needs by making sure that the right people are in the right place at the right time. It is unfortunate that both federal and states ministries of education have failed to come out a strategic manpower planning for both the federal schools and states schools. The non-availability of such document to guide manpower development in education is responsible for the shortage of counsellors. George-Prince (2021) identified poor planning of workforce as responsible for shortage of teachers in public schools. Ogunode, Gregory, & Musa, (2020) submitted that the lack of manpower planning is responsible for the teacher gap in the Nigerian educational institutions across the country. The problem of inadequate manpower in the Nigerian educational sector is a result of lack of effective manpower planning. Anyadike (2013) cited Goetz (1989); Owobamigbe, Ohunene, & Ogunode (2021) observed that there are many reasons that accounts for this shortage of trained Guidance and Counsellors in the various educational institutions across the country. Some of these factors include lack of strategic planning on Guidance and Counsellors production, inadequate funding of guidance and counselling programme, inadequate tertiary institutions offering guidance, increased in the population of students and counseling programme and unstable educational policies.

Shortage of Higher Institutions Offering Counselling Programme

Another reason for the inadequate professional counsellors in the Nigerian educational institutions is shortage of higher institutions offering guidance and counselling programme at first degree, master and PhD level. Many universities, colleges of education and other specialized educational institutions are not offering guidance and counselling programme. Ogunode & Paul (2021) identified limited teachers' education institutions in Nigeria is another factor responsible for shortage of professional teachers in the various educational institutions. The total number of higher institutions that specializes in teachers' production for the country is few and not produce the needed manpower requirement for the entire educational institutions. Also, Ogunode (2020) reported that inadequate teachers of institutions is another factor contributing to the shortage of professional teachers in the Nigerian educational institutions. The total numbers of teacher institutions in the country is not enough to produce the numbers of teachers needed in all the forms of Nigerian educational institutions. The number of Colleges of education, institute of education and faculty of education in the country do not have the capacity to production the professionals teachers require to produce professional teachers for all the educational institutions in the country.

Negative attitude of government towards development of guiding and counselling Programme

The negative attitude of government towards development of guiding and counselling in the Nigerian educational institutions is a major factor responsible for the shortage of professional counsellors in the various educational institutions. The government have fail to recognize the need to develop guiding and counselling programme. Policies designed and formulated for the development of the programme have not been implemented by the government.

Poor Motivation

Poor motivation of counsellors in the Nigerian educational institutions can be linked to the inadequacies of trained counsellors in the schools across the country. Counsellors are poorly motivated. The working conditions of counsellors and welfare packages is poor and not attractive. Many counsellors decline to work in the educational institutions due to the working environment and salaries. Many professional counsellors are working in other institutions where the salaries and welfare packages are more attractive. Ogunode & Paul (2021) posited that poor motivation of teachers is another factor responsible for shortage of professional teachers in the Nigerian educational institutions. Nigerian teachers are poorly motivated and this is causing

many professional teachers to leave the sector. Mmadike (2006) identified excess workload; low morale; inadequate remuneration; unattractive prospects for promotion and inadequate working conditions as sources of job dissatisfaction among university teachers in Nigeria. Lawal, Bandekaji & Ogunode (2021) submitted that many counsellors working in the Nigerian educational institutions are poor motivated. Their salaries are not paid on time. They lack conducive working environment and this is affecting their productivities at work.

Political Influence

Political influence in recruitment processes in most educational institutions in Nigeria is responsible for shortage of counsellors in the schools. Human resources (officers) in ministries identifying the position needed in the various schools and all plans have been done to recruit to fill the various positions. During the recruitment processes, political actors dismantles the process by sending in their candidate to be recruited whether qualified or not qualified. The actual people needed to fill the various positions are sub-change. This political influence is responsible for recruitment of wrong people into the schools.

Brain-drain

Brain-drain problem is one of the major challenges affecting the educational institutions in Nigeria. Many professional teachers are leaving the educational institutions because of the poor working condition and unconducive environment. Many counsellors have left and many are still leaving today. Lawal, Bandekaji & Ogunode (2021) observes that the situation of brain-drain could be worse. This is because the limited members of trained counsellors are moving out of school settings into non-school settings.

Recommendation

The following recommendation were made:

1. The government should increase the funding of guidance and counselling in the country. This will guarantee total development of the programme.
2. The government should formulate strategic plan for manpower development in the educational sector especially for guidance and counselling programmer.
3. Tertiary education institutions where guidance and counselling are not been offered should be directed to start the programme. This will help in the production of more professional counsellors.
4. More counsellors should be employ and deploy to the public educational institutions across the country where there is problem of shortage of Counsellors.
3. The government should ensure offices used as guidance and counselling rooms should be well furnish and all guidance and counselling resources are provided to motivate counsellors
4. The government should increase the salaries and welfare packages of Counsellors to prevent the problems of brain-drain in the programme

Conclusion

The roles of counsellors in the development of guidance and counselling in the Nigerian educational institutions cannot be underestimated. The counsellors are the implementer of the counselling curriculum and they are strong member of the educational institutions. This article examined inadequacy of professional counsellors in Nigerian educational institutions: the causes and the way forward. The paper identified inadequate funding, poor manpower planning, shortage of higher institutions offering Counselling programme and negative attitude of

government towards development of counselling and guiding programme, poor motivation, political influence and Brain-drain were identified as the causes of shortage of professional counsellors in the Nigerian educational institutions and it was recommended among other things that the government should formulate and come up with strategic plan on manpower development for educational sector which will specifically address the guidance and counselling programme etc..

References

1. American School Counselors Association. (1997). "The Role of the professional school Counselor" Alexandria, VA.
2. American School Counselor Association (n.d.) The Role of the School Counselor:
<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness>
3. George-Prince N, J,. (2021) Human Resource Planning in Public Sector: A Case Study of Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB). *International Journal of Development and Public Policy*, 1(7), 233-240
4. Ifelunni, I. (2005) "The missing links in Nigerian Education system." In Keynote address presented at a conference on the state and future of Education in Nigeria. FCE (Technical) Asaba, (June 2005): 13-17.
5. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN). (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos, Nigeria: NERDC.
6. Iduwu, S. (n.d.) Guidance and Counselling for the Primary School Child
7. Jacobson, W. (2010). Preparing for tomorrow: A case study of workforce planning in North Carolina municipal governments. *Public Personnel Management*, 39(4), 1-21.
8. Lawal A., O, Bandekaji C., A & Ogunode, N., J (2021).Challenges Facing Counsellors in Nigerian Public Primary Schools and Way Forward. *Middle European Scientific Bulletin*,(17),300-310
9. Neyland-Brown, Leslie, John M. Laux, Jennifer L. Reynolds, Kelly Kozlowski, and Nick J. Piazza. (2019) "An Exploration of Supervision Training Opportunities for School Counselors." *Journal of School Counseling* 17, no. 1.
10. Odediran, N.O. (2014). *Guidance and Counselling Nigerian School Counsellors*. Ilorin. Nato Publicity and Printing Co.
11. Ogunode N., J. & Paul S., A (2021) Shortage of Professional Teachers in Nigerian Educational Institutions and the way Forward. *Journal of Ethics and Diversity in International Communication* 1(4), 9-19
12. Ogunode, N. J. & Owobamigbe, K. D. (2021) Guidance and Counseling Services in Nigerian Public Primary Schools: Challenges and the Way forward.*Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance*. Vol 8(2), p:29-37
13. Ogunode, N, J., Okwelogu I., S. & Ahaotu, G., N. (2021).Problems Faced by Public School Teachers in Nigeria and the Way Forward. (17) *Middle European Scientific Bulletin* 356-265

14. Ogunode, N., Gregory D., & Musa, A. (2020). Assessment of political officeholders' attitudes towards planning of education in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas*, 1 (1), 68-79. <https://doi.org/10.47434/JEREDA.1.1.2020.68>
15. Ogunode N, J,. (2021). Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria: Problems and Suggestions. *Central Asian Journal of social sciences and history volume: 02 (02)*.p:90-102
16. Owobamigbe K,. D, Ohunene, L,. A, & Ogunode N, J. (2021). Guidance and Counseling Services in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: Problems and Solutions. *International Journal on Integrated Education*. Volume 4, Issue 10, 67-74
17. Onah, F. O. (2015) Human resources management theory and practice. John Jacobs Classic Publishers Ltd.
18. Reilly, P. (2003). Guide to workforce planning in local Authorities: Employer's organization for local government. London University Press.
19. Suleiman, Y., Olanrenwaju, M. K., & Suleiman, J. M. (2019). Improving Guidance and Counseling Services for effective Service Delivery in Nigerian Secondary schools: Implication for Stakeholders in Education. *Journal of multicultural Studies in Guidance and Counseling* 3(1), 75-89