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EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS IN THE NEW NORMAL: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we examined the education employability and global competitiveness in the new normal: Implications for counselling. We discussed the new world order and its demands. The quest to make quick money has changed the way people think and behave. Nigerian youths now tend to choose career that can give them huge remuneration than career that they have passion for. The Nigeria mentality of the end justifies the means has greatly affected University Education in Nigeria, as both lecturers and students now engage in various examination misconducts just so they will have good grades. The employability and global competitiveness has also greatly affected the role of Guidance Counsellors thereby affecting the services they render especially in the Vocational Counselling. Parents and our contemporary society has implications on counselling services in education global competitiveness and employability. Based on the findings, the researchers made some recommendations. More competent Vocational Counsellors should be employed. Counsellors who have what it takes to convince both the students and their parents on the need to make appropriate career choice. Hence, Nigerian graduates can be able to compete with their counterparts in the developed countries for one can only have a satisfactory career life when one practice what he has passion and interest for .

Keywords: Education, Employability, Global, Competitiveness, Implications, Counselling Services.

Introduction

Counselling is a collaborative process, involving a non-judgmental and supportive counsellors who will work with you to set goals and establish strategies to meet those goals. Counsellors offer altruistic services to their clients/students. We have three broad areas of counselling namely, Educational Counselling, Vocational Counselling and Socio-personal Counselling. In vocational counselling, the counsellor helps the client/student to make appropriate career choice by helping them identify their abilities and capabilities. For a satisfactory career life one ought to choose a career that

matches his skills, passion, talents and traits. In our contemporary society, individuals no longer go for careers or jobs that matches their interest instead their go for careers that earns them the desired global competitiveness that the society crave for. This affects the individual productivity in that field of work.

In developing countries today, the rate at which the youths desire to relocate to developed countries is another factor affecting career choice. Youths tend to rush into a specific field of career than others. For instances, youths in the developing countries like Nigeria, tends to rush into medical related courses because they believe that the future has greater deal for them when they relocate to any developed country. Again, in terms of employment, graduates from specific field of work stands a better chance of employment than others. For instance, graduates from Social Science courses are not really appreciated and recognised in developing countries like Nigeria.

These are some of the things that affects the place of vocational counselling in our country Nigeria. With this new normal, Vocational Counsellors now find it difficult to counsel students about choosing careers that they have passion and interest for. Careers that they can be more productive and of course have a satisfactory career life.

New World Order and its Demands

Global competitiveness arose as a result of a phenomenal development referred to as globalisation or what Lagarde (2012) termed "the new world of interconnections". This development compels a new way of living, of communicating and of interacting. To Lagarde, it is a great paradox of our age for on the one hand, the world gets bigger, with so many people and places sharing the fruits of knowledge and prosperity; and on the other hand, the world gets smaller with so many people and places crossing paths and sharing destinies. She concludes the description by saying that the world is more "closely-knit" than ever before and that "we are all dependent on one another more than ever before".

As global observers and as participants we know that people travel more freely across borders either as tourists, workers, students, conferees, diplomats and what have you. World trade has increased and Nigerian crude oil and agricultural products like cocoa, cassava and cotton are taken to distant lands while Japanese, Taiwan, Malaysian and Korean technological products find large lucrative markets in Africa and Nigeria. Lagarde (2012) says about 900 million tourists travelled between countries in 2010, the world records over 200 million migrant workers and foreigners make up between a fifth and a quarter of the professional workforce in countries like Australia, Canada and Switzerland. It is common knowledge that a large percentage of qualified Nigerian professionals are in the United Kingdom, the United States of America (USA), the Middle East and South Africa, to mention but a few.

Undoubtedly, the new world order generates a world of new opportunities as well as

grave challenges and uncertainties thus making survival tougher and more demanding. Globalisation compels new ways of thinking, new ways of behaving and of doing things; we are bound to behave as new global citizens for a sneeze in the east forces the west to listen and a rumble in the west has its implications for the east. We are truly in a global village and that is why the North Korean's threat over nuclear weapons forced reactions from the west especially Britain and the U.S.A while the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria attracted warnings from western powers to their citizens in Nigeria. Globalisation demands that we watch out for each other and watch each other; we must watch our actions and be sensitive to how these actions affect others, both far and near.

In the new order, the knowledgeable who are able to explore and exploit global resources and use their knowledge to advantage will benefit more than those with poor and irrelevant knowledge; the former will be active and prosperous while the latter will be passive and poverty ridden.

University Education in Nigeria

If Nigeria is to become an active and fruitful participant in global competitiveness, her universities must produce better materials that can stand their own anywhere. Nigerian universities up to the 1970s could stand their own and their products competed favourably with western and American university graduates. The early Nigerian universities produced Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, John Pepper Clark, many seasoned administrators, intellectuals, diplomats and professionals. Today, the situation is different as many Nigerian university graduates can hardly articulate their ideas nor defend the degrees they have. Many are considered unemployable. (Dabalen, Oni and Adekola, 2015) and are branded as "half-baked graduates (Ade-Ajayi, 2012). There is this interesting story in the *Vanguard* of August 19, 2012 on page 18. The British General Medical Council (BMC) was reported to have barred medical graduates from nine Nigerian universities from obtaining licenses to practice in the United Kingdom. They include Ambrose Ali University, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, University of Jos, University of Nigeria, University of PortHarcourt, Igbinedion University and the University of Benin. Those not listed may really not be better just that they were fortunate to have escaped scrutiny. Such poorly rated universities cannot provide the desired catalyst for national development. Saint, Harnett and Strassner (2013) argued that education in general and higher education in particular are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society. This is where Nigerian universities fail the nation and their graduates.

The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

Guidance according to Shertzer and Stone (1976) is a process of helping the individual to understand himself and his world. The world refers to the environment in which the individual lives. As the world of work is changing the role of the counsellor cannot

be overemphasized. With reference to entrepreneurial education and job creation, the counsellors are in a better position to make the students realize that they have to create opportunities of work for themselves. Obi (2012) cited Barki and Mukhopadhay (2007) suggested a paradigm shift in the provision of guidance and counselling services as a panacea to the changes in the work place. The situation had been that graduates on leaving school seek white-collar jobs. These days, there are no jobs and there is high rate of unemployment which has become globalized. The youths in tertiary institutions are supposed to have in their minds, as they leave schools, how they can create jobs for themselves. The counsellor has a great role to play here by encouraging the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship in university graduates.

The universities should endeavour to establish counselling centres which is in line with Nigeria's Minister of Education's pronouncement that there should be counselling in all departments in tertiary institutions. These centres should be manned by competent counsellors who are to drive entrepreneurial spirit into the students. Counsellors are to liaise with entrepreneurial centres in the various institutions, so that students develop new ways of thinking, new ways of doing things and acquire the mindset for entrepreneurship development. If universities are to deliver the right skills expected of students in the labour market and to develop entrepreneurial abilities, the counsellor becomes crucial in providing needed guidance. No doubt counsellors with all their skills like genuiness, motivation, time management, listening, silence, empathy, rapport, creativity, and questioning can assist in trying to spur entrepreneurial spirit in university students. Counsellors can assist students to make appropriate decisions on the type of entrepreneurship area they can venture into. This is in line with Obiunuand Okoh (2013) who believe that entrepreneurial skills can be enhanced through guidance services.

The guidance programme is made up of cluster of services which are used to guide students. These services include Orientation Service, Information Service, Appraisal Service, Educational Service, Vocational Service, Personal Social Service, Referral Service, Counselling Service and Follow-up Service. For example Appraisal services are services provided by counsellors to enable the counsellor understand his client and the client understands himself knowing his assets, liabilities, potentials, abilities through test and non-test techniques. When students have a good understanding of themselves they are able to make worthwhile decisions and here lies the crucial factor in entrepreneurship development. When a student understands himself he knows the entrepreneurial areas to go into. Orientation service is another service provided by counsellors. This is an induction programme normally provided to expose fresh students to their school environment. During this programme, talks should be slated relating to entrepreneurship development. According to Oghounu (2014) the orientation service can provide the motivation necessary for

students to internalize the virtues and values in enterprise and sustainable development. These services, if well provided in the Universities could create entrepreneurial spirit in students. The counsellor can employ other techniques to foster entrepreneurial spirit in students like group discussion, workshop, role playing, seminars, and symposia among stakeholders and at the end students will benefit from such exercises.

The counsellor using the social learning theory which teaches that individuals learn by observation, modelling and imitation can invite successful entrepreneurs to deliver lectures to students in different areas. These persons act as role models they might want to imitate. This, no doubt will help to motivate students and create entrepreneurship spirit in them. Such successful entrepreneurs include Dangote, Ibru family, Mike Adenuga Jnr. ofGlobacom and local entrepreneurs within their community. This gives students the opportunity of interacting with the entrepreneurs which will go a long way to spuring them into trying to carve out a niche for themselves. Telling students stories of successful entrepreneurs who started in humble ways but today are giants in the business world can indeed motivate them. We can talk of Steve Jobbs who started business in his garage; Bill Gates who according to Babalola (2012) dropped out of Harvard University to begin the Microsoft Computer Software Company with Allen; King Camp Gillette formed the American Safety Razor Company with Nickerson and these became big businesses. The counsellor can also use bibliotherapy which is a technique in vocational service by giving them books on successful entrepreneurs to read. After reading, there should be group discussions on the books and how they can acquire some thoughts and implement them to become wealthy people and creators of wealth. Such biographies and auto-biographies are good stimulants to the development of entrepreneurial spirit.

Field trip is another technique of widening the individual's horizon about the world of work. Counsellors, university authorities, departments can organize field trips to different industrial locations to create awareness in students of how they can create and grow business for themselves. This will also give them the opportunity to discuss with different entrepreneurs about their initial fears, anxieties, teething problems, finance, management and other related issues. This no doubt will give them the knowledge on how they can start small business of their own after graduation.

In various Nigeria Universities, we have different clubs e.g Man-no-war, Cadet, Drug, Free club, Red Gross and so on. The counsellor can use them as platforms to introduce the students to entrepreneurship. The counsellor can go further to forming entrepreneurship clubs where small and medium entrepreneurs are discussed. The counsellor can introduce entrepreneurship club among the students and other individuals of the university community. This will help to create entrepreneurship consciousness among students and culture.

The counsellor can liaise with entrepreneurship centres in the other universities to look for business opportunities like sand dredging, block moulding, running of cyber-cafes, manufacturing of sachet and bottled water, fast food in university premises, soap making, tie and tie and dye and so on that can be attractive to the students.

Another role as suggested by Amuseghen, Tayo-Olajubudu (2012) is to organize intra and inter faculty business plan competitions. The dividend of such competitions is that it will help to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship in the students.

Implications of counselling services in the global competitiveness and employability

Global competitiveness and employability has affected the counselling services in Nigeria so much such that Vocational Counsellors are now finding it difficult to place the students according to their academic performance. Even psychologically test can no longer provide the counsellor with accurate and sincere answers because the students now try to fake their responses just so the counsellor will place them on a particular career of their choice.

We have other numerous implications which includes;

1. **The quest for money**: As earlier mentioned, contemporary youths now crave more for money than passion. The quest to make-it quick syndrome has tremendously affected the career choice students make. Everyone tends to rush into medical courses because of the attention given to it in the developed countries. Even the students who are not good in science subjects are also rushing into medical courses thereby making the University to produce more quack medical doctors than ever.
2. **The parents' factors:** Over the years, parents has always interfered with the students' choice of career. Every parents want his ward to study only professional courses. Even when the child's result cannot get the child to study that particular course.
3. **What the Society want:** In our contemporary society, everyone tends to accord more respect to graduates from professional courses. Teachers are not always accorded the kind of respect that people usually accord medical doctors. This also affects the career choice that the students make. Nobody wants to be looked down upon.
4. **The economy of the country:** The rate at which the economy of the country is inflated, nobody wants his own to study courses or career with little or no remuneration. We do not only work for passion, we should also work for money because 90% of our needs can only be solved with money.
5. **Role Conflicts by the counsellors:** Some counsellors are already demoralized because they now find it difficult to convince both the

students and the parents to choose career that matches their abilities and capabilities.

Conclusion

This paper examined the education employability and global competitiveness in the new normal: implications of counselling. Vocational counselling has greatly been affected by the global competitiveness thereby making Counselling services not valued. Students are more interested in courses with huge remuneration than courses they have passion for and it's affecting the productivity of the country. Again, many Nigerian graduates are actually not meeting up with the demands of productivity in foreign countries. Both Parents and Counsellors have a great role to play in correcting this wrong new normal as to save our society from greater damage.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers made the following recommendations

1. The University should employ more competent Vocational Counsellors that can give appropriate vocational counselling to the students so as to enhance satisfactory career life.
2. Parents should stop interfering in their children's choice of career as they are creating more quack professionals.
3. The students should be encouraged to choose careers that can give them both passion and money.
4. The society should stop attaching more importance to particular courses than others.
5. Various professional bodies should have strict law abiding them and forbidding incompetent individuals from practicing.
6. University lecturers should stop encouraging all sort of malpractice in awarding grade to students.
7. Developed countries should expand their net of employment in other fields of work other than medical courses.
8. Nigerian universities should reinforce strict rules against examination misconducts.

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