

Quality of Guidance and Counseling Education in the Face of Insecurity in Public Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

Guidance and counseling education is essential for personal and academic development, career success, and psychological well-being. However, in Nigeria, insecurity-ranging from terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts poses significant challenges to access, equity, and quality of G&C education. This paper examines the impact of insecurity on G&C education, explores disparities in access and equity, and suggests strategies to improve quality amid security challenges. The paper further examined the benefits of Guidance and Counseling structure, implementation and counseling intervention to address these challenges. The study revealed that counselors must play a role of career counseling and information counseling to create awareness on national and sensitive issues. The paper concluded that attachment theoretical model of psychotherapy can be applied in solving insecurity problems in the public school in Nigeria. The paper concludes by investigated the causes, and consequences of Insecurity, and also the role, importance and benefits of Guidance and Counseling towards insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Guidance, Counseling, Insecurity, and Education.

Introduction

Guidance and counseling (G&C) education plays a critical role in addressing students' academic, emotional, and social needs. However, in Nigeria, insecurity has significantly affected the delivery of G&C services in schools, especially in conflict-prone areas. Issues such as attacks on schools, displacement of students and teachers, and inadequate funding have led to reduced access, inequalities, and a decline in quality. Guidance and counseling is fundamental to students and the individuals in the society. Mogbo, Obumneke and Anyachebelu (2011) defined guidance and counseling as a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world. In the context of this study guidance is an important component of educational service. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) realize the relevance of guidance services that it has stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) that it is desirable to provide guidance and counselors in secondary schools in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa in Mogbo (2011), the mandatory student guidance and counseling services is to provide the true condition and situation in Nigeria, security issues inclusive.

Education is the accumulated knowledge or experience that has positive effect on the individual character and behavioral. Education is a body of knowledge through which societal values and norms could be acquired. An individual needs guidance services in order to acquire the right type of education. Insecurity is an issue that people are concerned with. Udoh (2015) defined insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger or injury. Beland in Okarah (2014) defined insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. In the context of this paper insecurity implies high rate of incidences that are resulted in deaths and psychological trauma for individuals and families in different parts of Nigeria.

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Nigeria has six (6) geo – political zone. The nature of insecurity takes various forms in different parts of these geo-political zones in Nigeria. Onyishi (2011) revealed that in the south-south the fear of kidnapping is the beginning of wisdom. Title holder, professionals and oil expatriates are not spare from kidnapping saga in the south- south Nigeria. In the south-west armed robbers have taken over different parts of the state. In the North-west, Boko haram activities has killed thousands of citizenries and rendered many homeless. The North-central seen not be spared from the endemic insecurity. People in the North central region battled with the herd men insurgencies. The aged, religious organizations, farmers, women and children are not speared from one form of insecurity and the other. It seems that there are various from of insecurity that existed in Nigeria.

Security Management in Nigeria

There are many strategies the individual and the government can use to avert insecurity and to achieve safety. One of the strategies is management of security in Nigeria. Emenike (2003) defined management as a process designed to ensure cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement in effective achievement of goals. Ochai (2013) defined management as the co-ordination of human and material resources in an organization in order to achieve goals. In context of this paper, management is defined as the process of planning, controlling, organizing, directing, coordinating and supervising human and material resources in order to attain stability, harmony and peace. Insecurity is influenced by geographic, economic and social factors. Management is an effective's tool to avert disparities in resource allocation that could lead to insecurity. Government can plan for the future of the nation. Ochai (2013) argued that government can plan for stability of the individuals and the entire nation. The national planning and Research Department in Nigeria can prepare a variety of plans to access and address challenges in areas ranging from housing and economic development, land use, transportation and food storage. National Research Study (2016) defined that comprehensive plan is a leading policy tool with legal significance. Effective planning can address insecurity and other security systems issues as important plan components. The development, adoption and implementation of security related goals and policies in Nigeria led to the establishment of the National Food Safety Management in 2017. According to (FRN, 2017), security is a multi-sectoral issue that requires proper coordination, planning and supervision. This led to the collaborative effort in the development of the National Policy on Safety and its implementation strategy. Security is one major tool of development and poverty reduction. Achieving stability, peace and harmony calls for effective Management of Nigerian resources that serve as growth and development of the nation Nigeria.

Benefits of Group Counseling

- i. Peer Support: Students can share their experiences, providing emotional support and fostering understanding. This shared experience can reduce stigma associated with truancy.
- ii. Skill Development: Group counseling can teach students valuable life skills such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution, which may contribute to improved school attendance.
- iii. Increased Motivation: Interaction with peers who are also working to overcome similar challenges may imbue a sense of motivation to attend school regularly.
- iv. Parental Involvement: A group counseling program can also encourage parents to participate, allowing them to gain insights into their children's issues and learn how to support them.
- v. Targeted Strategies: Counselors can identify common triggers or patterns among truant students and develop targeted strategies to help them engage more with their education.

The quality of guidance counseling in addressing insecurity in Nigeria's education system face several challenges. These challenges impact students' access to counseling services and the effectiveness of interventions designed to mitigate insecurity-related issues. Below are some key factors affecting equity and quality in guidance counseling:

Challenges to Equity in Guidance Counseling

- i. Unequal Access to Counselors – Rural schools often lack professional counselors, leaving students in these areas without support.
- ii. Socioeconomic Disparities – Wealthier schools tend to have better counseling services, while underfunded public schools struggle to provide adequate support.
- iii. Cultural and Religious Barriers – Some communities may not fully embrace counseling due to cultural stigmas or religious beliefs.
- iv. Gender Inequality – Female students, especially in conservative regions, may have limited access to counseling services, particularly concerning issues like gender-based violence.

Challenges to Quality in Guidance Counseling

- i. Shortage of Trained Counselors – There is an insufficient number of qualified guidance counselors in Nigerian schools, reducing the effectiveness of services.
- ii. Inadequate Funding – Many schools lack resources to support counseling programs, affecting the quality of psychological and career guidance.
- iii. Limited Training and Professional Development – Counselors often lack continuous training to address emerging issues, including insecurity-related trauma.
- iv. Lack of Standardized Policies – The absence of clear national policies for school counseling leads to inconsistencies in service delivery.

Impact of Insecurity on Counseling Services

- i. Increased Psychological Trauma – Students in conflict-prone areas face emotional distress due to kidnappings, terrorism, and violence.
- ii. Displacement of Students and Counselors – Schools in insecure regions face frequent disruptions, making it difficult to sustain counseling programs.
- iii. Fear and Distrust – Students and parents may hesitate to seek counseling due to fears of being targeted.

Possible Solutions

- i. Recruitment and Training of More Counselors – The government should invest in training more guidance counselors, particularly in underserved areas.
- ii. Integration of Trauma Counseling – Schools should incorporate trauma-informed counseling to help students cope with insecurity-related stress.
- iii. Use of Technology – Online counseling services can bridge the gap for students in high-risk areas.
- iv. Government Policies and Funding – Stronger policies and increased funding should support counseling services across all schools.
- v. Community Involvement – Parents, religious leaders, and local organizations should be involved in promoting counseling services.

Improving guidance counseling in Nigeria's education system is crucial to addressing the psychological effects of insecurity and ensuring that all students receive the necessary support to thrive.

Quality of Guidance and Counseling Education in Nigeria

- i. Limited training programs: Few institutions in Nigeria offer training programs for counselors, resulting in a shortage of qualified professionals.
- ii. Outdated curriculum: The curriculum for guidance and counseling programs in Nigeria may not be up-to-date or relevant to the needs of contemporary students.
- iii. Lack of resources: Schools and counseling programs often lack the resources needed to provide effective guidance and counseling services.

Equity of Guidance and Counseling Education in Nigeria

- i. Disparities in access: Students from affluent backgrounds or those attending private schools may have better access to guidance and counseling services.
- ii. Rural-urban disparities: Students in rural areas may have limited access to guidance and counseling services due to a shortage of qualified counselors.
- iii. Gender disparities: Female students may face unique challenges in accessing guidance and counseling services due to cultural and societal norms.

Recommendations

The following have been recommended increase in the funding of guidance and counseling program, provision of more working tools, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, provision of adequate security in public and private schools at all levels improvement of supervision of guidance and counseling programme, employment of more trained counselors, increase in the salaries of Counsellors and ensure constant training and retraining program for counselors.

- i. The government should increase the funding of education at all levels and more allocation should be given to guidance and counseling programme in the school level.
- ii. The government should employ more professional guidance and counseling teachers and deploy to the public schools to improve the service delivering of the guidance and counseling in schools across Nigeria.

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- iii. The government should ensure offices used as guidance and counseling rooms should be well furnish and all guidance and counseling resources are provided to motivate the students come for guidance and counseling services.
- iv. The government should improve on the supervision of guidance and counseling programme in the schools. This will help to improve the quality of guidance and counseling services in the public schools across the country by employing more guidance and counseling supervisors and providing adequate funding for guidance and counseling supervision.
- v. The government and school administrators should provide the working materials guidance and counseling teachers needs to carry out her/his responsibilities in the schools. Materials like record books, ICT facilities, pens etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the roles of counselors in the realization of the schools objective cannot be underestimated. Counsellors working in public schools in Nigeria are facing many challenges like kidnapping and banditry. This paper examined the challenges facing Counsellors in public and private schools in Nigeria and inadequate funding, lack of working tools, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity problem, poor supervision, teaching of large classes, negatives attitude of students towards Counselors, negative relationship between counselors and school administrators, poor motivation and poor capacity development of supervisors were identified as challenges facing Counselors working in public schools in Nigeria. To solve these challenges, the presenters recommended the following: increase in the funding of guidance and counseling programme, provision of more working tools, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, provision of adequate security in public schools, improvement of supervision of guidance and counseling programme, employment of more trained counsellors, increase in the salaries of Counsellors and ensure constant training and retraining programme for counselors.

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