

The Role of Guidance and Counseling in National Integration

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Abstract

The concept of guidance and counselling as a compound twin word that is -used; to describe situations where a trained counsellor strives to steer troubled clients out of the typified problems. The paper itemized 10 principles of guidance and counselling; Likewise, the concept of national integration was also discussed as the notion of people coming together in a geographical and political expression, with the aim of maximizing tile use of their resources for The good of all Justification for national integration and challenges associated with national integration were itemized and discussed. One of the ways guidance and counselling can be used as a top for national integration is through leadership and citizenship training. Thus, guidance and counselling practitioners should pay attention on equipping individuals with skills and capabilities of becoming responsible future; leaders and integrated citizens to enhance national; integration. The paper concluded that the nation as a country with diverse economic, social and political force's can be harmonized to attain national integration through effective guidance and 'counselling programmes.

Key words; *Guidance, Counselling and national integration*

Introduction

Guidance and counselling as a discipline was introduced in Nigeria in the 20th century as a pragmatic response to the political, social and economic challenges of the time. The fact is obvious that Nigeria is a country of diverse ethnic groups, cultures and multiplicity of languages. This has created a lot of problems in the Nigerian society ranging from political instability, tribal discrimination, imbalance in educational development, mutual distrust, greed, corruption sectionalism, poverty, lack of patriotism and economic mismanagement. To this end it becomes imperative for guidance and counselling to be introduced in the system and the society at large in order to harmonize our differences to become productive, creative, self-reliant and appreciate the need for unity in diversity (Egbo, 2015). Concept of Guidance and Counselling

Traditionally, guidance entails activities designed to induce positive functionalities into abilities, interest, attitudes, aptitudes, and at the same time traditionally involves provision of direction or advice as the way; setting and helping to drive, lead, assist, pilot, and steer ideals, into individuals by counselling professionals to enhance the achievement of 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 as 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 of view in order to help pupils understand themselves; and as a service, it refers to the procedure: a 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 (2003) asserts that guidance programme should help client in reaching, rather two opposite goals: adjustment to society and freedom to act as

.unique individuals, failure of .which results in conflicts in the society which always incite 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, we live as to solve individual problems.

Counselling, on the other hand is an interactional process meant to enhance. Definition 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) to understand the counsellor and solve his adjustment problems. The aim of counselling is always to assist clients to better understand: oneself and his/her- environment in relation to the present and future problems. Guidance and counseling therefore is a compound twin word that is used to describe situations where a trained counselor strives to steer troubled 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 counseling is used to enhance the optimal development of the clients' aspirations and in resolving personal and social problems (Egbo, 2015). Principles of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and counseling as a helping relationship is predicated on a number of principles to facilitate the realization of its objectives and effectiveness in the society. According to Olayinka and Omoegun (2002), the practice of guidance and counseling is based on ten principles as follows:-

Guidance services are for all people. Counseling is for all to cope with life situations and decision making. Whenever the individual is faced with the complex problems of decision making, there is need for guidance to attain adjustment.

Guidance services are voluntary and not by force or coercion. Clients should be encouraged to seek the assistance of counselors out of free will rather than the use of force. Therefore, guidance should be seen as a cooperative effort between the counselor and the client.

Guidance services are primarily required to prevent problems rather than providing solutions. In essence, guidance services should be seen as preventive rather than curative

Guidance services do not provide solution to all human problems. Clients having problems should be assisted by the counselors to the best of their abilities but when such problems are

beyond their services, they should be referred to other specialists for direct attention. Hence, counselors should recognize their potential and limitations.

Guidance services are for all levels, right from young to old people in the society. Appropriate counseling services and techniques are designed to meet the needs of clients at the various levels in the society.

Guidance services should be rendered on a continuous basis. As a person grows and develops, his needs, experiences, interest, aspirations and goals may also change, hence the need for counseling at different stages in life.

Guidance services may manipulate the environment to help the client. The counselor should be able to explore the environment in seeking employment opportunities as well as securing scholarships to assist indigent citizens.

Guidance services are based on the total development of the individual (mentally, socially, emotionally, physically and in terms of his vocational aspirations). Hence, the development in terms of the three domains are emphasized in counseling in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Guidance services should recognize the worth and dignity of the individual client. According to Carl Rogers, the four elements required for effective counseling are empathy, congruence, positive regard and unconditionality of regard. Guidance services are provided with the intention of effecting positive changes in the individual clients, counselors should therefore not condemn any client on the basis of his/her misbehavior or information received about him.

Confidentiality is about the most important principles in guidance and counseling. —Keep our secret secretl. Guidance service must ensure the security and confidentiality of all personal information revealed by the client during the counseling relationship. A counselor should not betray the trust and confidentiality which his client has reposed in him unless it is dangerous to do. Concept of National Integration

There is no universally acceptable definition of integration, however according to Coleman (1996) integration is the process whereby a distinctive racial, cultural or religious minority group merges with and is accepted by the dominant group within a society without fundamentally changing its and/or their own way of life giving rise to a multicultural society.

Dashen (2001) asserted that the concept of national integration presupposes the notion of people coming together in a geographical and political expression with the aim of maximizing the use of their resources for the good of all. This presupposes a progress towards better economic, social, religious and political integration. This state of togetherness implies putting aside the different forces of disunity and embracing one destiny for national survival.

The concept of national integration seeks to produce unification and stability. Intra-national unification which is defined as the process whereby functional unity is created among people who recognize some kind of common unity such as the integration of their elites. Intra-national unification beings with elites in the society putting aside their ethnic, racial, religious and regional differences to create an atmosphere where heterogeneous unit can feel some sense of interdependence and integration. In countries where intra-national unification has been achieved, disparate groups are held together by mutual ties of one kind or another which give the groups a feeling of identity and self-awareness. Every nation strives to develop stable and cohesive system in order to provide a society with conducive atmosphere for social, economic, technological and political development. To achieve this, this, they spend huge amounts of fiscal and political investments to avert conflict, yet national integration does not mean the absence of tension and conflicts in a society. The essence of national integration therefore is the establishment of institutions modalities for the peaceful and satisfactory resolution of social conflicts, whatever form they may take be it class, ethnic, religious or regional (Olayinka and Omoegun, 2002).

Justification / Recommendation for National Integration

In a country like Nigeria with diverse ethnic groups and multiplicity of languages, there is need to harmonize these diverse elements and supported this position when he posited that the issues of

national integration are important because of the following reasons;

1. Without forging much greater integration at all its resources to improve the miserable living conditions of the people.
2. A nation cannot build the social, economic and political foundations on which to promote and defend its dignity and independence and indeed survival as one country.

Supporting this position

Dimka (2002) highlighted the reasons why integration is necessary and important as follows:

1. The heterogeneous nature of the country requires integration
2. The need for peace and unity among the various cultural groups is a basis for living in harmony with one another.
3. There is no society that is self-sufficient. There is therefore the need for interdependence among societies, groups and individuals.
4. The need for specialization. All the parts that make whole cannot be the same thing at the same time, so some people specializes in doing one thing while others specializes in doing another. By so doing, human beings complement the efforts of each other
5. The laws of the land i.e the constitution permits citizens to live freely and own property in any part of the country.

Akinjide (2011) asserted that though from all indications, the society is getting more complex as individuals (either on religious ground, ethnic sentiment or the invocation of tradition), bring up more problems in addition to the existing ones. While nation has been trying to cope with the problems of corruption, human rights abuse, human traducing, ethnic-religious crises, terrorist activities, and insurrection in Niger Delta Region as a result of the demands for resource control, many other problems are daily raising their heads. It looks more of an unhealthy development with the national political landscape, a situation which comes to confirm that —the whole region (country) is clearly split into many divided selves.

National Integration for Security Challenges

Omebe (2005) identified a number of challenges associated with the achievement of national integration in Nigeria are as follows:-

- i. There is political instability in the country which often leads to religious and ethnic crises and violence that have resulted into many loses of lives of innocent souls.
- ii. There is imbalance in educational development between the North and South that have resulted into mutual distrust and discrimination.

- iii. The multiplicity of languages that have created communication gap among citizens and hinders the adoption of one indigenous lingua franca for the nation.
- iv. There is generally lack of an acceptable national ideology by the Nigerians, which is force of disintegration and threat to national unity.
- v. The present formula of revenue generation from national resources of the land is a source of discord and dissatisfaction among the petroleum producing states.
- vi. There are series of compliant of marginalization and discrimination in power sharing and appointment of citizens into key offices and boards.
- vii. General lack of trust and confidence in political leaders as a result of corruption, selfishness and nepotism.
- viii. Nigerian masses are discouraged as a result of poverty, epileptic power supply, frequent increases in the price of petroleum products, increasing cases of armed robbery, kidnapping and cultism prevailing in the society.

Further, Usman cited by Alli (2002), identify the following problems as impediments to national integration for security

- a. Regionalism and statism
- b. Poverty
- c. Lack of education, ignorance
- d. Uneven economic development
- e. The undermining of justices and equality for all Nigerians
- f. Constitutional weakness
- g. Quality of the political class
- h. Ethnicity
- i. Manipulation of religion
- j. Issues of fair and just political representation, sectionalism etc.
- k. Lack of historical consciousness and patriotism

1. Gross economic mismanagement and corruption, greed, prevailing cultural conditions.

Role of Guidance and Counseling In National Integration

One of the ways guidance and counseling can be used as a tool for national integration is through leadership and citizenship training. Thus, guidance and counseling practitioners should focus on equipping individuals with skill and capabilities of becoming responsible future leaders and integrated citizens to enhance national integration. Guidance and counseling in the society is a vital tool for eradicating ignorance, illiteracy and misinformation that are imperative for national integration (Omebe, 2005). Counseling services is for all and must be extended to members of the larger society as a whole in order to achieve national unity. Counseling programmes should be mounted on the citizens to emphasize on moral discipline, loyalty and commitment to national growth and development. Industrious and loyalty to constituted authorities. These are veritable ingredients for national integration in Nigeria (Alli, 2000).

Likewise, there is need to redesign the guidance and counseling curriculum in relation to the economic, social, political and cultural diversities in the country and fast-track the implementation to foster national ideology and patriotism among citizens as these would serve as instrument for national integration. Through the guidance and counseling, the citizens would inculcate the spirit of consciousness, tolerance in the face of provocation, political socialization, self-reliance and trust for leaders in authority. The fact is obvious that politician have always tempted to form a class of elites to separate themselves from the larger society. Guidance and counseling programmes could eradicate this through political education and adequate enlightenment campaign (Egbo, 2015). This would effect a total transformation in their character and attitudes and make them to realize that power belongs to the people and they have a right to determine their destiny. Also, political leadership requires sound educational training, administrative skills and competence and managerial acumen that are virtues, this can be acquired from systematic guidance and counseling programmes through training in seminars, workshops and conferences. Denga (2001) opined that Nigeria need to evolve a sound political arrangement that aim at social stability, economic emancipation, religious tolerance, security, national integration through rational power sharing in the legislative, executive and judiciary arms of government. In this case, this vision can only be

realized through a well-articulated guidance and counseling programme that could be made available to Nigerians as a whole.

Conclusion

In this paper, attention has been drawn to the concept of guidance and counseling and national integration. Attempts were made to highlight the challenges associated with the achievement of national integration. Obviously, the nation as a country is bombarded with diverse economic, social and political forces that can be harmonized to attain national integration through effective guidance and counseling programmes that would unfold to the citizens the benefits of unity in diversity.

Recommendation

- i. Guidance and counseling practitioners should focus attention on equipping students with skills and capabilities of becoming responsible future leaders integrated citizens.
- ii. Guidance and counseling in school is a vital tool for eradicating ignorance, illiteracy and misinformation that are imperative for national integration.
- iii. Counseling services is for all and must be extended to members of the school system and the society as a whole in order to achieve national unity.
- iv. Political leadership demands sound educational training, administrative skills and competence in training through seminars, workshops and conferences.
- v. Nigeria need to evolve a sound political arrangement that aim at social stability, economic emancipation, religious tolerance, security, national integration and cohesion through rational power sharing in the legislative, executive and judiciary arms of government.

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