THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

ADA ANYAMENE (PROF)
Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

AND

CHINYERE CATHERINE NGWAKWE
Department of Guidance and Counselling/Psychology
School of Education
Federal College of Education [Tech] Gombe
P.M.B 060 Gombe, Gombe state, Nigeria
Email: chinyerenwosu57@gmail.com
08030994606

Abstract

This paper examined the role of vocational guidance in enhancing sustainable development among secondary school students in Nigeria. The paper was able to discuss some of the problems secondary school student used to encounter in the course of choosing their vocational careers. It also explained how vocational guidance and counselling will help the students to come out of such problems. The meaning of sustainable development were discussed as well as the aims and objective of vocational guidance. The roles of vocational guidance in sustaining development were equally explained. Recommendations were made among which are that the federal, state and local governments should provide a clear vision and mission for Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education in Nigeria. They should also increase funding of Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education programmes at all levels of education among others.

Key: Vocational, Guidance, Counselling, Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

The problem of choosing, preparing and entering into vocational careers have existed since the dawn of civilization. Vocational development process involves sociological, cultural, psychological and economic ingredients which results in outcomes that are effective in vocational behaviour, vocational maturity, decision-making and ability. Thus as physical and intellectual development can be prevented from growing if appropriate interventions are

not applied, so can the normal developmental process of vocational development be stunted if appropriate interventions are not available in a planned, systematic way. There are specific skills that should be constructed and maintained throughout the life span in order to deal with career choice and management tasks at any given point in time (Bethel-Eke & Okwelle, 2017). The skills includes; a well-defined self-concept, knowledge of self-attributes, broad knowledge of the world of work, detailed knowledge and reality testing of occupations under consideration, awareness of the need to plan ahead, decision-making skill, knowledge and use of appropriate resources for career decision making. This set of skills, indicative of career maturity, can be used again and again in the changeable 21st century work environment.

One of the primary goals of functional education system is to equip its products with the necessary skills and values for productive living. In pursuance of the goal, the Federal Government of Nigeria determines to make Nigerian education relevant to the life of the individual (FRN, 2013) consequently, schools are set at the various levels of education to translate the government vision into reality. At the primary and post primary levels, the schools are expected to provide the tripartite functions of administration, instruction and guidance and counselling service (Bethel-Eke & Okwelle).

Guidance and Counselling services could be said to be the life wire of any educational system which is development perse. It is rather disheartening that the prominence given to e-learning, Information Communication Technology and Library service under Section 11 of the National Policy of Education (2009) was not given to Guidance and Counselling. Despite, this pit-fall, guidance and counselling in Nigeria has made impact in Nation building and development these past 51 years to meet the philosophy and national goals as stipulated in the National Policy on Education. These goals are the building of:

- A free and democratic society
- A just and egalitarian society,
- A united, strong and self-relevant nation,
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2009)

Mikaye (2012) says that guidance and counselling is important because it provides an insight on working knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is necessary to assist young people to be disciplined and be able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their ever changing environment. To understand themselves, their academic social and physical environment, realize their potentials, as well as identify opportunities in a world where

chances for further training, employment and advancement continue to dwindle. Learners are counselled to alter any maladjusted behaviour. Since most citizens are involved in education process directly or indirectly, the impact of guidance and counselling is real to them. Human needs necessitate new inventions. Although guidance and counselling was focused on career development, contemporary socio-economic issues (such as unemployment, drug, unstable families, truancy) have necessitated the incorporation of professional guidance and counselling in secondary schools. This is because guidance and counselling is safe to apply for holistic development of students, their behaviour notwithstanding.

Ayieko (2012) says guidance and counselling plays a pivotal role in students' behaviour management and correction in schools. Counselling can be used both as a curative measure in addressing school discipline and to avert and/ or correct indiscipline among students. Guidance and counselling may be provided holistically in secondary schools. Guidance and Counselling services, according to Anwana (2010), are designed to enable an individual to gain self-understanding of himself as well as his self- direction. The services are offered by a counsellor who is professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge to assist the client. Over the years, counselling services have been adopted at the primary and post primary school levels in Nigeria, and they have been found to play a good complementary role to other school programmes. It is assumed that with the increasing complexities in the society, the growth of industrial and technological development, most students find it difficult to adjust themselves to the school challenges, the society expectations, selecting and entering into sustainable occupations as well as adjusting to satisfactory family roles (Ilgar, 2004). He observed that within the school, students have counselling needs ranging from educational, personal-social and vocational which if not properly handled, may lead to their maladjustment or frustrations in their later lives.

Ilgar (2004) proposed that it is common to state that students choose subjects of study which have little relationship with their vocational goals, with the result that many people get a traumatic shock when they find that they have not prepared themselves for the career which they wanted to enter. So such mistakes are to be realized very late in an individual's life time. Educationally, guidance and counselling services help the students adapt to school, make educational decisions and choices by informing them about educational facilities (Imoiboho, 2014). They help the students choose the most appropriate elective course (Canel, 2007). An organized programme of vocational guidance assists students in taking decisions wisely and realistically. Bethel-Eke and Okwelle (2017) asserted that vocational guidance may be seen as a process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of

himself, and of his role in the world of work, as well as to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality with satisfaction to him and benefit to society. The secondary school stage is an important step for acquiring desired positive personality features and getting ready for secondary school and vocational orientation (Canel, 2007).

Guidance and counselling in these early years were considered to be mostly vocational in nature, but as the profession advanced other personal concerns became part of the school counsellors agenda. Vocational guidance was spreading throughout the country, so that by 1918 more than 900 high schools had some type of vocational guidance system. Early vocational guidance counsellors were often teachers appointed to assume the extra duties of the position in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities. The 1920s and 1930s saw an expansion of counselling roles beyond working only with vocational concerns. Social, personal, and educational aspects of a student's life also needed attention.

The Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been defined by many in various ways. Adebola (2007) defined sustainable development as a kind of development that can be initiated and managed properly in such a way as to give attention to continuity and preservation as people explore an explicit available resources for the enlargement of their existence. Ugoh (2008) described sustainable development as a construct, which envision development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. Osuafor (2010) posited that for development to be sustained there must be human development. According to Arogundade (2011) the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development should include,

(1) Improving the quality of basic education

(2) Reorienting existing education programme to address sustainable development.

(3) Developing public awareness and understanding, and

(4) Providing training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Ugoh further argued that continued sustainable development is only possible or assured when concrete steps are taken to make the youth acquire skills that will enable them to be self-reliant and therefore become the tools for achieving development and its sustainability.

UNESCO (2002) alludes to Education for Sustainable Development as a process which prepares people of all walks of life to plan for, cope with and find solutions for issues that threaten the sustainability of our planet. According to UNESCO, understanding and

addressing the global issues of sustainability that affect individual nations and communities are at the heart of Education for Sustainable Development. UNESCO further explains that these issues come from the three spheres of Sustainable Development, which are: Environment, Society and Economy. It should be observed that environmental issues like water and waste affect every nation, as do social issues like employment, human rights gender equity, peace and human security. In addition, we should affirm that every nation wants to improve the livelihood of its people by addressing political and economic issues such as poverty reduction and other major concerns and challenges like HIV and AIDS pandemic, migrations, urbanisation, and refugees, which have grabbed global attention.

The Nations of the World therefore, through the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution to establish a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), whose objectives were to facilitate needs and networking among stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development, to foster increased quality of teaching in Education for Sustainable Development, and to develop strategies at every level to strengthen capacity in Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2002). The UNESCO module on guidance and counselling (2002) also posited that Guidance is a programme of services to individuals based on their needs and the influence of environmental factors. Guidance and counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities, programmes and services geared toward assisting individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions. As explained by Mubanga (2014), the need for counselling services today could be due to the ever- growing complexity of the society and people have to learn how to cope with the upcoming challenges.

The unprecedented expansion of educational institutions and first generation learners create a number of psychological problems that are personal, vocational and social. Guidance and counselling plays a vital role in preventing educational, personal, social, mental emotional and other similar problems among secondary school students. Ministry of education and principals of secondary schools are aware of the heavy reliance placed on guidance and counselling services. These services are presented by Nwachukwu (2007) as information services, placement services, appraisal services, vocational guidance services, counselling services, referral services, evaluation, follow-up, consultancy and research services. As a vital component of any type and any level of education the absence of non utilization of these services in the present day secondary school system has led to the unprecedented rise in the crime wave, violence among students, severe value erosion, wrong

career choice, and wrong subject combination among other issues. Mutie and Ndambuki (2014) asserted that counselling service is the brain and heart of the guidance programme. Thus counselling represents a part of the total process of guidance which is helping individuals, achieve the self- understanding and self- direction necessary to make the maximum adjustment in a particular environment. In a democratic country like Nigeria every citizen has to play a pivotal role in the upliftment of the nation.

Therefore, it is generally agreed that a citizen must be educated in such a way that it would develop certain desirable life skills, attitudes and values in him for manifestation of his own self as well as for the progress of the nation. It may enrich his intellectual and social skills helpful to lead a purposeful and successful life. Life skills based education helps students understand themselves, their friends and their world. Effective counselling services need to be based on a complete understanding and acceptance of students experiences (Mutie &Ndambuki, 2014). Therefore, all students would require counselling services in order to develop their academic, vocational, social and personal competencies. Effective counselling will enable them to deal with psychological problems they may experience and make rational decisions on how to solve or cope with the academic, vocational, social and personal challenges. It helps an individual to acquire skills and attitudes, which make him or her properly adjusted person in life situations.

Mohanty (2003) points out that the increasing educational institutions are of many kinds and vocations as well as occupations are of different types. Choice of career or vocation is an important event in the life of an individual. The selection of a wrong vocation can lead to unhappiness, discontent and ultimate failure, because the occupation that the person follows is not merely a means of earning a livelihood. So the vocational choice is an important event in one's academic and career pursuit. The vocational guidance is provided by the consultants so that a student can easily select an appropriate occupation or education which goes well with their capabilities, skills and interest. The Paris 2001 International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) Declaration on Educational and Vocational Guidance declared guidance and counselling services to be essential in meeting personal, social and economic development needs and to encourage further sustainable development in a knowledge based society. The Paris 2001 IAEVG Declaration on Educational and Vocational Guidance also affirmed the importance of research by asserting the effectiveness of guidance services should be monitored through regular evaluation and relevant research studies (Mubanga, 2014).

The Concept of Vocational Guidance

Vocational guidance is referred to as the various process of assisting someone to accept and develop an organized picture of himself and to advance a good role in his or her work place (Imoiboho, 2014). Imoiboho stated further that it provides for a special aim and objective. It helps individuals to finding realistic, satisfying, and interesting roles in their environment. Vocational guidance services therefore, refers to those services that assist students/individuals to make judicious educational, training and, occupational choice and to manage their career (Anwana, 2010). Anwana listed the following activities:-

(a) To assist students within schools to clarify career goals, understand world of work and develop career management skills. (b) To provide for individual and group guidance. To assist students with decision making regarding initial courses of vocations, training and further education and job choices. (c) To have an organized and systematic support of community members and to provide occupational and educational advice and information to students. In the view of Anwana (2010), the concept of vocational guidance and counselling refers to expert assistance and support with the aim to help the individual to :- (a) Explore, analyze and develop the factors constituting their self concept (Interests, personal qualities, characteristics, skills among others (b) Explore, evaluate, process and classify information into alternative education and vocational pathways with respect to both their needs and choice to labour market requirement. (c) Interpret information about education and vocational career with information derived from self observation so that they develop decision making capabilities both with respect to their orientation in education and choice in occupation(s) befitting their particular psycho-social makeup. (d) Create and implement their own education and vocational plans. Ultimately, the individual will be able to make the correct choice with respect to their future occupation/ Vocation and thus live a fulfilled and active life. Since a guidance programme is concerned with meeting students' needs, it can be structured only as a service to help the student in the identification of his abilities, aptitude, interests and attitudes. It also involves assisting him to understand, accept, utilize his traits and provides him with opportunities for learning about areas of occupational and educational endeavours and to help him in obtaining experiences which will enable him in making free and wise choices. It helps him in developing his potentials to the optimum so that he may become the individual he is capable of becoming and lastly to help him in becoming self directive.

Udofia and Sam (2009) opined that vocational guidance is the process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare, enter and progress in it. It is concerned with

helping individuals make right decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career effecting satisfactory vocational adjustment. According to Udofia and Sam (2009), the main purpose of vocational guidance is to serve the individual and society, to prevent maladjustment and dissatisfaction so as to ensure efficient use of man power that will lead to sustainable development. To provide Print based and Computer based services to disseminate information about jobs, careers, vocational training, and help individual make a career decision well. Organized vocational guidance services are important both to the education system and labour market as well as their interface. Within the education system, vocational education has an important role to play in laying the foundation of a life-long career development. These include knowledge, competencies regarding self – awareness, the world of work and making career decisions and transitions. Vocational guidance helps individuals to acquire knowledge in the following areas:- Self awareness, exploration of the world of work and mature decision making (Kaur, 2005).

Functions of Vocational Guidance Service

Yuksel (2007) describe the following as the various functions of vocational guidance service.

1) Adjustment- It helps the student to make appropriate adjustment in an educational institution, work, home and community.

2) Orientation- It helps the student in career planning and long term personal goals.

3) Development- It helps the student to get rid of his problems, check maladjustments and contribute to his self development, self realization and natural development thus furthering the welfare of the society. It is therefore an important instrument of national development. Vocational guidance at secondary school level concerns with the development of proper vocational attitude (Imoiboho, 2014). It is concerned with helping student in planning broad education and vocational direction not necessarily constituting to final choice but selecting probable broad zone of direction of interest for future exploration and study. Imoiboho (2014) opined that students are usually ready for exploration somewhat more vocational in tone, but he is not yet ready to choose and plan for special occupation. Dissemination of occupational information to students in secondary schools should be considered enough as part of vocational guidance. Just orientation to the world of work should be considered sufficient. Collecting and dissemination of information about students abilities, aptitude, interest, personal characteristic are important .The psychological tests and observations records knowledge about students should be gathered and discussed to them. Each student should be

helped in developing a picture of his personality profile. Students should be helped to crystallize their self concept.

The Aims of Vocational Guidance and Counselling

According to Comfort (2013), Nigeria's National Master-plan (Blue print) for guidance and counselling and vocational education explained the objectives of formal guidance and counselling and vocational education to include:

1) Pre-vocational education in primary and secondary schools for general technological awareness, acquisition of technical literacy and general technical versatility;

2) Vocational education in job specific vocational schools for the production of craftsmen level manpower;

3) Vocational education in polytechnic institutions for the production of technician/technologist level; and professional education in university level for the production of manpower at professional level. When all these aims are being put in place in appropriate manners in which it was stated, it will automatically produce students who will help in the development of the country in order to sustain the improvement of the country's economy.

The Role of Vocational Guidance in enhancing Sustainable Development

Vocational Guidance and Counselling has an important role to play in raising the quality of work and quality of its students and graduates, increasing job satisfaction and motivating workers as well as enhancing productivity (Baba & Umar, 2014). In the new economic development therefore, Vocational Guidance and Counselling is expected to produce an educated, skilled and motivated workforce for sustainable development and nation's growth.Vocational Guidance Service is about the guidance of development of individuals and that of the economy. In this regard, Vocational Guidance and Counselling is viewed as an indispensable instrument for economic development because Vocational Guidance and Counselling helps to bring about empowerment improves a nation's economy, provides job opportunities, reduces crime rates and encourages creativity and competiveness that enhances nation building. Vocational Guidance and Counselling facilitates the adjustment of the skills and knowledge of man to the changing demands within society. Skill and knowledge as well as social values acquired through Guidance and Counselling allow an individual to manipulate the natural and physical environment, making life more useful and improving sustainable scientific, technological and economic development (Baba & Umar, 2014).

Through Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education provides goods and services are easily available thus, giving rise to high standard of living among the citizens of a nation. No doubt, Vocational Guidance and Counselling service is a veritable tool that cannot be ignored as it equips secondary school students with necessary skills for self-employment and ability to employ others for the development of a nation. It is in recognition of the changing role of Vocational Guidance and Counselling services in the world's economic order that different countries have come up with different frameworks towards repositioning their Guidance and Counselling and Vocational Education programmes. According to Alexandrou (2009), the French National Assembly enacted a law on social modernization which contains important measures concerning Vocational Guidance and Counselling services the right to employment and reported that the government of Denmark made efforts to increase the number of training places with emphasis on social and practical skills development. In Germany, use of the objectives of the country's education reform is to promote the vocational education of gifted young people and to raise the standard of Vocational Guidance and Counselling Educations. The role of guidance and counselling to teacher trainees can be classified into two. In the first instance, the provision of a broad based and functional guidance and counselling will assist the teacher-trainees to explore and understand themselves so that they can become self- directing and reliant individuals.

Secondly, it will afford their students the opportunity to learn vocational education from a teacher who properly understands himself and his environment. This self-understanding is essential and imperative because individuals who understand themselves and their world are usually more effective, more productive, happier and healthier human beings. This is because through guidance and counselling services individuals would achieve greater awareness of themselves. It could thus be said that provision of guidance and counselling services along with other pedagogical programmes in Vocational Education will help among others to:

(1) Develop in teacher-trainees an awareness of opportunities in their personal, social, educational and vocational areas by providing them with appropriate useful and usable information.

(2) Help the under-achievers to use their potentials to the maximum.

(3) Help teacher-trainees to acquire useful knowledge and skills necessary for survival.

(4) Work with the parents/guardians with a view to assisting them to understand the needs and problems of their children/wards in acquiring Vocational Education among others.

Conclusion

Vocational guidance and counselling services have been identified as indispensable tools of assisting secondary school students in adjusting for life actualization which can lead to sustainable development. Counselling services rendered in secondary school settings enhance students realization of potentialities for functional living. Vocational guidance and counselling services also help reduce un-employment in the labour market which is to say that when these secondary school students are properly guided, they will be able to choose a career that will not only benefit them but will go a long way in sustaining the economy of the nation.

Recommendations

To achieve sustainable development in Nigeria, through the implementation of Vocational Guidance and Counselling services in the secondary schools, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The federal, state and local governments should provide a clear vision and mission for Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education in Nigeria.
2. They should also increase funding of Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education programmes at all levels.
3. Government should partner with the private sector to maintain and expand Vocational Guidance and Counselling Education programmes in Nigeria.
4. Vocational Guidance and Counselling rehabilitation and recreational centres should be set up in various secondary schools and communities where counselling services should be obtained. Group counselling sessions/workshops/seminars should be held there for students, youths and other interested members of the public.
5. Government should diversify school curriculums and re-align them towards Education for Sustainable Development. This will in turn provide students with opportunities to choose options according to their interests. In the end Education for Sustainable Development would be attained.

References

Alexandrou, A. (2009). *Union learning representatives: Challenges and opportunities,* London: Routledge.

Anwana, U.I. (2010). *Guidance and counselling*. Enugu: Academic publishing Company.

Arogundade, B.B (2011). Entrepreneurship education: An imperative for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studying, 2*(1), 26-29.

Ayieko, J.S. (2012). Solving discipline problems in Kenyan secondary schools. *Journal of sustainable development in Africa,10*(2), 91 – 115.

Baba, M.M. & Nasir, U. (2014). Roles of guidance and counselling in vocational and technology education. *Journal of Research in Education and Society, 5*(2), 18-25.

Bethel-Eke, O. A. & Okwelle, P.C. (2017). Appraisal of vocational guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in River State. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development, 5*(4), 7-14

Bryan, H. & William, B. (2012).Where to from here? Guidance and counselling connection with TVET in UNESCO (2002) technical and vocational training in twenty first century–New roles and challenges for guidance and counselling. USA: UNESCO

Canel, A.N. (2007). *The place and importance of guidance services in education.* Cape Town: Juta Press.

Comfort, W.A**.** (2013). Evaluation of employers perception of the role of Guidance and Counselling and Vocational Education. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science 4*(4), 461-468.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009). *National Policy of Education*, Lagos, NERDC Press 4th Edition.

Imoiboho, S.U (2014). Appraisal of guidance and counselling services in schools and non-school settings in Nigeria: The way forward. *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction, 7*(1), 1-7.

Kaur, R. (2005). Career maturity of school children. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology,* 31, 1-2.

Ilgar, Z. (2004). The main types of guidance.*International Journal of Instruction* 1 (2), 39-56.

Mikaye, M.A.O. (2012). *Beautify Islam: Parent and their Role in the Upbringing of children*. Retrieved online 20th February, 2017 at *www.beautifulislam.net/family/upbringing-children.htm*

Mubanga, D.S. (2014). *Investigating the role of guidance and counselling in education for sustainable development*. M. A. Dissertation in M.Ed. Special Education. University of Zambia.

Mutie, E. K. & Ndambuki, P. (2014). *Guidance and Counselling for Schools and Colleges*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press Nottingham: The University of Nottingham Best.

Nwachukwu, D.N. (2007). *The teacher counsellor for today's school*. Calabar University of Calabar Press.)

Osuafor, A.M., Okeke, S.O & Nnorom, N.R. (2010). Strategies for and challenges to entrepreneurship education in science for sustainable development.

Udofia, N.A. & Sam, S.S. (2009). Entrepreneurship education and vocational counselling in schools in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. *Journal of Educational Development*, *12*(1), 140 -155.

Ugoh, S.C. (2008). Oil Politics and Crisis of Development on the Niger Delta. *Unizik Orient Journal of Education. 5*(1), 30-37.

Yuksel, S.F. (2007). The effect of some variables on the school headmasters‟ level of duty expectation of the school counselors. *Egitim ve Bilim Dergisi*, *27*(123), 13-21.