



Guidance and Counseling Services in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: Problems and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

The various regulatory agencies of higher institutions directed all tertiary institutions in Nigeria to established Guidance and Counseling units in their respective institutions with the objective of providing quality Guidance and Career services to students and staff within the institutions. Many of these Guidance and Career centres are faced with challenges preventing them from discharging their statutory functions. This article discussed the challenges preventing effective Guidance and Counseling Services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Inadequate funding, Shortage of Trained Guidance and Counsellors, Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities and Inadequate Guidance and Counseling Materials will be used as challenges preventing Effective Guidance and Counseling Services and Career Development in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. To address these problems, the paper hereby recommend: allocate fund to the centre, guidance and counselling services should be seen as integral part of educational programme, employ professional/trained counsellors, provide adequate infrastructural facilities and provision of counselling materials.

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1. Introduction

Tertiary Education is the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics,

Polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). The goals of Tertiary Education shall be to: (a) contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training. (b) provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; (c) provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; (d) reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market (e) promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; (f) forge and cement national unity; and (g) promote national and international understanding and interaction. The tertiary institutions are host to the students, academic staff and non-academic staff. The students are regarded as the king. The welfare of the students is premium to the government and the institutions. The students are described as groups of people under educational institutions. The Nigerian students are faced with many problems. Onuorah (2010), noted that a number of students in colleges suffer stress and anxiety due to failure in examination, uncertainty about school fees, pressure from guardians to excel, inability to cope with school work and personal social problems. As a result, most male students get openly drunk, walk aimlessly in the college compound arguing loudly to themselves or they just sit at the student's centre without attending classes. The Nigerian students are also faced with the problems of inadequate infrastructural facilities. Ali, (2014), observed that present day students face a lot of challenges which ranges from inadequate hostel, undersized classroom, insecurity within and outside the campuses, inadequate financial provision by parent dues to economic hazard, peer group pressure and unnecessary demands by some lecturers. Face with all these problems, for genuine physical and mental soundness, to be able to settle for their studies and acquire the require skills that pave way for their employment after graduation, they need guidance counsellor to guide and counsel them, follow them up till they graduate successfully and become useful members of the society.

Ali (2014), submitted that to facilitate and sustain the university programme, especially for the students, there is the need for guidance and counselling services alongside, knowing fully that some of these students never had the advantage of any counselling encounter in their secondary schools. Also guidance and counselling services will provide an opportunity for them to appreciate the value, functional and opportunities of the course they offers to them. One way of sustaining student's interest throughout the programme is by establishing guidance services, prominent among the services to be rendered according to Ali (2008) are Placements, Follow up, Information, Appraisal, Referral, Guidance, Counselling and Planning. This paper intends to discuss the challenges preventing effective guidance and counseling services in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

2.1 Concept of Guidance and Counseling Services and Career

The tertiary institutions Guidance and Counseling Units are established to provide services in form of individual counselling, group counselling, seminar presentation, workshop and provision of guidance through the internet for students and staff. The tertiary institutions Guidance and Counseling units are named differently by different institutions but carry out similar Guidance and Counseling services. At University of Ibadan, the Career and Counseling Unit is committed to serving students in their career quests and other needs that may require professional counselling support. Though, limiting itself to areas of actual competence of professionals and support staff in the Division, as an integral part of the

Student Affairs Division, the Career Guidance and Counselling Unit promotes University Community welfare by extending support services to staff of the University. The counselling aspect of the services provides, systematic and creative psycho-social therapies that emphasize non-clinical practice while clinical related cases are referred to appropriate quarters; all in a bid to ensure qualitative service delivery in provision of overall wellness of students and staff. The Unit works in conjunction with other collaborating agencies as well as with other departments and units to enhance the overall conducive campus climate (University of Ibadan, 2020).

At the University of Ilorin, the Counselling and Human Development Centre (UCHDC) aims and objectives include:

- a. Identification of students' innate abilities and development of their capabilities, potentials and talents.
- b. Assisting individual to effectively adjust to educational and institutional challenges.
- c. Development of sound character.
- d. Promotion of effective interpersonal relationships.
- e. Acquisition of the necessary skills required for academic excellence and healthy living.

Programmes available at the Centre

The Centre provides guidance and counselling services based on the following programmes:

- a. Educational /Academic Counselling.
- b. Career Guidance/Counselling.
- c. Personal-Social Counselling.
- d. Marriage and Family Counselling.
- e. Health Counseling.
- f. And Research and Other Related Activities.

a. Educational /Academic Counselling

The Centre provides services on:

- Registration procedures, choice of courses and requirements for graduation.
- Spill-over, transfer, change of course and withdrawal cases.
- Effective study habits, usage of library services and acquisition of examination skills.
- Coping with academic challenges.
- Creating awareness on the available opportunities such as postgraduate programmes and scholarship awards within and outside Nigeria.

b. Career Guidance/Counselling

The Centre offers the following services:

- Preparing students for the world of works especially self employment.
- Providing career guidance on job opportunities and challenges in the various courses that are available at the University of Ilorin.

- Conducting researches into the various aspects of career guidance and counselling.
- Creating, promoting and developing training activities that would improve the employability of students and graduates.
- Assisting companies and commercial enterprises in organizing career talks for prospective graduates in order to acquaint them with job requirements and career prospects.
- Guiding students on job search and job retention strategies

c. Personal-Social Counselling

The Centre provides services on:

- Coping with academic demands, life in the University and life after graduation;
- Managing of phobia (fear), stress, depression and feeling of committing suicide;
- Building of social skills (assertiveness, decision-making process, modeling and mentoring etc);
- Managing cases of addiction to alcohol and other drugs;
- Overcoming undesirable personal habits (stammering, shyness, extravagant behaviour, overeating etc.);
- Managing emotional difficulties (e.g. temper tantrum);
- Assisting students to adjust to the University environment through orientation service;
- Fostering discipline and responsible behaviours;
- Coping with loneliness and feelings of inadequacy;
- Management of resources (e.g. income and facilities);
- Managing interpersonal matters (making friends, conflicts between or among room-mates, friends etc);
- Handling Religious and spiritual matters;
- Organizing training on assertiveness and decision making skills; and
- Managing other personal-social concerns that interfere with individual's normal functioning.

d. Marriage and Family Counselling

The centre offers services on:

- Marriage and family matters;
- Sexual matters (e.g. harassment, rape, pre-marital sex, incestuous relationship, variances, sexual dysfunctions);
- Choice of partners and preparation for marriage;
- Handling difficulties in marriage; and
- Handling interpersonal conflicts in courtship and family.

e. Health Counselling

The centre offers services on:

- Personal hygiene;
- Prevention and control of diseases; and
- Referral to clinics or hospitals for medical assistance.

f. Research Activities

collection and dissemination of guidance information;

- organization of workshops, seminars and conferences;
- writing of guidance and counselling texts (e.g. pamphlets, handbills and leaflets); and
- research work, outreach activities, postgraduate practicum and training in life planning skills, etc.

Other Guidance and Counselling Related Activities**a. Workshop**

This covers Personal, Family and Community Values; Adolescent Development; Communication; Sexuality; Gender Roles and Equality; Relationships; Teenage Pregnancy; Sexually Transmitted Infections like HIV and AIDS; Substance Abuse, including Drugs/Alcoholism; and Planning for the Future.

b. Study Clinic

The clinic addresses students' concerns in the areas of studying, academic performance, interpersonal relationships, etc.

c. Financial Management

Counselling on financial management is offered to students/staff in order to promote effective utilization of financial resources.

d. Orientation Service for International Students

The Centre assists international students to adjust to the University environment and provides guidance to them on areas of concern.

e. Practicum for Students in Guidance and Counselling

The Centre provides opportunities to counsellors-in-training to acquire practical skills and knowledge in counselling.

Personnel at the Centre

- Director
- Three professionally qualified counsellors and
- Administrative staff

At the colleges of education, Sambo, (2008) emphasized that these services below can help colleges of education make necessary adjustment in life; Orientation, Associations, clubs and societies, Health

clinic, Vocation and graduate placement, Housing – accommodation, Students sporting activities, Dormitory counselling (Hall advisers), Religious advising, Registration advising, Student union and Goal planning and constructive use of time.

Ali (2014), observed that the need for guidance services in University education is therefore imperative and of tremendous value if they are properly tailored and channel towards the benefits at the point of university education programmes. It entails psychological/emotional educational and social aspects. Psychological because of his feelings as a university student with the stress of accommodation, inadequate financial provision by parents, insecurity and cultism to mentioned jus but a few. Educational problems may also surface, with the present quest for university education; where-in students are admitted into course they did not option for. Student social responsibility may also hamper their interest in academic quest, and performances. The need for counselling in our universities also stems from the fact that students have some personal- social problem in coping with the stress involved. Some of these problems include: relating with opposite sex, overcoming the psychological/emotional trauma as mentioned earlier, coping with misunderstanding, adjusting to time schedule and etc. To achieve the objectives of university education, guidance/counselling services are heavily needed. The university students needed to be guided, encouraged and counselled to enable them end on positive side.

Ali (2014), observed that many students were admitted not in the course of their first choice, because of over population in demand for placement. Eventually, most universities fill their vacancy for students in their second choice course or other unpopular areas of study where-in they meet the entry requirement. This may be done but the student may not be interested but because of lack opportunities for admission having waited for a long time for the golden opportunity will accept the offer, but will soon lost interest and definitely his ability to focus on his/her study so as to acquire the necessary skill is affected. This is where guidance and counselling services are needed by the new timers to be able to continue their study.

3. Problems Preventing Effective Guidance and Counseling Services and Career Development in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Inadequate funding, Shortage of Trained Guidance and Counsellor, Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities and Inadequate Guidance and Counseling Materials will be used as challenges preventing Effective Guidance and Counseling Services and Career Development in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

3.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is a major problem hindering effective guidance and counseling services in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Funding is vital for the implementation of guidance and counseling service in educational institutions. Adequate funding is key to the delivering of quality guidance and counseling services. It is unfortunate that tertiary institutions in Nigeria are underfunded. Guidance and Counseling Unit in tertiary institutions drives their funding from their respective schools. The poor funding of tertiary institutions is affecting the performance of the Guidance and Career Development Centres of the higher institutions. Ogunode & Owobamigbe (2021) and Adebukola, (2015), observed that lack of adequate fund is one of the major factors affecting the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in Nigeria. Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should enforce standard for how the office of a school counsellor should look like. As an agent of curriculum

implementation, should inform the federal government of the need of school counsellors. Counsellors in some school are not recognized as professionals because of lack of adequate facilities. Some headmaster/headmistress do not provide office accommodation for counsellors that could be considered suitable for use as counselling office where counselling could be carried out. Many counsellors are just given any available space to use as counselling office. Many are not provided with the facilities and materials required to practice effectively. There should be adequate fund allocated from the three tiers of government and school management, to carry out some programmes like career day, career weeks, vocational training and seminar for the counsellors in order to improve on their profession and perform excellently on their job. Onuorah & Ogbodo (2019), observed that Guidance and Counselling is not well funded today, the education enterprise has become a costly venture. Enough funds are not allocated to each secondary school to run its various services. Where fund is available, very little is embarked for counselling purposes (Ipaye, 2006). It seems that government do not want to stretch their budgets with extra demands from emerging unit such as guidance and counselling, yet it is known that effective counselling demands adequate funding to purchase items such as psychological test material, cumulative record folders, log book, publications, play gadgets, cardboards and various felt pens as well as money to organize activities such as orientation, excursions, career day/week and furnishing the counsellor's office.

3.2 Shortage of Trained Guidance and Counsellors

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. Onuorah (2019), opined that lack of trained counsellors is a major problem. Despite the fact that there are many holders of higher degrees in guidance and counselling in Nigeria, some lack the skills necessary for this practice. Aside this, some of the trained counsellors in Nigeria reject postings to schools instead, they prefer to go to non-school setting for greener pastures. 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.

3.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities in many Guidance and Career Development Centres in majorities of higher institutions is affecting the delivery of Guidance and Career Service. Ogunode & James (2021) sees school infrastructural facilities refer to social capital within the school environment. They include school buildings/complexes such as classrooms, tables, exam hall, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasia, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, etc., Institute/centers' specialized facilities e.g. ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, etc., and Boards e.g. interactive, magnetic, screen and chalk, etc., ICT that is computer laboratories and services, network connectivity, multi-media system, public address system, slide, and video projectors, and Ergonomics furnishing in laboratories, libraries, and lecture rooms/ theaters, moot courts, and studios, etc. They went further and listed the importance of infrastructural facilities in

educational institutions include: it aids effective delivery of administrative functions in schools; it makes the delivery of services fast and reliable; it enables teachers to deliver lessons fast; infrastructural facilities provide a conducive working environment for both teachers and students; infrastructural facilities enable learners to learn at ease and learn well; infrastructural facilities enable the teachers to teach well, prepare their lessons, and deliver them online (ICT). The importance of school infrastructural facilities in the realization of educational goals cannot be underestimated. School facilities aid the delivery of the teaching and learning process in the schools. The absent of conducive centres with adequate rooms for students and guidance and counselor in many higher institutions is affecting the delivery of guidance and career development services.

3.4 Inadequate Guidance and Counseling Materials

Inadequate guidance and counseling materials in the guidance and counseling units is another problem affecting effective guidance and counseling service in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Many Guidance and Counseling Units in the Nigerian tertiary institutions do not have adequate Guidance and counseling materials like psychological test, Cumulative record folders, log book, publications, play gadgets, cardboards and various felt pens as well as money to organize activities such as orientation.

4. Way Forward

To solve the problems discussed in this paper, the presenters made the following recommendations: make fund available for the guidance and career development centres, guidance and counselling services should be seen as integral part of educational programme, employ professional/trained counsellors, provide adequate infrastructural facilities and provision of counselling materials. All these in place will enhance the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

1. Government/school management should make fund available for the guidance and career development centres to enable it function effectively. In some tertiary institutions, the guidance and career development centres are not funded. Students who approach the centre with problem of inability to pay school fees are linked with their places of worship to seek for assistance with the help of the centre because the centre is financially incapacitated. Also, fund for guidance and counselling programmes like orientation for new students, career day/week, awareness, outreach, seminars, etc.
2. Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities for guidance and career development centres in Nigerian tertiary institutions. There should be counsellor's office, staff offices, office furniture and counselling clinic.
3. Counselling materials like psychological tests, play gadget, tape recorder, log book, record folder, etc should be provided for the guidance and career development centres for effective service delivery.
4. The government should employ qualified/trained counsellors who should be posted to faculties and departments. They are to ones to get firsthand information from the students and are able to assist in solving their problems.

Conclusion

Guidance and counseling unit is an important unit in the tertiary institutions and their services are crucial for the development of students. The units in the tertiary institutions are faced with many challenges. This paper identified inadequate funding, shortage of trained guidance and counselors, inadequate infrastructural facilities and inadequate Guidance and counseling materials.

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