

# REVITALISING TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH SKILL TRAINING FOR EDUCATION COUNSELLORS

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## **Abstract**

*Education and all its processes is not complete without involvement of services that cater for the cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects of human life especially educational counselling. In view of this, this paper considers how teacher education can achieve its utmost productivity through skill training for education counsellors. The education counsellors are trained professionals who oversee the affective aspect of learners' lives and provide necessary information and support to make learners achieve academic success in schools. Many times, the role of the education counsellors has been identified to be in teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Thus, it is clearly inappropriate to assume that the role of educational counselling can be handled by anyone especially those without prior academic background. The paper discussed challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and students today, the concept of teacher education, productivity, school and teacher productivity and the concept of guidance and counselling and its roles in effective teaching and learning. The paper highlights the need to revitalize and reposition teacher education through skill training for education counsellors. To this end, education counsellors should be encouraged to embark on skill training programmes that match 21<sup>st</sup> century needs for academic excellence. It is only when education counsellors have effectively carried out their duties in assisting learners achieve self identity and academic coping skills that the work of the classroom teachers can be made easier during teaching and learning.*

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Education Counsellors, Maximum Productivity, Revitalising, Skill Training, Teacher Education.

## **Introduction**

As the entire human landscape becomes more competitive and technologically driven especially in the wake of the recent global pandemic (COVID 2019); skill acquisition and training of suitable numbers of technocrats have become essential. The

educational sector is not left behind in this global changes as accessibility to knowledge even beyond the conventional walls of the classroom is daily advocated for by many. In as much as the change has become germane, how well the educational systems expand and develop depends on the quality, quantity and

commitment of teachers and education counsellors. This situation has made Bagchi and Bairagya (2021) concluded that the development of a new generation of knowledgeable teachers must be funded right away if the nation is to have a bright future. No other thing made the researchers emphatic but the belief that the most crucial elements of any educational programme are the qualified teachers, who are in charge of implementing suitable educational policies at all levels. Thus, no matter how excellent a program or policy may be, it cannot succeed without the right kind of teachers being available. Therefore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the importance of teachers cannot be overstated; however, in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable education, it is necessary to enhance teachers' education and quality to increase productivity.

However, since the focus of the teacher is on educating the learners academically; this process has been observed to have some shortcomings. Most especially as little or no attention is paid to the affective impact on learning and how this could determine learners' willingness to learn. To resolve this challenge and make learning effective, it has become paramount that education counsellors should be recruited in schools to attend to/and support learners in managing academic challenges. Counselling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals (American Counselling Association, 2020). Going by the above definition of counselling, the basic goals of counselling can be classified as to facilitate behaviour change and client's

potential, improve relationship, promote decision making; and self-development.

Thus, the purpose of skill training in counselling is to assist teachers perform better at work through understanding of students' affective process and how it could influence their academic performance and achievement. This is in particular reference to the prevailing rate of poor academic performance and perceptual value of education as a whole. It has therefore become imperative to provide skill training for education counsellors to prepare them professionally in a way that can make them effectively assist students in dealing with physical, social, emotional, occupational, and educational issues. Learners require assistance and counselling in order to make intellectual decisions and create changes in their lives. They require assistance in dealing with the challenges of today's rapidly changing environment. This is an argument supported by Szymkowiak et al. (2021) that affirm that education counsellors play crucial roles in ensuring that necessary awareness is created to facilitate the enhancement of personal, social, academic, professional and vocational growth in learners. Additionally, counselling has the potential to enhance the quality of human life and produce significant socioeconomic advantages for both individuals and society at large. Moreover, teachers and education counsellors play a critical role in ensuring that learners are properly prepared for their roles in society in order to achieve the national goals. They also support the development of positive attitude in learners as well as the removal of undesirable characteristics by helping them recognize their talents and abilities. It is

therefore imperative to understand that educational counselling is an important complementary aspect in teaching and learning. Counselling also complement in the preparation of classroom and group activities that are appropriate for learners' needs.

Going by the aforementioned, it is important to reiterate that the efforts of teachers and counsellors in a society are significant for higher productivity in the educational system. However, it should be noted that in a new and divergent society learners and teachers will benefit from educational counselling since it provides skills and approaches necessary for learners overall development when effectively implemented.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Technological advancement and other emerging issues in recent times have made it germane for professionals who want to effectively carry out their service and responsibilities to up skill themselves in relevant areas that are complementary to their career and will make them visible and accessible. This said development has become important for educators and counsellors who intend to motivate and effectively provide needed services in the schools. Many students are more interested in online entertainment engagements and networking rather than learning and education. Thus, teachers and counsellors have this to contend with in professional practice and as such skill training relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs should form part of continuing education. Common topics that the education counsellors deal with during the counselling session are mental health-related concerns, anxiety disorders or

sadness and so on. However, given the anticipated limitations of physical interactions in the new-normal, educational counselling should continue to be given to learners who need additional support and help even beyond borders (leveraging several communication means).

It has therefore become critical that time and resources should be put in place for education counsellors to carry out their basic professional training through engaging in regular sessions with learners and providing basic information and skill training for teachers in order to achieve successful implementation of services and higher productivity (Awan, 2002).

### **Research Objectives and Questions**

The study focuses on revitalizing teachers' education in the 21st century for higher productivity. To this end, the study considered whether or not the current teacher's education in guidance and counselling has been successful in meeting the current requirements and demands of students; and sought to justify the need for the immediate revitalization. This raises the study's question: will revitalising teacher education in guidance and counselling lead to increased productivity in the 21st century?

### **Literature Gap and Significance of the Study**

Different researches (Adu, Akinloye & Adu, 2015; Ayeni & Akinola 2020; Lai-Yeung, 2014) have been carried out on the need for revitalizing teacher education. For instance, Rawlings (2021) investigated how revitalizing and funding teacher education correlates with quality secondary education.

However, the extent of revitalization of teachers' education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for education counsellors is still limited in Nigeria. It is in view of this that this study has been conducted to advocate and identify the need to revitalize teacher education to achieve upmost productivity through skill training for education counsellors. Thus, the relevance of this study cannot be overemphasized as it will be beneficial to counsellors, parents, school administrators, teachers, and student counsellors.

### **The Concept of Teacher Education**

Teacher education involves the training of administrators, managers, guidance counsellors, and other workforce members required for nation-building (Uju, 2021). Teacher education is the collection of policies, procedures, and programs designed to provide prospective teachers with the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies they need to carry out their duties in the classroom, schools, and community (Nwalado 2018). According to Oyekan (2006), teacher education is the provision of professional education and specialized training over a set length of time in order to prepare people who plan to grow and nurture children into responsible citizens.

### **Challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

Over time, teacher education has been besieged with so many challenges; ranging from lack of professional motivation and students perceiving it as a last option or resort to low government effort in implementation and funding of the educational sector. This has made many students view teacher education and associated profession as

means of acquiring certification but with little interest in skill development. Nwosu (2021) identified the following as issues plaguing teacher education in Nigeria:

- i. Teaching has become unprofessional as a result of a high number of unskilled and underfunded staff remaining in the system. Until the government makes training necessary and follows the policy aggressively, teaching will remain open to anybody, and this situation has the potential to further erode professionalism in the teaching profession.
- ii. Issues of quality assurance and internal efficiency: The academic and emotional qualities of prospective teacher educators are crucial for quality assurance and internal efficiency in the teaching profession. In Nigerian tertiary schools, a trend has emerged in which candidates who apply to higher education institutions for teacher education have either been denied admission or are otherwise unqualified for admission into popular professional courses such as medicine, law, engineering, and so on.
- iii. Poor policy implementation: This poses a threat to the quality of teacher education delivery. Poor quality delivery is to blame for the poor performance of Nigerian teacher graduates from higher learning institutions. Our policies are developed with the future in mind, but the challenge comes when it comes to putting theory into practice during implementation. Several reasons may be to blame for impeding the seamless implementation of educational

- policies, resulting in poor quality delivery.
- iv. Inadequate knowledge and use of information communication technology (ICT): In a globalizing society, another major difficulty for teacher education in Nigeria is the use of ICT. All teachers and its products' relevance in the twenty-first century.
  - v. Poor working circumstances and brain drain: In Nigeria, teachers' working conditions are inadequate to recruit and retain the best minds in Nigerian schools. As a result of the decreasing attraction to the teaching profession and, as a result, the diminishing enrollment in teacher education programs, those who remain in the profession maintain relatively low social status, with corresponding psychological consequences.

Unfortunately, since the teacher education is responsible for equipping people with necessary skills to train every other professional, the negative perceptions which pose as challenge for the profession is dangerous for the overall psychological and socio-economic development of the society. This is in line with Adeniji and Ogunyemi (2023) argument that for real progress in teacher education, government need to revisit the question of funding and policy implementation.

Also, teacher's learning and training must be taken serious, especially the teaching practicum, with rigorous supervision and evaluation to ensure that teachers get the best out of the process. According to Ogunyinka et al. (2015), the nation needs more qualified

teachers to handle concerns of educational quality and stall the chronic scarcity of qualified teachers; and the only way this can be possible is by putting concrete efforts in the business of education.

### **Concept of Productivity and Teachers Productivity**

Productivity is the measurement of an organization's or an individual's ability to achieve a set goal(s). Productivity measures the pace of increase in various organizations' capabilities to accomplish and really execute their mission or goals, as well as guaranteeing that the quality of goods and services meets the desired level (Ayeni & Akinola, 2020). Adu et al. (2015) defines productivity as the degree of efficiency and effectiveness with which an individual helps towards the attainment of predetermined goals. This means that an effective teacher is the one who makes the best use of the available resources to complete the duties outlined in the job description or schedule within the time frame specified.

Productivity in education is the degree to which goals for learning are met, taking into account the input, process, and output stages of education. Additionally, teachers' (instructors) productivity encompasses the teachers' competence in delivering updated and relevant knowledge and skills, effective time management, accurate lesson planning, textbook use, research, student motivation, classroom management, student discipline, and performance feedback.

Higher productivity means the number of items that a person has produced with the input that was made accessible to them.

School productivity is generally defined as the outcomes that a school system achieves for a certain level of input. Teachers' productivity/performance in the school system depend on the achievement of established educational objectives; thus, the level of teachers' performance can only be associated with being good if the students are able to do at least as well as the target requires. As a result, the emphasis is on instructional results rather than instrumental performance.

### **Educational Counselling in Effective Teaching and Learning**

Educational counselling services are expected to develop, assess, and improve educational programs, increase teaching and teacher competence, and minimize costs for students. To make this possible, counsellors are required to build effective rapport with the teachers and learners, listen to their complaints and shortcomings, and offer appropriate assistance to for socio-psychological wellbeing. Educational counselling can serve as a solid foundation for a more comprehensive education for life as it can be used as therapy for individuals with specific personal problems, general "life skills training programme" for building personal resources in order to cope effectively with their future lives (Dha, 2017). According to Egbo (2013), "the total development of a child can only take place in an environment conducive to teaching and learning." In light of the foregoing, educational planners place a premium on all educational services that can improve teaching and learning in schools. As a result, the role of guidance and counselling in effective teaching and learning in schools is

more important for a child's future success.

Counsellor productivity denotes the efficacy of professional counsellors in assisting client to solve their difficult area. Counselling is more supportive and remedial in nature, whereas guidance is more preventive and developmental (Lai Yeung, 2014). Counselling is a set of methods that help an individual solve his problems. Counselling is more emotionally involved in the affective world of individualized learning, that is, emotions and feelings, values, attitudes, and so on (Alordiah et al. 2015). According to Tambuwal (2010), guidance means to direct, pilot, manage, steer, aid, assist, lead, and interact. The scope of guidance covers all sphere of human life in the areas of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and all human developmental stages (Pravat, 2017). Whereas counselling is defined as the process by which a professional counsellor assists a person with a problem to voluntarily change his behaviour and clarify his attitude, idea, and goal in order for his problems to be solved. Also, Counselling is a learning process in which a counsellor assists an individual or individuals in learning, understanding themselves and their surroundings, and being able to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature, and step up, educationally, vocationally, and socially (Egbo, 2015).

Personal guidance assist the client to have enough understanding about issue relating to his health, finances, other relationship and attendant problems, take decision and make rational choices, develop social skills that can enables him operate along with others at



home, school, place of work and other social milieus and assist individual to develop problem solving skills to cope with problems instead of avoiding them (Eweniyi & Olagunju, 2002).

The goals of school guidance and counselling services are to assist students in meeting their basic psychological and physiological needs. The purpose of guidance services is therefore to provide emphasis and strength to educational programs. School guidance program includes (Gibson, 2009 cited in Lunenburg, 2010). To provide realization of student potentials, to help children with developing problems, to contribute to the development of the school's curriculum, to provide teachers with technical assistance and to contribute to the mutual adjustment of students and the school. understanding themselves and developing relationships with peers, balancing permissiveness and controls in the school setting, achieving academic success, and providing opportunities for independence (Heyden, 2011).

Close contact with students allows educational counsellors to have a thorough understanding of students' needs, behaviors, and ambitions as they grow. For numerous years, teachers observed their students in the classroom on an average of 180–200 school days every year. Except for the parents, no other adult has such close interaction with the students. A teacher/counsellor can also instill in children a positive attitude and respect for all types of labor, resulting in inculcation of positive attitude to labor and dignity labor. Teachers/counsellors have an indirect or direct influence on students' attitudes, which

might influence their choice, hobbies, and career-related decisions, as well as their work values (Surendra, 2020).

School counsellors more than any other professionals in a school context, play a critical role in getting to know their students. This allows them to form a bond with each pupil based on mutual trust and respect. Students are more inclined to approach their school counsellors and teachers to discuss personal difficulties as a result of this relationship. Furthermore, teachers with a history in counselling and guidance will be able to deal with student concerns more professionally. As a teacher/counsellor, you should be able to listen attentively, exhibit empathy and warmth toward kids, and develop a friendly, mutual respect and esteem relationship. Teacher/Counsellors should also be able to assist students in dealing with their problems and concerns in a professional manner. In fact, a teacher who has received training in guidance and counselling will be able to provide therapy to students, individually or in groups, to help them deal with problems that they would not be able to provide otherwise (Surendra, 2020).

### **Revitalizing Educational Counselling Service for Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Many of the recent pandemics have caused considerable disruption in face to face professional service delivery especially in the education sector. To combat this challenge, advocacy for e-learning and cyber counselling became a common norm in teaching and learning. Thus, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century education, e-learning has become a new standard that educational institutions in Nigeria have adopted (Igbokwe et al., 2020).

What this portend is that skill training, advocacy campaign for continue education should be made part of education counsellors job to encourage teachers to upgrade their pedagogy to enable effective teaching and learning.

In addition, counsellors are encouraged to ensure that schools are sensitive to local settings within a framework of core standards and principles. Every school should be able to adapt to the demands of the local community and provide a curriculum that addresses local problems and priorities (Nwosu, 2021). Thus, in order to revitalize teacher education, there should be a balance of theory and practice, a universal teacher education curriculum with clearly synchronized program contents and underlying epistemological concepts for delivery, the importance of in-depth content knowledge of subjects that teachers are prepared to teach, including expected competencies, and program evaluation. Also, there should be consistency between the program's stated goals and principles, their structures and implementation, including training systems and process assessment, adequate program resources, including an appropriate institutional environment for the effective and efficient launch of all programs, and global and national recognition of teaching as a profession that requires certification before professional teachers can practice.

Teachers in training should play an active role in the training process since there is an imperative requirement for participatory teacher education. Teachers should be involved in decisions about the needs to

which their training must react, the challenges that must be solved in the workplace on a daily basis, and the specific knowledge and skills that must be passed on to them. Teachers in the participatory approach must be self-directed and self-taught. Every component of the training must be founded on introspection and reflection.

Training is essential for reviving teacher guidance and counselling to meet the need of 21st century. This is due to the fact that, in addition to topic instruction, instructors are increasingly tasked with a variety of obligations. Some of their primary responsibilities include guidance and counselling. These two words have various connotations in the guidance and counselling literature. The former refers to assisting students' overall growth, while the latter is typically aimed at assisting pupils with issues. In other words, guidance work is proactive and developmental, whereas counselling is more supportive and remedial. The global trend in giving guidance and counselling appears to have shifted from a casework and remedial strategy to a preventive, developmental approach (Dhal, 2017). Because all instructors are involved in student guidance and counselling to varied degrees at school, there is a clear and pressing need for guidance and counselling training for all teachers. Some guidance instructors have actually insisted that similar training be provided to all teachers. They even considered it "the basic requirement of a teacher" (Dhal, 2017).

According to Ogwuche et al., (2021), counsellor education should be reinvigorated and repositioned to prepare aspiring and



working counsellors to:

- i. create a successful therapy for the treatment of psychological issues such as low self-esteem, anger, and religious intolerance.
- ii. Participate in the provision of a variety of counselling services in schools, internally displaced persons' camps (IDPs), and religious centers; For people who have lost their logical thinking abilities, rational emotive therapy is used extensively, as is vocational counselling for unemployed youngsters.
- iii. Counselling with renewed vigour in penal institutions, reformation, rehabilitation, and integration must be prioritized, particularly with jailed terrorists. Here, vocational counselling and knowledge with religious counselling are essential principles.
- iv. Provide traumatized victims with adjustment and information counselling at rehabilitation centres;
- v. Counselling for unity in diversity must be the primary goal of all counselling efforts. Prejudice and intolerance must be combated through counselling against discriminatory treatment (in employment, admittance, social welfare, etc.).
- vi. Value reorientation is also essential in counsellor education, which would be best accomplished under the auspices of a national guidance ministry.
- vii. The nomads demand more counselling to stem the flow of ongoing herdsmen killings and to teach them the importance of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching is an important activity in Nigeria that allows for the acquisition of skills and is recognized as the most fundamental and strategic profession for producing the personnel required for national development. As a result, adequate teacher training is required for the benefit of society so that the country can boast of competent individuals whose performances will place Nigeria as an intellectual behemoth in Africa. Improving guidance and counselling services in schools is necessary because improved guidance services can be used to address a variety of issues such as poverty, threats to public health, violence, educational inequity, mental health, workforce, and economic development, while improved school counselling is also critical to student academic achievement and adjustment to various life situations and helps to address educational inequities, increase educational attainment, and lead to improved student academic achievement and adjustment to various life situations (Mulhern, 2020).

Despite the fact that many critical factors have been identified as barriers to teacher education in Nigeria, it is hoped that the implementation of the aforementioned steps will influence the outcome, direction, and priorities to be recognized, thereby positively changing the value system and remodelling teacher education towards meeting the nation's aspiration to build a veritable standard of education through dedicated, competent, and committed teachers. Teachers should be given what they deserve in order for society to receive what it deserves from teachers in order to establish a thriving and dependable economy.

## Recommendations

- i. Teacher training institutions should make guidance and counselling part of teacher education, with the aim of making the trainees teacher counsellor(s).
- ii. The government and school administration should provide adequate training and funding for counsellors operation in school setting.
- iii. Counsellors in school should arrange moral counselling and advocacy sensitization programs for school leaders, teachers, parents, and the entire society on correct knowledge and re-orientation about counselling as a discipline, as well as the responsibilities and functions of counsellors.
- iv. School should provide for the needs of school counsellors to make them functional and effective.
- v. Training and retraining opportunities should be provided for school counsellors to update their knowledge.
- vi. Teachers, students, and parents should be involved in crafting policies to ensure character and academic culture in schools.

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