



THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDINAL CHANGE THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria is in Africa not only for her richness and abundance of resources, nor is it for her population/economic advancement, nor her ability to live together for so long despite the diversity, but for the attitude and images created by Nigerians living abroad and those within. Despite the abundant human and material resources available to the country, many are still wallowing in abject poverty and deprivation. Attitude is a way of thinking or feeling about something. Many Nigerians have lost their dignity and integrity; corruption and other social vices have eluded the country; value for money, power and materialism are the order of the day. The attitude of Nigerians has gone so badly that issues of corruption, money laundering, kidnapping, religious intolerance, and value change have arisen. Have become the new normal and form part of the attitudes that require adjustment among Nigerians. However, the policies put in place by the government at different times have yielded no significant success because they were not well channelled. Hence, the a need for counselling intervention through teacher education. This study focused on and discussed concepts such as counselling, goals and scope of guidance and counselling, building the right attitude through education, teacher education in contemporary society, the purpose of teacher education in Nigeria and the place of guidance and counselling in teacher education. It was concluded that teacher education should be strengthened to produce better teachers who are morally up to the task, and to have a better product out of teacher training institutions. The role of counsellors in schools and guidance and counselling services cannot be overemphasised. It was, however, suggested among others that education should be made functional at all levels.

Keywords: Guidance, Counselling, Society, Attitude, Positive Attitudinal Change, Teacher Education.

Introduction

Nigeria is a well-known country in Africa not only for her richness and abundance of resources, nor is it for her population/economic advancement, nor her ability to live together for so long despite the diversity, but for the attitude and images created by Nigerians living abroad and those within. Attitude is a way of thinking or feeling about something. The attitude of Nigerians has gone so badly that issues of corruption, money laundering, kidnapping, religious intolerance, and value change make up attitudes that require adjustment among Nigerians (Akorede et al., 2022). The rate at which people kill each other these days is worrisome, either for rituals, for money or nonpayment of ransom or even indirectly through corruption in terms of policies, road and building constructions. Another bewildering thing is the way society celebrates these people, which tends to normalise the abnormal acts. People are ready to do anything and everything for money. Students no longer see pride in studying to pass. Nobody wants to work hard to make money. Most people now want to do minimal jobs and earn a lot of money. An average secondary school student will say “*school is a scam*” since they have dubious ways to make easy money. Politicians, traditional rulers and some religious leaders prefer to keep money in various places in their houses instead of the bank, causing a shortage of money in circulation. Parents will force their children to study courses they are never interested in at the University, which eventually results in dropout or underachievement.

Meanwhile, despite the abundant human and material resources available to the country, many are still wallowing in abject poverty and deprivation. Many Nigerians have lost their dignity and integrity; corruption and other social vices elude the country; value for money, power and materialism become the order of the day. Having realised these, governments at different times have put in place different policies and programs. For

instance, the former President Shehu Shagari, during his administration, created the Ministry of Ethical Revolution in 1983. The major objective was to guide the national morality. On coming to power in 1984, General Muhammadu Buhari introduced the War Against Indiscipline (WAI). When General Babangida came to power in 1987, he created the Directorate for Social Mobilisation. Due to a change in government, these measures could not last. During the Yar'adua administration, Late Prof. Dora Akunyili, the then minister for information and communication, initiated a program tagged "Re-branding Nigeria", the program aimed at modifying and re-orientating Nigerians to always think and act positively to gain a positive image both at home and abroad. The immediate past first lady, Patience Jonathan, also tried a peace initiative program, which was nicknamed her MAMA peace. During the same regime, a policy of whistleblowing was also introduced. However, the policies put in place by the government at different times have yielded no significant success because they were not well channelled. Hence, there is a need for counselling interventions through teacher education.

Concept of Counselling

In the opinion of Buhari, Barakat and Aboyeji (2017), Counselling is a helping relationship, a process that occurs in one-on-one interactions between a person who is facing issues that he cannot handle alone and a professional who has the expertise and experience necessary to assist others in finding solutions to a variety of personal difficulties. Egbochukuin Buhari, Aboyeji and Barakat (2020) see counselling as a procedure whereby an uninvolved individual helps a distressed person (client) feel and act in a more personally fulfilling way (the counsellor) who offers the client knowledge and responses that encourage the development of behaviours that allow him to deal with himself and his surroundings more effectively. From the above, counselling is viewed as a two-person interaction between a counsellor and a client that takes place in a professional context and is started and maintained to help a client make good behavioural changes. The demand for systematic school guidance and counselling increases as society grows more complicated. For the purpose of making informed decisions, developing suitable plans, and making the best use of their abilities, students need the assistance of a counsellor. A program called guidance and counselling offers services to people in accordance with their needs, knowledge of their immediate environment, how that environment impacts them, and the unique features of each institution. It is intended to support each person's ability to adapt to their surroundings, grow in their capacity for setting reasonable goals, and advance in their education.

Building the Right Attitude through Education

Education is the brain of any nation. It catalyses national development and necessary condition for national survival. Education, therefore, is seen as the transformer of undeveloped manpower resources of the nation into the productive process of any society. It equips people with the needed knowledge, skills, techniques and information for the improvement of the national economy. This requires the best hands in the process.

The education of any particular society at a particular time is the culture in which the people of that society operate at that time. Education is seen as culture, a process or a product (Amaele, 2001). Critical analysis of education reveals that it is an attempt to develop the personality of the child/adult learner and equip them as a member of society. Education, according to Fafunwa (2004), is the culmination of all the processes that a child or young adult goes through to develop all the skills and attitudes that are of positive value to him and the society where he belongs. This follows that the concept of learning, training and upbringing are not the same as education but are components of the all-embracing concept of education. Education involves the development of an individual, morally, physically, mentally, intellectually, socially and spiritually, such that the person is of the best use to himself and the society he belongs to. So, for any positive attitudinal change in Nigeria, a functional education system is the key, and this can be ensured through counselling and functional teacher education.

There is a complex relationship between the culture, values and customs of the society and its system of education. The concept of education as a change agent in society is enormously complicated by the fact that the educational system is itself a part of the changing society. So while society is changing, it is expected that we have a changing educational system too. The curriculum and contents of over twenty years are still in place at basic and post-basic education levels in the country. The child is born into a society that has a culture, and the primary function of education is to prepare the child to be a potential and functional member of the society.

Amaele (2001) said that culture determines education as education determines the personality of the individual. The individual child is influenced by and influences his environment through continuous interaction, and this helps in the development of the individual. Thus, if the environment influences the individual negatively and /or otherwise, then the individual reciprocates in the same manner and vice versa.

Education as a social institution performs diverse functions in order to assist the individual and society in achieving their expectations. These functions were summarised by Amaele (2001) as:

- i. Conservative functions: education helps to preserve the society's dominant culture (skills, facts, procedures, values, norms, concepts and images of approved behaviour from one generation to another.
- ii. Innovative function: education as a social organisation is expected to be a vital source of new ideas and knowledge. Therefore, education should initiate social change, and society is to follow.
- iii. Socialisation process: the child is expected to be a member of the community, but not a member of the society, until they have learnt the norms of the society through education. Only then he as an individual, is he adopted into the immediate environment.
- iv. Political Function: Political education helps the individual to acquire values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour about the generalisation, distribution and exercise of power in society. Since individuals who make up the society come from diverse sub-cultural units, knowledge of a new culture will help to promote national integration and consciousness. This is likely to result in respecting the views, ideas, values and norms of others.
- v. Economic Function: functional education helps to improve the economic situation of the people who acquire it; education is used to select people who are expected to have some attitude, skills and technical know-how which will result in greater productivity and economic advancement.
- vi. Selective and Allocative Functioning: Education has helped by providing the manpower needed for the economy in different sectors. It is considered a sieve for selecting and directing people to diverse areas of interest and levels of operation based on their training, experience and qualification/certification.

Teacher Education in Contemporary Society

Teachers' work is to teach, whether as a hobby, a job, or a career. In general, a teacher who has not received professional training cannot teach successfully. This is because teaching aims to instil desired changes in behaviour rather than only influencing disconnected facts. Effective teaching may be enhanced if the educational system provides enough resources for both the teachers and the pupils. This might be accomplished by first offering effective teacher preparation programs that produce, attract, and keep the best teachers in our schools. The success of any nation's education, therefore, depends largely on its quality of production, for education is supposed to be man-oriented. Education, therefore, is expected to address critical issues like dignity of labour, quality leadership, committed followership, industrial unrest, political stability, religious extremism and tribalism that are the order of the day in Nigeria. It is important to use education to develop practical skills in medicine, agriculture, and resource management. It is anticipated to have a significant impact on the rule of law, national cohesion, and most importantly, Nigerians' moral growth. This can only be accomplished by an educated instructor. Incidentally, no education, no matter how beautifully designed or how well its visions intend, can be attained without well-equipped, visionary and committed teachers. The teacher is the life wire of any education system. This point was aptly observed by the Nation's policy makers in education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) clearly stated that "*no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers*". Based on this, a well-purposeful, articulated, directed, funded, equipped, supervised and managed teacher education is a necessary condition for positive attitudinal change among the people.

Purpose of Teacher Education in Nigeria

According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), the following describes the goal of teacher education in Nigeria:

- i. To develop effective classroom teachers with high levels of motivation for all levels of our educational system.
- ii. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- iii. To strengthen teachers' commitment to national goals and to assist them in integrating into the community and society at large.
- iv. To provide teachers with the knowledge and experience necessary for their position and to develop their capacity for adaptation to any changing circumstance, both within their own country and in the wider globe.
- v. To strengthen teachers' dedication to their careers as teachers.

The teacher is the key in the entire education program, for the teacher may make or mar the best educational fact. No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. This fact emphasises that teacher education must be directed by the general objective of education. Consequently, the purpose of education in any nation will be focused on the nation's philosophy of life. As it is in the FRN (2014), "*... no policy on education can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and objectives of the nation*". The national objective of education in Nigeria, however, is to build a:

- i. Free and democratic society
- ii. Just and egalitarian society
- iii. A united and strong society
- iv. Great and dynamic economy
- v. Land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

If the purpose of teacher education is strengthened, the attitude of the average Nigerian towards our religious differences, ethnic differences and language differences would be positive and to our advantage. As part of the national aims and objectives of education, in line with the national philosophy, are to:

- i. Inculcate national consciousness and national unity;
- ii. Inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- iii. Train the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
- iv. Acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the nation (FRN, 2004).

The Nigerian teacher education is aimed at producing the required manpower to fulfil the laudable aims and objectives of our education to be fulfilled. This means that if the teacher education program is faulty, curriculum implementation will also be faulty, and consequently, the achievement of the aims and objectives of education will fail. Amaele (2011) opined that teacher education is aimed at equipping teachers with the following characteristics:

- i. The ability to arouse and maintain students' interest in the course of study
- ii. He can communicate ideas in a clear, lucid, logical and organised manner
- iii. He can help students develop appropriate skills throughout the period of study
- iv. The teachers' ability to help the students develop their thinking process
- v. He can motivate students towards achievement

- vi. The teacher is enthusiastic, flexible, friendly and altruistic
- vii. He shows good perception and knowledge of his subject matter
- viii. He has high explanatory power with his ability to make theoretical explanations more practical and abstract concepts more concrete.
- ix. The teacher shows concern for students as persons, but firm in his dealings; he can create a conducive environment for learning.
- x. He is fair in his assessment and grading of students
- xi. He is well-balanced emotionally, healthy and physically sound.

Above all, being morally upright and allowing this to be transparent in all his dealings both within and outside the classroom is essential. For the teachers to be effective and efficient with these characteristics, there is something more to it, and that is, functional and effective “*guidance and counselling services*” in teacher training institutions across the country.

The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Teacher Education for Positive Attitudes

In a one-on-one setting, counselling is a process that helps people. Two individuals, one faced with a challenge which he cannot cope with alone, and the other, a Professional with the qualifications and abilities to assist others in finding answers to various personal problems. From the above, counselling is seen as an interaction which occurs between two individuals, called a Counsellor and a client, this occurs in a professional setting and is started and maintained to help a client's behaviour change for the better. A counsellor, therefore, is a professionally qualified person who provides useful services to clients based on their needs, the understanding of their immediate environment and influences. In the process of self-understanding, planning, decision-making, and coping with the obstacles that are relevant to their developmental phases. Counsellors assist clients in identifying and defining resources and environmental opportunities.

Goals of Counselling

The aims of providing counselling as identified by Mc-Daniel (1990) and outlined in Buhari, Aboyeji and Brakat (2020) are to: Foster psychological development of the client; assist client to explore the environment and be the architects of their lives; Facilitate wise choices and decision by clients; Become purposefully self-directed; Assist client to be able to handle future concerns independently; Guide clients to have absolute for one's own and other people's value and dignity; and assist clients to become self-actualized (p.88).

With these goals the teachers will be in their stable and balanced mental health thus able to perform their role efficiently and effectively; the students including pre-service teachers will develop attitude of exploring the environment and be the best they ever wanted to be; they will have ability to make independent choices and decisions they will never regret; and average Nigerian will be able to respect themselves and others then have respect for the rule of Law and be patriotic citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Scope of Guidance and Counselling

The demand for systematic school guidance and counselling increases as society grows more complicated. To be able to make informed decisions, proper plans, and to fully utilise their skills, students need the help of a guidance counsellor. Guidance is intended to aid each person in adjusting to their surroundings, growing in their capacity to set reasonable goals for themselves, and advancing in their education. Guidance and counselling cover three major aspects of human life, these are: Educational/Academic, Vocational/Career, as well as Personal/Social aspects of an individual.

Positive Attitude and Educational/Academic

According to Buhari et al. (2020), educational guidance and counselling are focused on helping students make decisions about, and adjust to, the curriculum and school life in general. In order to meet a country's requirement for human resources, it is important to encourage young people to pursue the appropriate kind of education while maintaining the proper balance. For instance, instructors or counsellors ought to assist students in carrying out the following: Recognise the best combinations of academic disciplines or courses;

help students create effective study techniques; help students take their own initiatives; assist students in developing realistic plans for the future; and increase students' knowledge of educational opportunities. All of these can be done with functional teacher education and counselling.

Positive Attitude and Vocational/Career

In view of the importance of appropriate occupational aspiration and ultimate occupational choice, career counselling is indispensable. Vocational guidance is a process that enables people to select a career, get ready for it, begin to practice it, and advance in it. Some of the goals of vocational/career counseling include the following: Making connections between the idea of education in general and the practical side of life particularly the world of work might help pupils become aware of a variety of careers that they can consider; to increase the relevance of educational process to employment needs of the society; and to expose students to ascertain their localities, family backgrounds and other factors that might affect their choices of careers. To ascertain all these, the role of a well-trained teacher who can relate with practical examples in the environment to classroom teaching and learning is essential (Akorede et al., 2022).

Positive Attitude and Intra-Personal/Social Relationships

Personal and Social counselling addresses behavioural issues and emotional discomfort, which could develop if people have trouble managing developmental phases and tasks. Personal and social guidance primarily aids in improving self-awareness, interpersonal skills, manners and etiquette; engage in leisure pursuits, enhance social abilities, cultivate family and familial bonds, as well as understand social roles and obligations. The personal social needs of guidance and counselling in education include:

1. Adjustment needs
2. Help in solving adolescent problems
3. Help inculcate the right values, patriotism and discipline in individuals.

Emotional needs of the individual must be met; if not, undesirable behaviour will result. Counselling service provides an opportunity for individuals to ease their emotional problems by talking them out with the counsellor. Emotional problems include: Insecurities about becoming older, melancholy thoughts when bored at work, excessive guilt over a severe error, worry over a lingering anger after an interpersonal disagreement, career decision, a lack of assertiveness and confidence, and depressive feelings when bored mourning following a loved one's passing, as well as disappointment and loneliness following a parent's divorce (Oladele, 2004). Only a well-trained teacher can easily notice any of these in a student and make an appropriate referral to the counsellor.

Conclusion

The positive attitudinal change expected of Nigerians could be best attained through school and teacher education, for teachers who are considered as foot soldiers to make this happen need to be properly trained. Thus, teacher education should be strengthened to produce better teachers who are morally up to the task. However, to have a better product out of our teacher training institutions, the role of counsellors in schools and guidance and counselling services cannot be overemphasised.

Suggestions

The position of the NPE about school guidance and counselling shows that the government recognises counselling as a helping relationship capable of making any educational system deficient without it. However, it is suggested that:

- i. Education should be made functional; Counsellors should be trained as counsellors, Teachers should be trained as teachers, Artisans should be trained as one, Doctors should be trained as doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Musicians should be trained as such. So that everyone will know their place and function maximally.
- ii. Counsellors in schools should function as counsellors and make their impact felt on the development of the children/students, as entrenched in the scope of guidance and counselling.

- iii. Counsellors should be given their rightful place in the education sector so that their role as a life changer and behaviour modifier will not be lacking in positive attitudinal change among Nigerians.
- iv. Attention should be taken away from our extreme value for money, but reputation, recognition and social impact.
- v. There should be reorientation about our value system, too much value for paper qualification without talent and real experience is killing us as a Nation.
- vi. Teacher training institutions should be given priority, and the best heads admitted into teacher training programs.

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