

Overview Of Policy And Practice Of Guidance And Counseling In Nigeria And The United States Of America (Usa): Role Of Computer Technology

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ABSTRACT: *Guidance and Counseling began to emerge as an identifiable aspect of the Nigerian educational enterprise in the mid 50s. It is a discipline whose history emanated from the experience of happenings in the United States of America and it is these happenings that influenced the establishment of the Guidance and Counseling as a discipline in Nigeria. This paper therefore examines the policies and practices of guidance and counseling in Nigeria and the trends in the United States of America. The significant role of computer technology in facilitating the rendering of guidance and counseling services is also assessed. The paper recommends amongst others that Government of Nigeria (representing the developing nations) and USA (representing the developed world) should be more proactive and give priority attention to issues of guidance and counseling. Guidance and counseling is an extremely sensitive aspect of the lives of people in the society and as such should not be treated with levity.*

Keywords-*Guidance and Counseling, Policy and Practice, Computer Technology, Third World, Developed World, Government.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is informed by the growing level of social disorder, vices, unemployment, unguided goals, irrationalities in career selection and development the world over. The existence of all these aforementioned ills is a mere pointer to the fact that a greater percentage of the world's population lacks a true sense of direction, leadership, guidance and counseling. The way out is therefore to examine and create awareness on the essence of guidance and counseling. Guidance and Counseling has been practiced right from time immemorial in an informal manner, today it is well established. It is a discipline that transverse all human endeavour, that is, it is an integral part of every other discipline with special attention to persons' day today activities in those disciplines.

History is a continuum and any kind of division imposed on it is more or less arbitrary. Guidance and Counseling as a discipline has an abundant evidence to show that it originated from America at the beginning of the 20th Century because of the society's emphasis on individual development. This could be seen from several historical events that took place in the United States like the Vocational Guidance Movement, Standardized Testing Movement, Mental Health Movement, Pro-counseling Legislative Acts.

Guidance and counseling is an essential tool for effective interpersonal relationship for self-understanding as well as equitable adjustment to one's environment. In support of this, Odebunmi (1992) saw it as encompassing the full range of personalized assistance given to the individual seeking to expand his self-understanding and his understanding of others. The guidance and counseling profession is one that is unique and of immense importance to mankind (Egbochuku 1999). Although it is practiced in a local form in many quarters, yet many people have not come to grasp with what it entails.

However, Guidance and Counseling began to emerge as an identifiable aspect of the Nigerian educational enterprise in the mid '50s. It is a discipline whose history emanated from the experience of happenings in the United States of America and it is these happenings that influence the establishment of the Guidance and Counseling as a discipline in Nigeria. This paper therefore examines the policies and practices of guidance and counseling in Nigeria and the trends in the United States of America. The paper intends to bring to the fore the central role of guidance and counseling in the development of a total man. The significant role of computer technology in facilitating the rendering of guidance and counseling services is also assessed. The policy recommendations provided in this work are meant to challenge governments of nations to proactively embrace decision making approaches that could engender transformation of the entire society.

1. CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNING

1.1 Guidance

Guidance is derived from the word guide, which invariably means to “direct on a course, to give instruction and to manage. Guidance is the aid given to a person who realizes that he/she needs assistance in order to make him/herself a useful and worthwhile citizen of the society which he/she lives in. Moreover, Odebunmi (1992) saw guidance as encompassing the full range of personalized assistance given to the individual seeking to expand his/herself understanding and his/her understanding of others. Egbochuku (2008) opined that Guidance would enable the individuals to answer such questions as: Who am I? What am I capable of doing? How can I fit into my society? How can I maximally use the opportunities within my environment to achieve my life goals?

Shartzter and Stone (1976) defined guidance to mean “to direct, pilot or guide. Guidance is a more directive or prescriptive form of help. Idowu (1998) sees it as a family name for all the helping service within the general educational and community systems. To make the meaning to be more explicit, Akinade (1987) remarked that some specialists assert that guidance is a broad term used to cover a number of specialist services available in schools. Such services include the information service, testing service, placement service, follow-up service and counseling service. But looking at the modern day global world, the provision of specialist services are no more limited to the school, it now includes the community in general.

From the above, guidance can be summarily defined as cognitive educational services (within or outside the school system) that help people understand themselves, provided the client reveals accurate, reliable and valid information about himself and his environment.

2.2 Counseling

Counseling is a process of helping individuals or group of people to gain self-understanding in order to be themselves. counseling is a reflection of a professional relationship between a trained counselor and a client. Olayinka (1972) defined it to be a process whereby a person is helped in a face-to-face relationship while Makinde (1983) explained counseling as an enlightened process whereby people help others by encouraging their growth. Counseling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-growth, self-development and self-actualization.

2.3 Types of Counseling

There are two major types of Counseling, namely: individual counseling and group counseling.

- (a) Individual Counseling: This is referred to as one-to-one counseling. It occurs between the professionally trained Counselor (Therapist) and his client (Counselee). The goal of this is to help the client to understand himself, clarify and direct his thought, in order to make a worthwhile decision. Through this, clients’ problems are alleviated. It is mainly to bring about change in the client either by altering maladaptive behaviour, learning the decision making process or preventing problems (National Open University of Nigeria,2006)
- (b) Group Counseling: This is a counseling session that takes place between the professionally trained counselor and a group of people. Number of this group should not be more than seven, or at least ten, in order to have a cohesive group and an effective well controlled counseling session. Members of the groups are clients/counselees whose tasks or problems that are meant for resolution are similar. During group counseling, a free atmosphere is allowed and freedom of speech is encouraged. The counselees are free to express themselves individually as counseling progresses so that encumbrances surrounding the tasks or problems to be resolved would be open for all to consider and benefit from. All counselees are expected to participate and express their feelings. The responsibility of the counselor during group counseling is to help remove the marks covering the problem. He helps open up the problem with the professional competence and knowledge he possesses. The counselor is not just a member of the group; he is to direct the affairs and situations.

2.4 Classification of Counseling

Counseling can be classified according to different spheres of life in which human beings could encounter problems.

- (a) Educational Counseling: problems that could be of learning, teaching and that of education generally are handled here.
- (b) Marital Counseling: problems that could emanate from married life beginning from spouse selection are resolved here.
- (c) Personal Social Counseling: problems including personality and life in general are taken care of here.

- (d) Rehabilitation Counseling: problems emanating from life disruptions such as accidents, retrenchment and natural mishaps are handled here.
- (e) Vocational Counseling: problems from work and training, career choice making and adjustment are handled here.

Only three of the above types of counseling are mainly practiced in the school setting. These are Educational, Vocational and Personal-social counseling which will be the full responsibility of the school counselor. However, a counselor in private practice might need to engage in the other types of counseling depending on the needs of his clients.

2.5 Basic Principles of Guidance and Counseling

The basic principles guiding the practice of guidance and counseling as accepted by most authorities in the field of guidance and counseling in Nigeria and elsewhere are described as follows:

- (1) Guidance and Counseling is for everyone. The service is not only for those with special handicaps but it is also meant for all "normal", developing children and adults;
- (2) Guidance and Counseling must be provided in a way that ensures human dignity and worth. The full and adequate development of the individual must be given preference. It should be seen as encouraging individuals to attain maximum satisfaction, to realize their potentials and to be aware to self. No one who has gone through counseling should feel inadequate;
- (3) Guidance and Counseling activities should therefore be based on the need and total development of every person. It is the duty of all personnel in a setting to identify the needs of individuals so that programme activities can be designed to meet such needs;
- (4) There is a close relationship between counseling activities and the instructional process, each contributing to the other. Counseling can help make the instructional activities to be more relevant and meaningful to the needs of students, while the instructional activities can help to give necessary information and directives to a student in planning his/her life goals;
- (5) Guidance and Counseling is a sequential, continuous and developmental process, which starts from birth to death. This means that guidance and counseling runs from the nursery school through primary, secondary to the tertiary institutions. It is not a once-and-for-all event but a process which is an integral part of the total educational programme throughout the school life of an individual;
- (6) All guidance activities must emphasize the will for each student to learn more about himself in an accurate and systematic manner. Through the use of well-planned instructional strategies and appraisal techniques, individuals can become more knowledgeable about themselves and about the world around them. Without such knowledge, an individual cannot exercise intelligently the rights to free choice in educational, vocational and personal-social fields.
- (7) Effective leadership is the watchword for any effective guidance and counseling programme. Guidance counselors who are qualified, well - trained and competent are expected to function in schools and other settings. Such professionals would be able to enlist the support of staff members in effecting guidance activities.
- (8) Every member of staff in a school and non-school setting should assume responsibility for guidance activities. The principal, teachers and counselors are all members of the guidance team and each member has prescribed functions and roles.
- (9) The practitioners should practice within ethical and moral limits. The ethical and moral guidelines should be such that clients would feel secure and confident in using the services provided. This also guarantees that counselors will not use techniques and/or approaches for which they do not have competence; and
- (10) The objectives of counseling should be based on clients' needs and not on the needs of the counselors. In pursuing such needs of the client, the counselors must present a positive image.

Guidance is the processes of helping a client understand himself and his environment (Sertzer and Stone, 1976) while Counseling on the other hand is a person-to-person relationship in which one person helps to resolve an area of conflict that has not been hitherto resolved (Thompson and Poppen, 1972). In a nutshell Guidance and Counseling helps the client to attain a level of self actualization through a professional counselor specially trained to render such services without age or gender discrimination both at counselor and counselee end. Guidance counselors must have a license. The Counseling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) sets forth the criteria by which all counselors must adhere. CASSON requires guidance counselors to have at least a masters degree or higher. Further, guidance counselors can receive certification, which enhances field expertise and often accompanies a financial incentive.

Guidance and Counseling is very important in the life of men because every person needs guidance at some point in life to ensure that good decisions are arrived at. Since no human is above mistake, it there follows

that every human needs counseling also at some points in their lives. Man by nature is a complex being that is often encompassed with myriads of problems, issues and serious pressing matters surrounding his existence on a daily basis. Guidance and Counseling therefore provides a platform where these enormous problems can be resolved and lasting solutions provided for, in order to ensure a smooth relationship among different people in the society.

Interestingly educational guidance a process of assisting students achieve the self-understanding and self-direction necessary to make informed decisions and move toward the achievement of their individual objectives. Guidance focuses on the complete development of individual students through a series of services designed to maximize school learning, stimulate career development, and respond to the personal and social concerns that inhibit individual growth. Although guidance activities are usually associated with educational professionals known as counselors, educational guidance is actually a cooperative enterprise involving the participation of teachers, administrators, other educational specialists, and parents. In colleges and universities, administrative offices such as student affairs, admissions, financial aid, housing, student health, and placement provide guidance services. College counseling centres assist students with academic, vocational, or personal problems.

Guidance counseling as a profession has been in the United States since the early 1900s. Although the field experienced a brief decline during the Depression, it has become a staple of American education since the 1940s. Guidance counselors not only assist students, they also provide assessments of students with behavioral problems and coordinate with teachers to address these problems (Marriage and Family Counseling Basics).

Other counseling services include career-development programs to foster awareness of career alternatives, programs in human relations skills, and training in actual job skills, as well as the acquisition and dissemination of related information. Counselors work with teachers, administrators, and families in coordinated efforts to help resolve specific student problems. If necessary, they can refer students to trained therapists for additional assistance. In order to ensure this cumbersome task, Guidance and Counseling programmes are developed through cooperative and affective enterprise with respect to other disciplines (Okoye et al, 1990). This largely explains why some of the methodologies and techniques used in Guidance and Counseling is derived from those used in other disciplines. Some of these disciplines includes; psychology, sociology, religion, philosophy, politics and medical science.

II. POLICY AND PRACTICE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN NIGERIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

In this section of the paper, the policy and practice of guidance and counseling in the United States of America (USA), representing the developed world shall be put side by side with that of Nigeria. For the purpose of easy understanding, the paper first captures the Nigerian situation and identifies areas of concern and thereafter examines what is obtainable in USA.

3.1 Nigeria

The date of the commencement of modern guidance in Nigeria could be traced to 1958. That year, the Catholic Reverend Sisters in St. Theresa's College, Ibadan, recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to their final year students. Therefore in 1958, the reverend sisters, assisted by Mrs. Oruwariye, invited interested and enlightened members of the society to the school. Specialists in different areas of endeavour who had made their marks were invited to give career talks on their professions to their final year students (National Open University of Nigeria 2006). This effort gave insight to the students about world of work and hence assisted many of the students to select good jobs or higher institutions of learning. The result was quite encouraging and it geared some other schools in Ibadan and other big towns around to start organizing career talks for their senior students. This singular move led to emerging of career masters and mistresses while interested teachers in the school system were assigned job of collation and disseminating of career information to students.

In 1962, Ibadan Careers Council was formed. It was composed of distinguished knowledgeable and philanthropic individuals. Their aim was to propagate vocational guidance to students or the young ones. They organized workshops, seminars and symposia. In 1967, Nigeria Careers Council grew out of the Ibadan Career Council. The members of the Ibadan Careers Council formed the nucleus and support of the Nigeria Careers Council. They continued along the line of vocational guidance. The Council incorporated career masters and mistresses. A journal named "Careers" was published by this body to disseminate current information about job.

In a move that showed recognition of the guidance and counseling services, Dr. C. I. Berepiki, a Fellow of the Counseling Association of Nigeria, was appointed the first Vocational Guidance Officer by the Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos in 1961. He wrote *An Approach to Guidance in Schools*. For a very long time after him, there were no other trained officers to work actively in this unit but with the current state of the profession, the unit is well manned by trained male and female counselors. It now has two sections – Careers

and Counseling Sections. They organize workshops and conferences and coordinate counseling activities in the country. Many State Ministries of Education have similar set-ups.

Another opportunity to introduce guidance and counseling several secondary schools was when in 1967, Mr. Rees, an American, organized a workshop at Comprehensive High School, Aiyetoro, Ogun State. The motive was to plant the seed of guidance and counseling in that area and he did it successfully. The Association, in 1992, started the same acronym with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and the Computer Association of Nigeria (CAAN). In order to avoid confusion at the Kano Conference in 1992, the Association dropped CAN and took up CASSON i.e. (Counseling Association of Nigeria).

The Association has also encouraged the formation of State Branches. This is to encourage 'grassroots' spread of the Association. Some state branches are quite active. They hold various activities, workshops, seminars and handle some counseling cases. This aspect is done on individual basis or, in some cases; 'team approach' is used. Some state branches have journals e.g. Imo State has Counseling Spectrum.

December 1, 1976 marked the birth of Counseling Association of Nigeria at the University of Ibadan. The first president of the Association was Prof. Olu Makinde, (1976- 1980) he was succeeded by Prof. S. A. Gesinde, (1980 – 1984), Prof. Para Mallum, (1984- 1988), Dr. (Mrs.) Achebe C. C. (1989-1990); and Prof. C. G. M. Bakare (1990-1994); Dr. Nsa A. Nsa (1994 – 1996) and 1996 – 2002 Prof. Carew, Prof. A. I. Idowu, (2002-2004) and Prof. Okobia (2004). The Association is a body of trained guidance counselors mainly, but it encourages interested individuals in the helping professions to join it (National Open University of Nigeria, 2006)

The Association produces, through its senior members in the Universities and some Colleges of Education and other counselors for both the private and public sectors of the Nigerian economy. The journal of the Association is called "The Counselor". Through it, research findings of members, which are discussed at the annual conferences, are disseminated. Conference proceedings are also published.

In 1975, the first Department of guidance and counseling in Nigeria was established in the University of Ibadan. The second full-fledged department was established at the University of Ilorin in 1981. Since that time, several universities and some colleges of education have been producing well-trained counselors. Presently, several counselors have had postgraduate training with Master and Ph.D degrees. There are some professors already in the discipline. Several journals have been formed to disseminate research findings. These include Journal of Applied Psychology (UI); Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counseling (University of Ilorin, Ilorin); Journal of Counseling and Development (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife); Journal of Research in Counseling Psychology (Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye); Journal of Counseling and Consulting Psychology (Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos). Several textbooks have been written on different areas of guidance and counseling by the trained counselors

3.2 Guidance and Counseling and National Policy on Education (NPE)

Nigerian Government in recognition of the importance of Guidance and Counseling to her education system included Guidance in the policy document of the National Policy on Education (1981). Paragraph 83 (II) of the policy document stated expressly that -in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counselors will be appointed in Post-Primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category are scarce, Government will continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counseling. Guidance and counseling will also feature in teacher education programmes (Federal Republic of N, 1981).

The above statement shows that the planners of the National Policy on Education were aware of the growing need for Guidance services in the Secondary Schools hence its inclusion in the policy document. They were also aware of the problem of young people but were not however well informed about the scope, potentials and objectives of what Guidance and Counseling entails. I will now make an attempt at analysing the guidance and counseling programme as presented in the NPE and then give suggestions on what it should be.

The introduction of the new National Policy of Education in Nigeria (commonly referred to as the 6-3-3-4 system of Education) for the whole country in 1977, with major revision in 1981, which had among its features, the introduction of a new educational focus for the primary and secondary levels of education also influenced the emergence of guidance and counseling in Nigeria. This policy was a major break away from the existing educational policy that was bequeathed to the nation by the British colonial masters at independence. Under the previous arrangement, secondary school students were expected to spend five years in the secondary school. In addition, the curriculum tended to emphasize much of liberal type of education. But the new policy extended the number of years in secondary school from five years to six years. It further divided secondary education into two levels: junior secondary school (where the student was expected to spend three years) and the senior secondary school level (where the student was expected to spend the remaining three years). Guidance counselors are playing their part in the implementation of the ongoing 6-3-3-4 educational systems. This has helped to make all the State Governments to establish guidance and counseling units in their Ministries of

Education. In addition to counseling units in the Universities, there are some private clinics in the big cities such as Lagos, Ibadan and Owerri.

Incidentally, Guidance and Counseling enunciated in the policy document contains some vital point that needs to be analyzed. The first line of paragraph 83 reveals that, young people are ignorant of career prospects and that they have personality maladjustment. Consequently Guidance Counselors were to be appointed in post primary institutions. It was observed in the policy document that Counselors are scarce and, as a result, teachers will be trained in guidance and counseling. It was intended that guidance and counseling be included in teacher education programme. The above analysis is an indication that Government has good intention to meet the vocational and personal-social needs of school children in Nigeria. However, as Osokoya (1987) and Egbochuku (1999) put it, Guidance and Counseling is more than what could be given during the teaching - learning experiences alone. This is because guidance is broad in scope. It consists of educational, vocational and personal-social in scope. It is the all-round development of the school child or of an individual.

Suffice to say that although guidance and counseling is a relatively new comer to the Nigerian educational scene, it is gradually making its impact. It is still evolving, but the trends reveal that it remains central in the development of a total man.

3.3 Developed World-USA

The evolution, policy and practice of Guidance and Counseling in the developed world, although similar in many ways, have slight differences in what is obtainable in Nigeria. In this paper, the approach is to use the system in the United States of America to represent the developed world as seen below.

Guidance and Counseling as a discipline has an abundant evidence to show that it originated from America at the beginning of the 20th Century because of the society's emphasis on individual development. This could be seen from several historical events and practices that took place in the United States. These historical events are:

- i. Vocational Guidance Movement
- ii. Standardized Testing Movement
- iii. Mental Health Movement
- iv. Pro-counseling Legislative Acts.

In USA, Guidance and Counseling started with the Vocational Guidance Movement. In 1908, Frank Parsons, founded a Vocational Bureau in Boston. Parsons concern and belief was that if individuals can understand their strengths and weaknesses, such knowledge can be used to choose vocational opportunities. This pioneering effort played a great role in the evolution and practice of modern Guidance and Counseling. The vocational guidance movement was an attempt to reduce problems of unemployment, want and poverty among underprivileged Americans.. This experiments started by Parsons yielded positive results in that many youngsters benefited tremendously from the services rendered by the bureau (Shertzer and Stone, 1976).

Other pioneers in the advancement of counseling associated with the vocational guidance movement are Meyer Bloomfield, who succeeded Parsons as director of Boston's Vocational Guidance Bureau, Frank P. Godwin of the Cincinnati School system, Jesse B. Davis, Eli Weaver in New York, George Merrill in San Francisco and Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard University. Each of these guidance pioneers put in their best to see to the growth of the service. For instance, in 1910, Meyer Bloomfield single handedly promoted the first National Conference on vocational guidance in the United States of America. Eli Weaver, on the other hand, promoted the Second National Conference on vocational guidance in 1912 while George Menil was the first American to practice counseling within the school system when he was a tutor in 1895 at the Californian School of Mechanical Arts, San Francisco. Hugo Munsterberg also pioneered the development of career guidance in industry with the publication of his text titled "Psychology and Industrial Efficiency" (NOUN, 2006).

Guidance and counseling actually started in United States of America with emphasis on vocational guidance. It is on the same trend that it started in Nigeria considering the purpose and efforts of the Reverend Sisters at St Theresa's College Ibadan. It is worthy of note that emphasis on vocational guidance in the historical evolution of the discipline of Guidance and Counseling in developed and as well as in developing societies may be reflective of the pre-eminence of the institution of work in human civilization.

The Mental Health Movement also contributed positively to the evolution and practice of Guidance and Counseling. Clifford Beers was one of the pioneers of the mental health movement. The publication of this book titled "A Mind that Formed Itself" revolutionized mental health practices and invariably it promoted the development of counseling which can be regarded as part and parcel of mental health professions. The testing movement also led to the development of test devices, which greatly improved inventory and appraisal components of Guidance and Counseling.

Another major factor in the evolution, policy and practice of guidance and counseling in the United States is the enactment of series of Pro-Counseling and Pro-Education Legislative Acts. The great depression as well as expansion of government activities during the new deal era greatly increased public funding for

guidance programmes. Social upheavals, which accompanied great depression and other crisis, forced the American government to enact serious of pro-education and pro-counseling legislations. Some of these legislations are the Vocational Education Act of 1917, Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1920, the Wagner Peysner Act of 1933, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Manpower Development Act of 1964 and the Career Education Incentive Act of 1976.

Of all the legislation, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 more than any piece of legislature promoted the growth of guidance and counseling in the United States. When the soviet launched the world's first satellite in 1957, the Americans were worried that Soviet Union had surpassed them in space technology. With typical competitive spirit peculiar to America's civilization, the United States space industry took up the soviet's challenge. As part of their effort to achieve parity with the soviet in space technology, the Americans decided to overhaul the educational system. In order to achieve this goal, American's legislators decided that career counseling should be provided in all American Schools. That was the basic goal of the passage of the National Defense Act of 1958. This legislation made massive funds available to Colleges and Universities for training guidance counselors for American Schools. Ever since that time, guidance and counseling in the United States had been developing rather phenomenally.

III. COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

In Nigeria, United States of America and other countries of the world, school counselors are increasingly recognizing the benefits of using computer technology to increase their efficiency, to assist in the supervision of counseling interns, to aid in delivering developmental guidance lessons, and to facilitate individual counseling areas such as bibliotherapy (Offer & Watts, 2000).

The benefits of using ICT in school counseling are so great that there is no need for more justification as to why there is an urgent need to undertake our study on integrating ICT in school guidance and counseling

One of the areas in the various services being provided by the school is guidance services or the school counseling services. Through the implementation of the school guidance program various goals and objectives of developing and honing young children to become good and productive citizens of the country could be attained. Thus, our qualitative study on the perspectives of the use and application of ICT in guidance and counseling is meant to outline the various ways in which the school can be cognizant to the statutes and policies of the State as to the benefits of ICT.

Through the efficient and effective use of ICT, school counselors are in a better position to provide administrators, teachers, parents, and students the appropriate timely information needed to help all students to set ambitious goals and to realize their goals.

The Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program 2001 states, ICT is a pervasive input to almost all human activities. It breaks barriers to human development in at least three ways: by breaking barriers to knowledge, by breaking barriers to participation and by breaking barriers to economic opportunity (Masagca and Londerio, 2008) Even in the daily lives of teachers and guidance counselors, the rapid advances in ICT can create new things such as storing information, retrieving information, handling, distributing and utilizing information. The advancement of ICT according to Ocampo (2002) is intertwined with globalization and together creates a new paradigm called the network age.

The school counselor of the future is expected to be one who will be prepared in a pre-service program to possess pro-active, socially critical behavior and skills needed to strategically plan to challenge the status quo in systems where inequities impede students' academic success.

Moreover, Offer & Watts (2000) presents the current use of ICT in relation to relevant forms of personal information, advice, and guidance leading to personal development for young people aged 13 to 19. It also reports that 150 items of software relevant to career education and guidance (CEG) are currently available. There are hundreds of websites that offer help and advice, and connections are delivered through ICT by having a website, and by sending a CD-ROM version.

The above scenario tends to create the same ripples in the area of school counseling, and more specifically on the job of the guidance counselor in trying to perform its role in the changing environments of the schools today.

IV. CONCLUSION

The summary of the comparative approach used in this paper as earlier provided indicates some areas of similarities and differences in the policy and practice of guidance and counseling in Nigeria and the developed world, represented by the USA.

While the date of the formal start of modern guidance in USA is taken as 1908 via the vocational guidance work of Frank Parsons (Father of American Guidance Movement), 1958 can be regarded as the date of the commencement of modern guidance in Nigeria. Secondly, in USA, the emergence, practice and policy focus on Vocational Guidance Movement, Standardized Testing Movement, Mental Health Movement and Pro-

counseling Legislative Acts while in Nigeria it took the form of vocational counseling, formation of career council/association and its provision in the national policy on education. Thirdly, in USA indigenes championed the course of engendering developmental transformation of guidance and counseling, for instance, Frank Parsons, founded a Vocational Bureau in Boston, other pioneers in the advancement of counseling associated with the vocational guidance movement are Meyer Bloomfield, Frank P. Godwin, Jesse B. Davis, Eli Weaver, George Merrill and Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard University, while in Nigeria, this pioneering endeavour couldn't be credited to Nigerian indigenes because it was the Catholic Reverend Sisters in St. Theresa's College, Ibadan, who recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to their final year students became the first effort to advance guidance and counseling.

However, Nigeria and USA have certain areas of congruence in their policy and practice of guidance and counseling. In Nigeria and developed countries, the vocational guidance and counseling remain central in the practice and policy. In fact, vocational Guidance and Counseling was the first classification. Again, both see vocational guidance movement as an attempt to reduce problems of unemployment, want and poverty among underprivileged. Both make use of conferences and seminars in trying to create awareness on the essence of guidance and counseling, the wealth of knowledge accumulated was thereafter published in journals and other mediums.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations are worthwhile.

- Governments of Nigeria (representing the developing nations) and USA (representing the developed world) should be more proactive and give priority attention to issues of guidance and counseling. Guidance and counseling is an extremely sensitive aspect of the lives of people in the society and as such should not be treated with levity. This lackadaisical attitude is most often reflected in the third world. Additionally, funding of Guidance and Counseling programmes should be taken more seriously and with greater commitment.
- Training of counselors remains crucial. If there is anytime the USA and Nigeria need Counselors, it is now. Various governments should put in place programmes to train fresh individuals as Counselors and not teachers being trained as Counselors.
- Teachers in the USA and Nigeria should be trained as Teachers and they should be made to function in that scope. Most schools are still short of professionally trained teachers. They should not be made to directly encroach into other people's profession such as the Counseling profession. Rather, they should be limited to their teaching profession. Many schools using teachers as Counselors no longer want to employ qualified Counselors and this has led to unemployment in the field of counseling. Teachers should be made to provide assistance to the main counselors.
- Re-stating of guidance and counseling in the new policy document (i.e. the inadequate representation of guidance and counseling in the 1977 6-3-3-4 educational policy can be corrected by properly and broadly re-stating it in the new policy document of the Universal Basic Education Scheme). The policy statement should involve the three areas of guidance which are education, vocational and personal-social guidance. It should clearly define the aims of guidance and counseling as it affects the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Conclusively, Nigerian Government in recognition of the importance of guidance and counseling to the educational system should not only include it in the policy document of the Universal Basic Education but should also re-state it in a broader view.
- There is a need for continuous re-training and establishment of a well-defined capacity building programs for guidance counselors that focus on individual skills of the counselors as to the other uses and application of ICT. This will erase the notion that ICT is only for encoding the information.

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