

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF MODERN COUNSELLING PROGRAMMES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS: A PLATFORM TO ACHIEVE TOTAL PERSON IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

*Non implementation of modern counselling programmes at the public primary school sector is associated with many deviant behaviours that are rampant among school pupils in the contemporary period and these include among others; pilfering, stealing, fighting, bullying, side talk while teaching and learning is on-going and so on. The implementation of modern counselling at the public primary school sector may usher in well behaved pupils capable of bringing positive development to themselves and the nation at large. This paper highlights some counselling interventions: (cognitive restructuring, self-efficacy training and so on) capable of replacing illogical thoughts of school pupils to logical ones and this would promote total person among school pupils and made them capable of making positive impact in the society and at the end make suggestions to policy makers. These suggestions include the appointment of school guidance counsellors at public primary schools without the attachment of any other assignment aside counselling roles and so on.*

**Keywords: Implementation, Counselling Programmes, School pupils, Total person**

### **Introduction**

Primary school is the bedrock of all educational system globally and whatever affects the system would have carry over effects on the subsequent system. The average age of pupil in the primary sector ranges from 2 to 12 years plus. Crèche 2 to 5 years plus and Basic 1 – 6 between 6 – 12 years respectively. According to National Policy on Education (2004) edition, primary education is the education given in an institution to the pupils between 6 – 12 years while Nursery education is the education given to the children between 2 to 5 years in an educational institution. In line with NPE (2004) number d and number g of the objectives of the primary education (d) character and moral training and the development of sound attitude; and (g) providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trader and crafts of the locality. It is obvious that education is an instrument per excellence for effective and meaningful development of an individual and society at large and due to this, all stakeholders are expected to take the bull by the horn in the realisation of the primary education objectives and at the end, it will enhance subsequent ladder and also meaningful national development (social development, economic development, moral development) and so on would definitely takes place.

### **Nature of School Pupils**

In this context, school pupils refer to children in primary school setting regardless of whether they are in private or public schools. The children have more or less similar characteristics; however, differ on biological composition as well as the environment where these pupils are brought up ever before their primary school enrolment. They exhibits different personality traits which includes among others, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and

conscientiousness. These traits may mar or make if right counselling is not put in place. An extraversion pupils are pupils that are ever ready to give response on any question being raised even when the response about to make is not sure and they must be treated carefully so that the morale and zeal to learn would not go into extinction.

School pupils at times exhibit bullying among themselves naturally. They may also exhibit pilfering stealing, fighting, low self-concept, talking in the class while teaching and learning is on-going, most importantly they can even engage in various forms of examination malpractices due to probably low self-esteem/low self-concept. Pupils who exhibits low self-concept tends to encounter difficulties in almost every area. Low self-concept learners have a high level of anxiety, encounter difficulty in making friends, adjust less easily to school and tend to be hampered in school achievement (Ikediashi, 2010). Above are some of natural characteristics that may be exhibited by school pupils and if such features are going on among school pupils unchecked. The pupils, parents, teachers and the society would have shares of the negative effects of such deviant behaviour. Hence, the need for counselling programmes among school pupils becomes obvious.

### **Psychoanalytic Theory of Sigmund Freud**

Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is of the view that childhood experience form the later part of personality of individual and that is why stakeholders (parents, teachers, and policy makers) should ensure conducive environment for good upbringing of the children. It is a method of psychological treatment that looks into the past causes to understand present behaviour. It explores how the individual adjusts to the various conflict of his or her development. Such adjustment could be examined in relationship to stresses of weaning, toilet training, relationship with parents and puberty. He is of the view that the Id, Ego and superego dictates majorly of human personality. Through psychoanalysis, individual is thus helped to understand his own mechanism of adjustment and is hereby helped to resolve his/her basic problem. Psychoanalysis is a model or system of counselling which Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) opined and applied in his clinical practice. It is a world-view, a comprehensive theory, a therapeutic treatment modality, and an approach to scientific inquiry (Akande by Oramah, 2012). The word “psychoanalysis” is a combination of two words that is “psyche” which means mind/soul which is abstract in nature while “analysis” means “taking apart”. Therefore, it is a process of understanding the “workings of the mind”. According to Freud, psychoanalysis assumes a psychotherapeutic application of the science of mind.

#### **Freud view of human nature**

- (a) He believes that human being is essentially biological, and born with certain instinctual drives and that behaviour is a function of reacting in-depth to these drives.
- (b) He also believes that human beings are irrational, unsocialized and destructive of themselves and others.
- (c) He is also of the opinion that there are three different levels of awareness that influence personality development namely; (i) the conscious (ii) the preconscious and (iii) the unconscious.

The knowledge of the above would assist in no small measure in handling effectively behavioural problems of school pupils. Since this skill formed part of the training of the guidance counsellor,

their appointment at public primary school axis would help in building total person and at the end curb undesirable behaviour exhibits by school pupils and Nigeria would experience peace. This role is missing at the public primary school sector because of non-implementation of modern guidance counselling programmes. No doubt, many teachers are in habit of serious application of corporal punishment for any deviant behaviour exhibits by the school pupils. They lack professional skill capable of handling psychological problems among school pupils and the application of psychological principles, theories, and techniques to behavioural problems among school pupils that can enhance positive adjustment capable of being made a total person possible can be done effectively by guidance counsellor.

Total means wholeness and of use to express the entirety of something e.g. object or event. Therefore, total person could be referred to a person who is readily prepared to face life challenges through acquired or inherent values, discipline, knowledge, preparedness and as such the person is mentally, emotionally and physically healthy person. In Yoruba traditional setting, whenever traditional marriage is being contracted, after some days or weeks the groom provides full matches and a full keg of palm wine to the bride family to show that the bride has not been defiled. This symbolizes that the bride is full, whole, undefiled, and this brings happiness and joy to the immediate family of the wife. However, if the wife has been defiled, half a keg of palm wine would be brought to the family of the bride and it is a symbol of shame. Total person therefore can only effectively be inculcated among school pupils through guidance counsellor and that is why researcher is advocating for implementation of modern counselling at the public primary school axis in Nigeria.

### **Social Cognitive Theory of Learning of Bandura**

This theory emphasized three important things that could facilitate learning and they are modelling, observation, and imitation. It is the believe of the proponent of this theory that people learn through the observation of a model and whether what the model does is wrong or right individual trend towards exhibits such act. And any behaviour an individual exhibits that is accompanied with reward there is every likelihood that such behaviour would be strengthened and in other way round behaviour that is not accompanied with reward is likely to go into extinction. Social learning theory describes the acquisition of skills that are developed exclusively or primarily within a social group.

It depends on how individuals either succeed or fail at dynamic interaction with groups and promote the development of individual emotional and practical skills as well as accurate perception of self and acceptance of others. In line with this theory, people learn from one another's observation, imitation and modelling. Self-efficacy reflects an individual understands of what skills he or she can offer in a group setting. Therefore, implementation of modern counselling programmes would assist in no small measure to put everything in place that school pupils acquired desirable behaviour without application of corporal punishment which may create additional problems among young ones.

### **Building in total person among Nigeria primary school through counselling programmes**

The essence of all educational programmes is to produce children that would be useful to him/herself and the entire society. The road to build total person among Nigeria school pupils are manifest.

## **Parents**

Parents must lead by example at home, workplace and within the entire community. These pupils are watching both verbal and non-verbal cues of their parents and even when parents are doing or exhibiting behaviour that negates the societal expectation, the pupil will still believe that such behaviour is ideal and would not think twice before they exhibit such as well. Parents should inculcate the spirit of respect, obedience and discipline into the lives of school pupils, and when they are in school, they would not find it difficult to do it. According to the Holy Bible “Train up a child the way he should go and when he is old, he would not depart from it. The life is script, parents should be conscious what he does because it would eventually become a blue print for the children and that they are the pictures of their parents. Parents should abstain from all forms of child abuse or child labour. They should sensor type of crèche or school to enroll their pupils. After their children have been enrolled in the crèche or primary school, they must visit them occasionally and ask for their moral and intellectual development and must equally work hand in hand to ensure the development of “total person” in their wards act.

Relevant educational materials capable of developing positive attitude, being moral, self-concept, self-efficacy among school pupils must be procured by the parents. Parents must avoid being at logger heads with their school pupils’ teachers for any form of misunderstanding. The result of these actions would not do any good. There should be a development of positive mindset among school pupils where peaceful coexistence occurs among the stakeholders, hence, it becomes necessary for parents to maintain good interpersonal relationship among the teachers of their wards. Organizing excursion is another method through which total person of school pupils could be built. Whether private or public primary school, they must inculcate habit of taking their pupils out of the classroom to a designated place where they would be able to use their senses such as: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and possibly thinking. While planning for such trip, certain steps have to be taken into consideration (a) cost: place to be visit must be affordable to all (b) proximity: place to be visit should be unnecessary far away to their locality (c) objective: the objective to be achieved must be commensurate to their ability (d) safety: their safety must equally put into consideration (e) age: knowledge to acquire as a result of the excursion must be in tandem to their age level.

Excursion would definitely promote social relationship among the school pupils. This is because while inside the place of visit, questions are going to be asked after some discussions have taken place and pupils may answer individually or collectively. While doing these, interpersonal relations are being promoted. Intellectual aspect of the total person of school pupils is also promoted through excursion. Pupils are engaged on some intellectual discussions relevant to their age/level during the excursion trip by their teachers.

## **Counselling Programmes among School Pupils**

Counselling is a process of assisting an individual or group through application of professional methods and technique which would eventually facilitate positive development among the clients. School pupils exhibit many deviant behaviour due to so many factors ranging from environment, biological/hereditary factor, peer influence, parental factor, inordinate desire and so on. These factors combine together may lead school pupils to exhibit truancy, stealing, bullying, fighting, disobeying and so on and of course that is why variety of counselling programme should be

organized and mounting at primary school setting as early as possible. Cognitive restructuring strategy is a psycho-therapeutic process by learning to identify and dispute irrational thoughts such as all-or-nothing thinking (splitting), magical thinking and emotional reasoning, which are commonly associated with many mental health issues. The strategy has proved effective in many studies. Ogunlade (2016) found cognitive restructuring intervention effective on enhanced students' attitude to schooling in Ibadan. Ofole (2010) also found cognitive restructuring effective on HIV risk perception and attitude toward HIV counselling, testing of road safety personnel and so on.

Cognitive restructuring involves identification of problematic cognitive known as "automatic thoughts" which are dysfunctional or negative view of self and school as well. The world or future identification of cognitive distortions in the automatic thoughts becomes catastrophic which means magnifying or minimizing the object, situation circumstance or events. Challenging stressful thinking errors, replacing illogical thought with realistic thought through mounting this strategy, school pupils would have imbibe logical thought capable of making them develops positively and by the time they are old, they would become a total person and useful to themselves and the entire society.

**Academic Self-Efficacy Training:** This involves series of activities purely organized to develop among school pupils to discover and see themselves of being able to excel in their studies and this belief would prompt them to diligently pursue their studies even in the midst of some challenges. Self-efficacy comprises belief people have about their capacity to bring about particular outcomes. It is the confidence a person has in bringing about a specific outcome (Efklides, 2011). Biehler (1978) noted pupils who attain high grade develop positive self-concept and self-confidence and are less likely to indulge in cheating in examination, whereas those who could not obtain high grade develop a sense of failure. Academic self-efficacy also found positively correlated to students' attitude to schooling (Ogunlade, 2016). Other counselling programme in schools that could be mounted among school pupils are self-efficacy training programme, emotional training programme (social quotient, intelligent quotient, emotional quotient, adversary quotient) and so on.

Other roles of counselling at the public primary school level:

**Career development:** career education is the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his or her way of living (Oyediran, 2012) early exposure of school pupils to the world of work would definitely prevent them from accident career decision making in life. Tantalizing school pupils with different careers would in no small measure assist them in choosing a realistic career in the nearest future. Inclusion of counsellor at public primary school axis would facilitate and integrate career development in educational programmes. However, despite the relevance of counselling programmes at this first stage of educational ladder, the sector is left without implementing school guidance and counselling programme. Casual observation of public primary schools in Nigeria schools reveals that modern counselling programme is yet to be implemented in that sensitive and first stage of educational ladder.

## Conclusion

It could be concluded that non implementation of modern counselling programmes at the public primary school sector is dangerous to the school pupils and the society at large due to the fact that school pupils are at their formative years and they need a lot of preventive counselling which could be best given by a trained guidance counsellors

## Recommendations

1. Government should introduce modern counselling programmes at the public primary school sector so as to produce total child in all sectors of the economy.
2. Counseling psychologist be appointed into public primary schools and should not be allowed to take other assignment aside counselling roles.
3. Individual and group counselling programmes must be organized periodically at public primary schools to enhance positive adjustment among school pupils.
4. Parents should work hand in hand with personnel at the public primary school sector. That is they should avoid being at logger head with school personnel.
5. Lastly, educational stakeholders (parents, teachers, guidance counsellor) should lead by example.

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