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ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF UNIVERSITY BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME (UBE) THROUGH THE CONTRIBUTION OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

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ABSTRACT
This study aimed at ensuring the success of Universal basic education through the contributions of Guidance Counselors. Two research questions guided the study. The survey design was used. A researcher developed questionnaire was used for the study and subjected to experimentation and reliability. The population for the study was all the 64 junior and senior secondary schools in the 32 Junior Secondary schools and 32 senior secondary schools in Ogidi Education zone of Anambra state. Census sampling was used since the population size was small. Mean score was used to answer the research questions. The findings showed that guidance Counselors in Ogidi Education zone actually did their job as school counselors and also provided adequate counselling services which in turn would contribute to the overall success of the Universal Basic Education programme. The implications of findings and recommendations were made.

Introduction

The Universal basic Education programme (UBE) was borne out of the desire of the Obasanjo administration to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as to stimulate and promote or accelerate will be made available to children of school age in Nigeria at no cost. It is a nine year free and compulsory basic education.

This laudable programme was officially flagged off at the Agricultural square Sokoto on 30th September, 1999 by the President and commander in chief of the federal republic of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo.

According to Gidado (2004) the executive secretary of Universal basic Education Commission, Abuja, the UBE programme is Nigeria's strategy for the achievement of education for all (EFA) and the education-related Millennium development goals

(MDGS). It is one of the strategies for realizing the nation's economic agenda as enunciate by the National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS) 2000. Through founded in 1999, the schemes progress was stalled by lack of legal teeth for the execution of certain aspects of the programme. So as soon as the president accented to sign the UBE bill on 26th of may, 2004 following its passage by the National assembly life came into scheme for an unfettered free and compulsory for all children within the school age target population. It guarantees regular funding from the federal Government to ensure its success. It also made a provision for the establishment of a UBE commission both at the federal and state levels for the effective co-ordination and implantation of the programme. This commission was formally constituted or established on the 6th October, 2004. In addition to the forgoing, UBE was designed as an evidence of Nigerian's commitment to the world declaration on education for all at JOMTIEN in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 as well as the New Delhi declaration of 1991 and its follow-up conference in Beijing in 2001. All these efforts were geared towards making the E-9 countries i.e the nine countries of the world with largest concentration of illiterate adults of which Nigeria is one, to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest time possible. The programme also is a formal public indication of Nigeria acceptance of the Durbar statement of commitment of 1998 and the then OAU decade of education in Africa 1997-2006, which requires all African states to broaden their access to qualitative and affordable education as a foundation stone for sustainable socio-economic development of the continent.

To ensure and maintain her claim as the giant of Africa and being a senatorial to all these conventions, the Obasanjo-led government decide to actualize the spirit and letters of these declarations by setting up this UBE scheme.

According to the Act establishing this programme, the objectives of UBE are:

1. To develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
2. To provide free compulsory UBE for every Nigerian child of the school age.

3. Ro reduce drastically the incidence of drop-out from formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.
4. To cater for the learning needs of young persons, who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the promotion of basis Education
5. To ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative skills and life skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed laying of a solid foundation for a life-long learning.

Aims

Basic Education is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them;

i. Live meaningful and fulfilling life.
ii. Contribute to the development of the society.
iii. Derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits from society.
iv. Discharge their civic obligation competently.

However, many writers have expressed their views concerning the Universal Basic Education. Workshops, seminars, training and re-training programmes are organized for teachers to ensure successful sustenance of UBE programme but less emphasis is paid to the inclusion of guidance and counseling programme in the UBE activities.

School counselor is a respected professional who has much to contribute to the welfare, effectiveness in the adjustment of not only he students but also of the principals, teachers, parents, other members of the school and its community at large.

For UME to achieve its mission which is; that every child that passes through the system must acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communication manipulative and life skill to be useful to him and the society at large by possessing relevant ethical, moral and civic values. Guidance counseling should be given the opportunity to use their professional competence on ensure the success of UBE which is the purpose of this study on ensuring the success of UBE through the contributions of guidance counsellor.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following two research questions;

1. What is the role of Guidance Counselors in school?
2. What counseling services do they provide to ensure the success of UBE?

Research Method

The design of the study was a survey. It aimed at eliciting response on contributions of guidance counselors towards the success of UBE. The study was design to elicit information from the guidance counselor on their roles in the school. The study covered the contributions of guidance counselor towards ensuring the success of UBE. It was limited in senior secondary school in Ogidi education zone of Anambra State. The population of the study is the entire guidance counselor in Ogidi education zone, based on the data from Projects research Statistics (PRS) department of Anambra State universal basic education Board Ogidi zone in September 2008. The Population of practicing Counsellors is 64 both in the senior and junior secondary school section of the zone. Since the population was small census sampling was used in order to avoid sampling error. The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (SD). Face and content validity was used to validate the instrument Draft of the instrument was given to 3 experts, one in the departments of measurement and evaluation and in Guidance Counselling in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. They were given free hand to add or remove any item of the instrument that is related to the conduct of the role of Guidance Counsellors in schools. Based on the contributions and suggestions of the experts, some items were modified and some cases new ones were incorporated. To test for reliability, the Person's product moment coefficient was used. Pilot study was carried out in (10) secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone using split half method. The mean rating were coded and subjected to statistical analysis and the RGCSQ yielded a coefficient alpha value of 0.87 which was considered high enough for the study. The researchers personally administered the instrument on the respondents. The researcher waited and collected the complete copies of the questionnaire. All the 64 copies distributed were retrieved. Mean scores were used to answer research questions. Values were assigned to the opinion of the respondents as follows:

Strongly Agree = 4

Agree = 3
Disagree = 2
Strongly Disagree =1

Any mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted while any mean score below 2.5 was rejected.

Presentation Results

Table 1: means score on Role of Guidance Counsellors in school

S/N	Item	X	Decision
1.	Guidance Counsellors help the students to understand themselves and appraise their capabilities.	2.9	Accepted
2.	Help students adjust and rediscover themselves	2.6	Accepted
3.	Help the individual students discover his present state so as to relate to his past and future life for his own betterment	3.5	Accepted
4.	Guide the individual to set meaningful and achievable objectives	3.3	Accepted
5.	Provide counselling to students in their educational, vocational. Personal and social concerns.	2.5	Accepted
6.	Visit educational, training institutes, firms as well as business and industries to gather information applicable to students in his school.	2.7	Accepted
7.	Provide parents with information about school policies, procedures, school course offerings, opportunities. Requirements and resources that can contribute to the fullest development of the children.	1.5	Not Accepted
8.	Section mean	2.7	Accepted

Table one above, the mean score for items 1-6 exceeded 2.5 for guidance Counsellors. This shows that Guidance counsellors actually help students understand themselves. Know their capabilities etc. They also help students adjust and rediscover themselves and meaningful goals. Students are made aware of their educational vocational and personal opportunities available to them. Most of the Guidance Counsellors do not give students enough of the required information they require for their advancement for logistic reasons. The section mean of 2.7 shows that most of the roles of Guidance Counsellors were accepted.

Table 2: mean scores in service provided by Guidance Counsellors to ensure success of the Universal Basic education (UBE)

S/No	Item	mean	Decision
8.	Organize and co-ordinate students referral in pupil personal	2.8	Accepted

9.	Organize orientation sessions for new students	2.6	Accepted
10.	Organize guidance activities in school like career days	3.5	Accepted
11.	Assist students choose appropriate career	3.4	Accepted
12.	Render appraisal services which involves use of test and non-test items	2.5	Accepted
13.	Provide placement and follow up services use for students	2.7	Accepted
14.	Provide information about students to those who need them	1.6	Not Accepted
	Section mean	2.7	Accepted

In table 2, items 8 – 13 have mean scores above 2.5. This is an indication that all those guidance services mentioned are essential to ensure of the Universal basic Education programme. Table 2 has a section mean of buttress the already made assertion that all the guidance services mentioned if implemented will go a long way to ensure the success of the programme (UBE).

Discussion of findings

In relations to research question one, the data analyzed indicated that guidance counselors actually play the role of the helping students understand themselves, appraise their capabilities, worth, potentials and their personality characteristics in theirs true perspective. This agreed with the opinion of Unachukwu (1989) who said that the school guidance counselor is a trained professional and adjust realistically to their environment. Also Guidance Cousnellors are in agreement that they help students adjust and rediscover themselves so as to relate their past and future life their own betterment. Individual students are also guided to set meaningful and achievable goals in life.

Also guidance counselors provide students counseling in their educational, vocational, personal and social concerns. They visit educational, training institutes, firms as well as business and industries to gather information students need for their welfare and upkeep in school. But unfortunately because of the logistic problem the function of providing parents with information about school policies, procedures, school course offering, opportunities, requirements and resources that can contribute to the fullest development of their children neglected. This very aspect of the job

of guidance counselor which is information service is often neglected is very unfortunate. Okonkwo and Ozurumba (1989) observed the vital importance of this by asserting that information services is very basic to all guidance services. It is planned in such a way that the students are provided with essential information on educational and personal social issues in order to make adequate decision on my any of the said area. Information service requires that a counsellor has to be very current with changes in the world of work, Education and other sphere of human endeavour. Absolute information may destroy individual in life. The information must be to the point otherwise the student is prone to wrong decisions. The counsellor is obliged to have means keeping students well informed and motivating them to utilize such information. The need is more in our society where students are easily influenced by misleading models. Adequate information will make for intelligent planning and logic reasoning.

In relation to research question two, the data analyzed showed that these guidance services are provided in schools to ensure the success of Universal basic education (UBE). They include referrals in pupil personnel services, orientation sessions for new students and transferring students in other classes but newly enrolled in their present schools. Orientation services is a group approaches in which student and indeed, all those who find themselves in new situations are assisted to adjust to that new situation. This may be in the classrooms, like moving room classroom to another, school, like moving from one school to another, town, like moving from one town to another; etc.

Anagbogu (1988) opined that orientation services deals with new educational environment or social environment. Orientation programme provides effective skills for adaption and accommodation of the school rules and regulations, industries and various institutions. This, no doubt, will lead to better performance on the part of the individual. Orientation is not only at the beginning of a course, it also takes place when an individual wants to embark on any event or function. Guidance Counsellors also organize career days; render appraisal services which involves test and non test items. They also provide placement and follow up services for students.

Implication of the findings

The implication of this study is that the Universal Basic Education programme can only be successfully carried out if guidance counselors perform their duties very well. Such duties include: resolution of Educational, vocational, socio personal problems. Others include assisting parents and community at large. Also building a conducive living atmosphere, acting as the technical leader of a guidance committee, construction and administering of test instruments. Helping to place students, collecting, analyzing and recording of information, guidance counselors also carry out research activities.

Recommendations

1. Government should train and post better qualified guidance counsellors not only in secondary schools but also in primary schools because of the importance.
2. Guidance Counsellors in secondary schools should be class free so as to enable them function better.
3. Government should equip the Guidance Cousnellors with the required and necessary tools with which to carry out their duties diligently and effectively.
4. Government should improve the conditions of service of practicing guidance counselors in terms better welfare package and better remuneration.
5. Government should from time to time send professional counsellors to workshops and seminars to be abreast of the modern trends in their area and also to update their knowledge.
6. School Guidance Counsellors must in turn show extra commitment to their duties and non performers must be shown the way out.
7. All practicing guidance counsellors are duty bound to be members of the counseling association of Nigeria where they discuss their problems together with a view of improving their performance on the job.

Conclusion

In secondary school is a period when any foot that is wrongly placed may be dangerous. The counsellor would be of help through career talks, the use of information services, excursions etc. Some of the students in senior secondary school have tender minds and therefore required careful handling.

At all times, the Counsellor must be guided by the broad aims of secondary education as contained in the National Policy of Education (1998) which states that the overall national objectives should be: “preparation for

useful living within the society; and preparation for higher Education". The students may be ignorant of how to achieve any or both aims of secondary education. This implies that they should be guided.

Guidance Counsellors should ensure the success of the Universal Basic education progrmme by providing effective guidance services in our schools. This is in line with Anagbogu 919980 who pined that guidance service may be seen as professional help provided to a student or groups of students in such areas as personal, educational and vocational needs. They are greatly concerned with helping the individual gain insight and understanding of himself in relation to present and future environment such that decisions and choices made would lead to more satisfying and rewarding experiences.

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