

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PARTNERSHIP FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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Abstract

Unemployment of teeming population of Nigeria youth is one of the major problems hindering peaceful society and her economic development. One of the causes of this problem is poor orientation of youth on the benefits of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, as well as poor training program. Guidance and Counselling could be a potent tool to overcome this problem. This paper discusses the aim, the role, the benefits and services of Guidance and Counselling in TVET for national development. TVET is an integral component of lifelong learning and as such plays a crucial role in helping individuals and countries to achieve a culture of peace, environmentally-sound sustainable development, social cohesion and international citizenship. The youths are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, Nigeria should sustain a very good plan to tap the energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track economic development. Urgently too, value reorientation should be provided for these youths in order to embrace TVET, and live up to expectations over the realities of TVET for national growth and development. This paper recommends a partnership between Guidance and Counselling and TVET for national Development.

Key words: Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Guidance and Counselling, National Development.

Introduction

Education is acknowledged as a means for transforming and empowering communities. Alam (2008) posited that education is a key agent of national development, either as a way of developing human capacity, increasing the skilled workforce for modernization, or as a matter of personal freedom, developing capability and empowerment. All nations, especially developing countries, need balanced development through all of the educational sectors in order to make significant progress in terms of national development. Through education, the youth gain skills, knowledge and develop attitudes to enable them become productive members of the society. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the sub-sector in the educational system widely recognized as the engine for

economic growth and technological development. TVET, as defined by UNESCO (2001) and adopted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) is:

“a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition, to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life”

In this broad definition, TVET refers to a range of learning experiences which are relevant to the world of work. It is education which is mainly to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding

necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations (Atchoarena & Delluc, 2002). Similarly, TVET plays a vital role in human resource development of the country by creating skilled manpower, enhancing industrial productivity and improving the quality of life. TVET thus equips people with a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are now recognized as indispensable for meaningful participation in work and life (Okwelle, 2013). In this context, the UNESCO-UNEVOC Bonn declaration on learning for work, citizenship and sustainability in 2004 stated that "since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) then must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development" (UNESCO, 2005).

Counselling is a helping profession that seeks to assist the individual in attaining self-understanding and self-direction. This can only be given by a trained counsellor in a school or clinical setting on a face to face relationship. According to Olusakin and Ubangha (2010), Counselling is as old as man but the introduction of formal guidance as an educational service in Nigeria dates back to 1959 when a group of Irish reverend sisters at St. Theresa's college, Oke-Ado near Ibadan invited about twenty persons from various professions and work environment to advise their final year students on the emerging world of work and to also assist the students discover their assets, (aptitude, abilities, interest) as well as their liabilities (weaknesses) in order to make realistic choice. In the face of glaring inability of the Nigerian educational system to cater for the virginity abilities, interest and needs of the Nigeria youth, the federal government of Nigeria issued a policy statement as contained in the national policy on education (2013) and observed as follows. "In view of the apparent ignorance of young people

about career prospect, and in view of personal maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in the post primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category are scarce, government will continue to make provision for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling". Guidance and counselling will also feature in the teacher education programmes.

Education is the bedrock of socio-economic and political development of any nation. Education is the most viable investment that individuals and nations should endeavor to invest. Education is an inevitable tool for human survival and vital enterprises that touches the lives of both the present and future generations. Connor (1957:7) sees educational system of any society as an elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it, certain skills and attitude that are adjudged to be useful and desirable in the society. National development can be referred to as the development of individuals and that of the economy. Partnership is an agreement where parties, known as partners agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interest. There should be a mutual agreement between TVET and Guidance and Counselling. The need for guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools and society as a whole cannot be over emphasized. To achieve national development, there is need for partnership between Guidance and Counselling and TVET.

Status of TVET in Nigeria

TVET system in Nigeria like other African countries is threatened with many challenges, one of such major problems upon which other problems seem to emanate from is that of poor orientation, poor training programme and image of TVET. Dike (2009) averred that while TVET has continued to thrive in many societies, Nigeria has neglected this aspect of education resulting to lack of skilled persons needed to drive the wheel of progress of the

nation's economy. Dike further stated that this neglect of TVET is socially and economically injurious because it is robbing the nation the contributions the graduates will make on national development. Evidence from studies indicates that many youths, parents and even government perceive TVET as not valuable as general education (Afeiti, 2008, Okoye & Okwelle, 2014). This negative view has grossly discouraged many young people from enrolling into TVET programmes, undermining the importance of this form of education to national development.

In Nigeria today, many youths are without right values of what TVET stands for, thereby neglect the necessary skill training, leaving them unemployable and less productive to the society. The youths are the backbone of development in any country. Hence, if Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity, there must be a very good plan to tap the energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track economic development (Aiyede, 2010). Taking into cognizance the veracity that TVET offers an important strategy to train skilled workers for the employment market and for sustainable livelihoods, there is an urgent need for value reorientation of these youths in order to make TVET attractive to them. In this way, many youths will embrace TVET and other stake holders will live up to expectations over the realities of TVET to national growth and sustainable development. This paper is focused on the need to orientate the youths and proffering solutions to ameliorate unemployment via guidance and counseling.

Therefore attempt is made to answer the following questions.

1. How is technical vocational education and training relevant to national development?
2. How valuable and sustainable is TVET?
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3. In what ways is guidance and counseling relevant in TVET for national development?

Values of Guidance and Counselling

Counselling as earlier defined is a helping profession that seeks to assist the individual in attaining self-understanding and self-direction. There is significant international evidence to support the economic, social and political benefits of Guidance and Counselling services. The research referred to in this paper suggests that the service is not just cost neutral but also provides significant benefits to the economy. Investment of a preventative nature has a critical economic value for participation, motivation and course completion at further and higher education. Socially the budget decision to cut guidance and counselling services runs contrary to Government Social Equity Goals of ensuring that education and employment opportunities are distributed equitably and that people make maximum use of their talents regardless of their social background, gender or ethnic origin. As educational and labour market pathways become increasingly complex in nature the demand for guidance and counselling is more critical now than at any time in the past as young people strive to find options appropriate to their interests, aptitudes and abilities and emerging work opportunities. The OECD review of national policies for career information, guidance and counselling services in 14 OECD countries, including Ireland, describes guidance within education systems as having an important role to play in laying the foundations for life long career development, including knowledge and competencies regarding self-awareness, the world of work and making decisions and transitions. It defines guidance services as 'services that assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.'

Place of TVET in National Development

National development has been defined in many widely differing ways, according to

Brundtl and Commission report in 1987, which defined National development as “a new form of development perspective which integrates the production process with resources conservation and environmental enhancement; it should meet the need of the present without compromising our ability to meet those of the future” (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987). In the same vein, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1988) defined national development as the management and conservation of the natural resources base and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generation. Kurya and Hassan (2007) posited that national development is a continuous and progressive increase and expansion of the volume of goods and services provided in a given economy with improvement in the social, political and economic life of present as well as future generation. To this end, Arokoyu (2004) opined that national development is inherently a value-laden concept, in that it implies responsibility for both present and future generations. This simply means that national development is about the development of individuals and that of the economy.

TVET empowerment improves a nation’s economy, provides job opportunities, reduces crime rate and encourages creativity and competitiveness in nation building, yet many youths are jobless because of poor orientation on the benefits of TVET. Guidance and Counselling has an essential role to play in raising awareness, and providing skills and values considered necessary for national development. As the goal, Guidance and Counselling, national development lies at proper orientation of youths about TVET system. Moreso, TVET facilitates the adjustment of the skills and knowledge of man to the changing demands within the society. Skill and knowledge as well as social values acquired through TVET allow an individual to

manipulate the natural and physical environment for making life more useful for improved sustainable scientific, technological and economic development (Okwelle, 2008). Thus, TVET and national development are inevitably connected through Guidance and Counselling. In the new economic environment therefore, TVET is expected to produce an educated, skilled and motivated work force for national development. Today, TVET is increasingly recognized globally as effective means of empowering young people to engage in productive and sustainable livelihoods. This goal may be defeated without Guidance and Counselling.

Career Guidance and Counselling, TVET and National Development

Career guidance increases students’ awareness of opportunity and their capabilities to be gainfully employed after school year. Particularly, in TVET, where costs are high and resources exceptionally scarce, having students to make the right career choice is critical. Often, people who play the role of Counsellors are untrained, unqualified and ill-suited for the job, hence the need for professional Counsellors in Career Guidance in TVET for national development.

Guidance Counsellors need to understand the requirements of the global knowledge-based economy and should appreciate and value TVET’s critical role in it. This also requires them to have labour market intelligence and be aware of the occupational landscape of the local and regional labour market, knowledge of the job market, contacts with local employers, and skills to assess clients’ interests and aptitudes. They need to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the educational system and equally need tools to help students’ discover their own aptitudes and interests. Career guidance is an excellent vehicle for redressing the current inequalities in participation in the workforce. Armed with demographic and labour market information, Career Guidance Counsellors can be instrumental in encouraging participation in non-traditional training for both

males and females and also persons with disabilities. Training for both new and existing staff is required. Career Guidance is not just for school children. As TVET strives to engage the existing workforce, the unemployed, the aging population, the disaffected youth and other untapped markets, there is a need to have a variety of access points which cater for all and sundry. Guidance and Counseling services are an important component of the education process and it is impossible for schools to operate without having such services. For one, “guidance and counseling is the bedrock for achieving self-actualization” (Egbochuku, 2008). Guidance and counseling is usually referred to as “a process of helping individuals to understand themselves by discovering their own needs, interests and capabilities in order to formulate their own goals and make plans for realizing those goals” (Egbochuku, 2008). Specifically, “the aims of guidance and counseling programs in schools are to assist individuals to develop the ability to understand themselves, to solve their own problems and to make appropriate adjustments to their environment” (Lunenburg, 2010). Assessments, placements, and counseling are some of the major services of a guidance and counseling program. Assessment services are designed “to collect, analyze, and use a variety of objective and subjective personal, psychological, and social data” (Lunenburg, 2010). These collected data can be used to better understand students and better guide them in decision-making especially in providing admissions, placements, and counseling services. The use of both grades and examination to identify students with a high potential for future success are an example of multi-dimensional screening (Armstrong and Rochet, 1999). On the other hand, “placement is ensuring that people are in the right place at the right time. It has to do with helping people find a place that will contribute to their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being (Villar, 2007). Specifically, placement services are designed to include “assessment, informational services,

and counseling assistance appropriate to the pupil's choices of school subjects, co-curricular activities, and employment” (Lunenburg, 2010). “The counseling service is designed to facilitate self-understanding and development through dyadic or small group relationships. The aim of such relationships tends to be on personal development and decision making that is based on self-understanding and knowledge of the environment” (Lunenburg, 2010). “Counseling is the heart of the guidance program. It is the counseling that integrates all the data gathered about the individual and his environment, in order for them to make sense” (Villar, 2007).

Conclusion

Technical Vocational Education and Training is a vital tool for improving national economy, providing job opportunities, reducing crime rate and encouraging creativity and competitiveness in nation building. However, there are some challenges facing TVET in Nigeria. Hence, Guidance and Counselling could be a major potent tool through which Nigeria could launch into global community of frontline economies.

Recommendations

Government should enforce education that stipulates the availability of trained Counsellors in all schools. Furthermore, the appropriate Government agencies should be motivated to identify schools where untrained people or teachers are playing the roles of Counsellors and organize the requisite program to transform such people into certified Counsellor. The entire citizenry should be enlightened on the importance of Counsellors so that parents and students alike can seek the assistance of counselors in their career choices

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