Creativity and Innovation in Guidance and Counselling Education in Nigeria

Felicia N. Modo, Lawrencia R. Uranta & Sunday B. Akpan
Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education
University of Uyo, Uyo

Abstract
Creativity and Innovation are very vital in achieving effective Guidance and Counselling Education in present Nigerian society. This study was designed to find out "The Benefit of Creativity and Innovation in Guidance and Counselling in Education in Nigeria". This paper examined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as means through which the goals of guidance and counselling programme could be achieved. It is imperative for the modern methods of generating and disseminating information to be adopted for effective provision of guidance services. Modern communication Technology facilities such as the computers, internet services, skype, cell phones, among others are described and advocated to be used to facilitate information services in guidance and counselling. It is therefore recommended that for these resources to be effectively utilized, counsellors must be computer compliant through in-service training.

Keywords: Counselling, Creativity, Education, Guidance and Innovation.

Introduction

Generally education brings about opportunities for all categories of people to reach their full potentials in the area of development as well as lifelong learning. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014: 2 and 3) the goals of education in Nigeria are:
a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen.
b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
c) Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of Education within and outside the formal school system,
d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and
e) Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute to the society.

Based on the Nigerian goals of education, it is very clear that education is the most desirable vehicle that can propel the nation most needed awareness, skilled man-power, creativity, inventiveness, innovative thinking, technological advancement, viable, durable, political, culture and development needed in building the nation.

In this regard, Guidance and Counselling programme was introduced into the Nigerian educational programme as one of the educational support services. The essence of this support was to facilitate the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system. Therefore, in section 8 of the National Policy on Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014:57) stated the following as the goals of educational support services as;
a) Develop, access and improve educational programmes;
b) Enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers

c)   Provide conducive environment for learning
d)   Make learning experiences more meaningful and realistic for children,
e)   Make education more cost-effective'
f)   Promote in-service education,
g)   Enhance access to learning
h)   Develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools and
i)   Promote partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Development Partners (IDPs) to access resources.

Thus, with this policy statement it is then clear that Guidance and Counselling being one of the educational support services has been recognized as a very essential tool for the promotion of the nation's educational development. It is an invaluable instrument towards the realization of political, social, economic, scientific and technological development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

The term creativity is derived from the word "create" which simply means to bring into being, to do something new, novel or transform something in existence into another entity. Creativity can mean different thing to different people, it is the imagination or inventive mind and to others, it is about originality. Robinson (2001) defines creativity as the process of developing ideas that are original and of value. Again, Robinson (2001), asserted that creative intelligence is dynamics, diverse and distinct. Most people believe that the term creativity only applies to those who possess artistic talents thereby associating creativity with the achievements of extraordinary people termed as geniuses.

According to Otukpa (2016), creativity is associated with special people who can do special things. It is possible to be creative in any activity that engages the mind. Therefore, creativity in counselling geared towards making people learn what is not original in their domain to do better in a situation they found themselves through education.

In the same vein, innovation refers to new or developments that bring about improvements. In other words, innovation, connotes a device, programme, method, process or production which can be utilized to bring about improved condition. In education, some innovations have been evolved to improve the quality of instruction, learning and the total educative process. Ogu (2001), sees innovation as a deliberate introduction of something new and way of solving individual or group problems, or a way of accomplishing goals. Ogu (2001) asserts that innovation does not happen accidentally. Innovation in relation to education means introduction of novelty into the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum contents, objectives, learning experiences, methodology and instructional materials are subject to change when they are absolute or have outlived their importance. When the curriculum contents are no longer addressing any of the social issues, they have to be changed with the ones that have direct effect in treating the social needs and problems.

Guidance and Counselling

Nwachukwu (2007: 22) mentioned that Guidance and Counselling as a systematic and organized educational helping service, professionally given by a professionally trained Counsellor or therapist to a learner of any age, within or outside the school walls at appropriate level to assist one understand himself/herself, situation and environment, discover his interests, potentialities and opportunities in life and learn how best to effectively utilize his assets as well as minimize his weaknesses, to live a maximum productive life.

Ali (2002:4) sees Guidance and Counselling as "services available to each learner to facilitate his academic success in school, to help him better understand his strengths and

limitations, to identify his interests, to aid him in his planning for attaining realistic goals". Ali (2002) further regarded it as a process of helping the individuals to be aware of their personal identity, perceive themselves in relation to environmental and interpersonal relationship, such as attitudes. Guidance and Counseling is the bedrock for achieving self-actualization. It is a process of helping individuals to understand themselves by discovering their own needs, interests and capabilities in order to formulate their own goal and make plans for realizing those goals. According to Tambuwal (2010), guidance means to direct, pilot, manage, steer, aid, assist, lead and interact, while Counselling is seen as the process by which a person with problem is helped by a professional counsellor to voluntarily change his behaviour, clarify his attitude, idea and goal so that his problems may be solved.

The Traditional Methods of Counselling

Every person is unique and responds to each type of counselling differently. There are different methods of traditional counselling considered to fit the needs of the client, some traditional methods are meant to target specific issues, while others on individual growth and change regardless of presenting problems (Fader, 2018). The author pointed out some traditional methods of counselling, namely, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Psychodynamic Therapy and Humanistic Therapy.

Fader (2018) explains that cognitive therapy focuses specifically on a person's train of thought and identifies problematic patterns of negative thinking. These thinking patterns stimulate negative thoughts and interpretations of the client and the world. Once these patterns have been identified, the cousnellor uses cognitive restructuring, to change the way the client interpret thoughts and situations, behavioural therapy adopts the philosophy that if a client changes his problematic behaviour, such client will see a positive change in thoughts, feelings and interactions with others. Behavioural therapy uses different theories of behaviour, reinforcement and motivation to pinpoint and improve problematic patterns of behaviour. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) combines both cognitive therapy and behavioural therapy and focuses on how a person's thoughts, emotions and behaviour are interconnected. Psychodynamic therapy focuses on self awareness of the client's actions and behaviours. Psychodynamic therapy is like CBT in that it works to understand how beliefs, thoughts, behaviour and emotions are interconnected. Humanistic therapy is a client-centred approach that emphasizes unconditional acceptance from the counsellor and the free expression of the client. Two common humanistic therapeutic techniques are client-centred therapy and Gestalt therapy (Fader, 2018).

Ineffectiveness of the Traditional Methods in the 21st Century

The challenges experienced by today's youths may be complicated by the technological world and the overall cultural climate of contemporary world which in turn affects the academic, social-emotional development and health of today's youth (Watling, 2012). According to Ahn (2011), the traditional methods of counselling tend to be reactive in the sense that the approaches respond once a crisis or challenge already has occurred. The author explains that, while the traditional methods or reactive approaches are valuable, they may not be the most effective or efficient way of supporting clients navigate through the challenges of life. Given that these challenges are to some degree inevitable and likely to affect virtually all members of the family population, it seems counterproductive to respond only when the client have been defeated by the challenge. Ahn (2011) asserts that the alternative approach is to prepare clients to meet common challenges before the challenges occur, by arming clients with attitudes, skills, tools and knowledge of resources needed to reduce human suffering, increase

human happiness which in turn may reduce the demand for frequent counselling services and support greater wellness in the general population for years to come.

The Need for Change from Traditional Counselling to Innovative Methods via ICT

Change from traditional counselling to innovative method of counselling cannot be overemphasized for it provides an avenue for counselling to move along with the technological positive change in the society today. Accordingly Freeze (2015), suggested that there is need to change traditional counselling approaches to technology-based therapy. This is a controversial trend in the practice of ICT in guidance and counselling which involves the use of internet therapy which allows both counsellor and client to see and hear each other speak in real time.

Furthermore, Freeze (2015) explains that depending on the severity of client challenges, it can be a great way to connect to a client who does not have the ability to get an appointment. Counselling can be done via phone, skype or web conferencing through program call "Abil To." Freeze (2015) observed that often clients are home bound due to medical condition, and in such situation ICT based therapy is very helpful, also in situations where clients are fearful of stigma.

Additionally, the professional reach of guidance and counselling is unparalleled in human services delivery. Therefore, the potential for innovation and creativity, and the inevitability of guidance counsellors using ICT in practice is necessary where counsellors must strive to meet this grand challenge (Barak, Boniel-Nissim & Shapira, 2008). The authors added that, integrating ICT into guidance and counselling will enable client to receive guidance services over the internet, cell phones, instant message chat, social media games and virtually reality settings.

Major Benefits of Creativity and Innovation of Guidance and Counselling in Education

It is obvious that many people have acquired skills and knowledge that are no longer adequate to deal with diverse situations of life (Mayor & Binde, 2001). This situation has arisen as a result of the globalization that is taking place in a new economic and social context (Grantham, 2002). Indeed, new technologies are being introduced, changing traditional production processes and labour relations. It is pertinent that Guidance and Counselling should not be left out in these technological changes. There is the need for the constant updating of skills and knowledge through flexible process of life-long learning. This mode of learning will be better pursued through on-the-job training for counselling practitioners and within the education system. According to Okorodudu (2001), it is possible to receive education and counselling from homes through modern communication technological facilities like the computers, internet services, skype devices, cell phones, among others. Specialized service providers abound who would most often have no contact with the person seeking help. These specialized service providers likely work in specialized areas independent of the client's environment.

Currently, there are online journals and newsletters that allow more convenient and accessible assistance regardless of time and space notions. The ease of developing websites has produced a massive increase in e-guidance users (Anthony, 2003). According to Tinio (2012), ICT – based career guidance is now available, not only on a selected number of locations, but on a vast range of other online sites. As posited by Tinio (2012), counsellors can make profit from the services at homes, work places and community locations. Even though computers have been in use in counselling for more than three decades now, more diverse computing applications have been developed overtime. Anthony (2003) posit that, these applications form

an essential component of guidance and counselling practice. These applications include assessment, career guidance, storage and delivery of client records, preparation of case notes, reports, cyber counselling and distance guidance (Sampson, 2000).

Amazingly, higher education extension of guidance into online student affairs and services are already in vogue. This include orientation, academic advising and counselling, judicial services and student activities.

One recent innovation is the open-access-model of counselling. A more diffuse approach has been conceived to replace the concept of counsellors working with individual clients in a psychological vacuum. Thus, guidance services have departed from the old tradition to the modern where ICT information rooms and brief informal interview resources are provided. The concept of "distance guidance" by telephone or internet makes it possible to deliver guidance services to remote locations, with or without direct staff assistance. Thus, ICT has the potential to significantly increase access to guidance services freeing it from constraints of time and space (Naouel, 2008). The application of ICT in diverse ways in guidance and counselling is a phenomenon whose time has come. This is because, it affords freedom of access by individuals, with the evolution of the internet into the information capabilities.

Secondly, distance learning through the Nations Open University Programme and other forms of online education programmes have become popular in Nigeria. It has been recognized as a cost-saving mechanism of providing higher education to the increasing number of qualified Nigerians who cannot access the conventional University Programmes. This programme will certainly increase the demand for guidance and counselling through computer applications. In other words, distance learning will surely necessitate distance guidance and counselling.

Conclusion

From all indications, it is observed that changing trend in the economy and the labour market call for scholars, educators, educational institutions, the government, policy makers, organizations and so on to brainstorm on possible creativities and innovations towards the development and the improvement of the economy as well as the nation's stability. In the area of creativity and innovation in Guidance and Counselling education, several approaches have been undertaken to see to the development of the nation via career Guidance Counselling and other related topics that can be of benefit to students and the nation as well.

At diaspora, several approaches are practiced which yielded positive result in career guidance. On this note, borrowed new ideas from other countries could be of immense benefit, for it is said that knowledge is power, and no knowledge is lost.

Recommendations

Arising from the issues raised, recommendations are hereby proffered to enhance the quality of service delivery via ICT in counselling.

1. Telephone guidance should not be seen as a distinct field of specialization but an integral part of the innovation and creativity in counselling.
2. There should be continued up-date of the counsellors' knowledge and skills in order to remain relevant in this modern age science and technology.
3. Counsellors should be computer compliant by way of in-service training
4. Telephone helplines should be funded by the Federal and State Governments as it is done in developed world so as to reduce financial burden on counsellors.

References

Ahn, J. (2011). The Effect of Social Network Sites on Adolescents' Social AND Academic Development: Current theories and controversies. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology,* 62(8): 1432 - 1445.

Ali, B. A. (2002). The *Effect of Guidance Services on Students Academic Performance*. Unpublished M.ed Thesis, ABU Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Anthony, K. (2003). "The use and role of technology in counselling and psychotherapy". In S. Gross and K. Anthony (Ed). *Technology in Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Practitioner's Guide*" (pp. 23-35) Houndmild Hilgrave Macmillan.

Barak, A., Hen, L., Boneil-Nissien, M. & Shapira, N. (2008). A Comprehensive Review and a Meta-analysis of the Effectiveness of Internet-based Psychotherapeutic Intervention. *Journal of Technology in Human Services,* 26(2): 109 – 160. Available at doi:10.1080/15228830802094429. Retrieved on 8th March, 2019.

Faders, S. (2018). The Different Methods of Counselling. Available at www.betterhelp.com. Retrieved on 8th March, 2019.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National Policy on Education* (6th edition). Lagos: NERDC Press.

Freeze, T. B. (2015). A Qualitative Study of Proactive Use of Traditional Counselling Methods: The Perception of Teachers in Education. *Journal of Guidance and Counselling.* Available at http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca. Retrieved on 8th March, 2019.

Mayor, P. and Binde, J. (2001). *The World Ahead: Our Future in the Making*. London: Zed Books.

Naouel, M. A. (2008). "Guidance and counselling to enhance lifelong learning in Algeria", Unpublished Ph.D thesis.

Nwachukwu, D. N. (2007). *The Teacher Counsellor for Today's School.* Calabar: University of Calabar Press.

Okorodudu, R. I. (2001). *Information and Communication Technology in Counselling*, Abraka: Delta State University Press.

Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2000). "*Why Career Information Guidance and Counselling Matter for Public Policy*?" OECD Press.

Otuka, J. O. E. (2016). Creativity and Inventions: The Role of Functional educational to the Target Group. *Journal of Teachers Perspectives*, 10 (2). 222 – 231.

Robinson, K. (2001). *Out of our Mind: Learning to be Creative*. London: Capstone Publishers.

Sampson, J. P. (2000). "Computer application in C. E Watkins Jr. and V. L. Campbell (Eds). *Testing and Assessment in Counselling Practice* (2nd Ed., pp. 514 – 517) Mahwah, N. J. Lawrence Erbium.

Tambuwal, M. C. (2010). *Organizing and Administering Guidance and Counselling Programme at the Elementary School Level for Effective Performance*. A Paper Delivered at 4 Day Workshop for Para-counselling Officers by the SUBEB in Collaboration with SSCOE, Sokoto.

Tinio, V. L. (2012). *ICT in Education*, http:lllwww.eprimors.org. Accessed on 10th June, 2018.

Watling, S. and Rogers, J. (2012). *Social Work in a Digital Society*. Sage Publication, London.