

Integrating Information Communication Technology (ICT) into guidance and Counselling Services.

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the Information Communication Technology (ICT) in integrating to guidance and counselling in our country Nigeria. It examines the concept of guidance and counselling and its significance in the world as lifelong. It also consider the various ICT opportunities that can be explored by guidance counsellors with regards to the use of ICT suggestions to facilitate ICT in guidance and counselling services were also proffered and concluded.

Key words: ICT, Guidance and Counselling, Integration.

INTRODUCTION

ICT is an acronym for information and Communication Technology. Information is the act of informing .It is the passing of knowledge derived from study, experience, association with others or instruction. Information is very essential for our daily survival and happiness on this planet earth and beyond. Example of information include: how to plan one's life, how to solve educational problems, social problems, emotional problems, information about hidden plan ahead, how to live a meaningful life, how to understand your environment, how to get admission into colleges/universities, prospective career, how to apply for scholarships, how to seek for job opportunities, how to find a wife/husband, academic information, how to study effectively.

According to Onugha (2010), information not communicated can cause loss of opportunities or bring disaster. Vital information not communicated through guidance and counselling can bring disaster. The Bible says “My people perish for lack of knowledge” Communication is passing on information; hence information and communication go together.

The marriage between these two has yielded great dividends. The development of this union has revolutionized the entire world Onugha (2010).

What is Technology? Technology is defined as the application of science. Information and Communication Technology is therefore the application the application and communication. There have been some technological developments in information and communication Technology. Up to early twentieth century in Africa, Information was from person to person, localized and with the inherent possibility of distortion. Newspapers were few and not affordable. For majority of the people, literacy level was low and so local announcements were more appropriate for communications across geographic boundaries, came postal services, telegrams, transistor radios, television, telephones and other telecommunication equipment's giving room for real time transmission of information Onugha(2010).

However, presently, we have computer networks, satellite, broadcasters and wireless transmissions. Technology is advancing rapidly that previously isolated fields such as television, phones, radios and computers are converging into a single field. The most dramatic change is how all these old information island are being connected to digital highway. One information n is created in any form, text, sound, pictures movies. It can be instantly distributed. All these technological developments have given rise to information explosion. He world has become a global village that make guidance and counselling easy for both the counsellors and their clients.

Furthermore, technology may be defined as the systematic application of scientific or other organised knowledge to solve practical problems. Information is a selected data or materials for problem solving. Information can also be described as fact told, heard or discovered about something. Communication is the exchange of information, news and ideas with somebody or a group of people. For effective communication to take place, it has to be a two way channel, Evans and king (1991). Information Communication Technology can be described as the use of electronic equipment especially the computer, for storing, analysing and distributing information of all kinds including words, numbers and pictures Igonoh (2003).

Concepts of guidance and Counselling

guidance and Counselling programme has actually provided us in our present age of complex scientific and technological development, the gateway out of the existing numerous problems ignorance, lack of efficient and effective ways of solving social-personal, educational and many other psychological difficulties among individuals and groups in the educational institutions and our larger society.

According to okobiah and okorodudu (2006), counselling psychology tends to deal with everybody problems among school children, adolescents, young adults in the various educational institutions and in different communities. Human problem in the educational, vocational social-personal domains are dynamic, and diversified. Some of these appear complex and solutions to them, go beyond the handling of lay persons. Therefore, they went further to say that counsellors, who have been specially trained in the scientific process of using psychological principles for assisting individuals in finding solutions to their problems, are found to be of great importance.

One of the main aims of guidance and counselling is to assist citizens especially among students in the secondary and tertiary institutions in resolving their personal problems. Onanuga (1983), expressed the “attempt continue to be made in making counselling an essential feature of our educational, health and cultural programmes in order to foster healthy daily interactions and instructions” she noted that providing guidance and counselling services in schools and colleges will cater both for individual development of the child and for national manpower needs in the different walks of life.

However, as each person grows up and develops, he is always confronted with a variety of situations in which he needs help. The classroom teacher and parents may not be able to such assistance. This is where the guidance and counsellor comes in to help with his special training to help in solving. For example, in educational, vocational, social-personal, marital etc. Mallum, (2000:4), stated that Guidance and Counselling provide the atmosphere as well as the setting e.g. physical, social and psychological which the counsellor can provide help to the client in terms of:

- i. Acquiring decision making skills
- ii. Making appropriate choices

- iii. Learning adjustment skills
- iv. Acquiring coping skills
- v. Getting acquainted with and becoming aware of opportunities in the personal, social, educational and vocational worlds.

Meanwhile, the term ‘Guidance’ according to Makinde (1984), derives his definition from the root word “Guide” which means to direct, to pilot, to manage, to steer, to aid, to assist, to help, to lead to inform and interact, to enlighten someone to know alternative of what to do in relation to a given situation that demands decision making. Furthermore, one can only be guided by someone who is mature or someone who is knowledgeable and quite familiar with what to do in such a given circumstances which require assistance. According to Okobiah and Okorodud (2006), the guidance service must have to be provided by the person who already has experienced some level of exposure to adequate scientific and professional knowledge, relevant to such familiar situations which require guidance.

Shetzer and stone (1976), defined guidance as the process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world¹. Denga (1983) defined guidance as “a cluster of services all aimed at helping a person to understand ‘self’ and to take appropriate steps in educational, occupational and life planning generally”. This means that guidance is a programme on which a “guide” is to be provided by someone who has been professionally trained to perform such duties. This provision would, therefore, be made in relation to individual’s educational social, personal, moral emotional health and leisure time needs and for this preparation for a suitable vocational and career adaptability, the future within a given socio-economic environment.

Generally, the consensus of the views of Nigerian authors such as Denga (1983), Ipaye (1983), Makinde (1984) Mallum (2000) Okobiah and Okorodudu (2015) also portray guidance as a broad based programme available in schools industries and society based programme available in schools industries and society based on their needs. This implies that Guidance is a programme which is made up of specific needs of individuals such as educational needs personal, social needs, spiritual or moral needs and developmental needs. The guidance programme is, therefore, provided on a specific need of students in schools or out of school setting.

In conclusion, guidance is not just advising students on the choice of subjects in the school as the layman's understandit; rather it is a scientific programme that is always handed by the professionals in the field. Therefore, guidance is a programme of activities in which counselling is to be provided in the domains of education, vocation and socio-personal phenomenon.

Meaning of counselling

The “counselling” like its twin brother has been defined in several ways. Lewis (1970) sited in Okobiah and Okorodudu (2006) “counselling is a process by which a trouble person is helped to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying manner through interaction with an unresolved person”. They continuous in English and English (1971) believed that the term “counselling” best described a relationship in which one person endeavours to help another to solve his /her adjustment problems. They believed that issues such as education, vocation and socialization include such main areas of adjustment among the adolescent and the young adults in the society. Shertzer and Ston (1976) defined (counselling) as a wide range of activities designed to aid individuals in solving their problems. Montenson and Schmuller (1976) defined counselling as a person to person process in which one person is helped by another to develop, increase in understanding and ability to solve his /her problems. Okorodudu (2015) defined counselling as “provision of help to someone in need in order for him to cope successfully with the life challenges of the moment”. This simply means counselling is for long life which has to do with ensuring that through the counselling process, the client regain themselves positively.

Meanwhile, Nigerian authors such as Denga (1983), Okon (1982), Bulus (1990), believed that counselling is basically a helping relationship. Oluyinka (1983, defined Counselling as “a psychological process of helping an individual to achieve his self-mental balance, self-direction, self-understanding necessarily to make the maximum adjustment to school, home and society”) Idowu (1986) sees counselling as process by which a person with problem is helped by a professional counsellor to voluntarily change his behaviour, charity his attitude, ideas and goals so that his problems may be solved.

From the above definitions and experiences, it is clear that Guidance and counselling is made up of a programme of relevant services as well as a process of helping individuals within and outside the school environment to realize their fullest potentialities in their emotional, social, moral, educational vocational and personal development.

Integrating ICT into Guidance and Counselling Programmes.

The importance of communication in counselling cannot be over emphasise because is the foundation on which the counsellors builds his/her services. Talking about the importance of communication in counselling, Okon (1982) cited in Adika (2011) opined that the underlying prerequisite skill in any helping profession is effective communication.

Counselling has been on in Nigeria for some time. Counselling services has been done mostly in ‘face to face’ from where the counsellor (s) and client (s) are in physical contact during counselling sessions because it is believed that eye contact make counselling more effective. In the past few decades however, information technology (ICT) tools have drastically changes the global economy and the people communicate, Olaleye (2010).

Guidance and Counselling psychologists are not left out in this all important development. ICT has significantly transformed various spheres of human life; agriculture, medicine, engineering, music industry etc.

Information and Communication technology (ICT) which is one of the new trends in education has become very popular in educational settings. Information and communication technology among other things must be made available to teachers, counsellors and students Olayele (2010). This point necessitates the need and integrating for a paradigm shift indelivering Guidance and Counselling services in the Nigeria society and worldwide.

However, electronic communication involves the use of emails, internet, cell phones, (GSM) SMS, small text message services. The multi-media

message services (MMS) helps counsellors communicate their clients easily and other computer aided strategies in counselling clients.

According to Olusakin (2009), the world has now become a global village with the aid of information Communication Technology (ICT), considering the population of people in need of Guidance and Counselling

Compare to the number of professional counsellors available. Technology Assisted Distant Counselling (TADC) would be the virile option for effective time management. This could be carried out through Tele-counselling and internet counselling.

Telephone-based counselling involves distance interaction among counsellors and clients using emails, chat and video conferencing features of the internet to communicate has many components such as;

- i. Chat based counselling: involves synchronous distance interaction between counsellors and clients using what is read via text to communicate.
- ii. Video Based Counselling involves synchronous distance interaction between counsellors and clients using what is read via Video to communicate. (US National Board for Certified Counsellors 2001; Walz, Bloom Sampson, Lanning and Chapman (2000) in Olusakin (2009).
- iii. Electronic mail (e-mail): Based counselling involves synchronous distance interaction between counsellors and clients using what is read via text to communicate. Collie, Mitchell and Murphy (2001) cited in Olusakin (2009).

The counselling can be done through television and Radio programme effectively in addressing issues inform of lecturing on psych-social problems or career guidance planning for youths etc.

In the counselling profession, information technology literacy is an essential skill a counsellor must master.

Furthermore, the computer has actually come to help counsellors; clients tap knowledge when and how they want. We have the LAN (Local Area Network) and the World Wide Web (WWW), through which information can be passed to any clients in microseconds, via the internet, a

counsellor can stay anywhere and counsel his/her clients in another place (continent).

Information consist of oral and blue prints, documents, sounds signals, data, ideas, figures, files etc.

Lomark (1997). Information should carry a message which is properly understood by the receiver before we can say that communication in counselling has taken place.

In conclusion, TCT provides an array of counselling opportunities and the paper attempted to look at the meaning of ICT, the concept of Guidance and Counselling, the integrating od ICT into Guidance and Counselling services in order to make the work of counselling effective and save time. The paper is of opinion that with paper planning and organising of ICT, the counselling would be integrated thereby making the system more important to counselling and Nigerian as a whole.

Recommendations

The writer make the following recommendations

- i. Government and non-governmental should encourage counselling practises by equipping the counselling clinics with modern electronic gadgets to make their work easily to reach out to their clients.
- ii. Government should make provision to sell counsellors for more training in ICT to good institutions.
- iii. The counselling association of Nigeria (CASSON) booth National and State level should organise ICT training for their members to improve their ICT knowledge and also improve counselling practises.
- iv. The counselling curriculum should be change or revisited yearly to meet up the correct demands in the society (ICT)

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