

Career-Guidance and Counselling Skills

A paper presented at 2-day Sensitization Programme for Dean and Desk Officers, titled: “Fostering a Culture of Support: A Shared Commitment between Management and Staff to Students’ Success”

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ABSTRACT

Career-guidance and counselling is a professional service aimed at assisting individuals in understanding themselves, exploring educational and occupational opportunities, and making informed decisions about their personal and professional development. This seminar presentation examines the concept, historical evolution, objectives, and societal importance of career-guidance and counselling, with a focus on skills, roles, and techniques required for effective practice. It highlights key competencies for counsellors, including communication, empathy, assessment, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Various counselling strategies, such as individual and group counselling, use of career information resources, and career development programs, are explored. The presentation also addresses challenges facing career counselling, including inadequate resources, shortage of trained personnel, socio-economic constraints, and cultural barriers. Finally, strategies to enhance effectiveness are discussed, emphasizing professional development, integration of technology, stakeholder collaboration, advocacy, and systematic monitoring and evaluation. The seminar concludes that career and guidance counselling is an essential tool for personal growth, workforce development, and societal progress. By investing in training, resources, and awareness, counsellors can empower individuals to make informed career choices and contribute meaningfully to national development.

Introduction

1.1 Concept of Career-Guidance and Counselling

Career-Guidance and counselling is a professional process that assists individuals in understanding themselves, exploring educational and occupational opportunities, and making informed decisions about their life paths. It involves helping people identify their abilities, interests, values, and personality traits and align them with suitable career choices and life goals. The term “guidance” refers to the broad range of services aimed at helping individuals adjust to school, work, and society, while “career counselling” focuses specifically on vocational development and occupational decision-making (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Career-Guidance and counselling is essential in modern societies characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization, and changing labour markets. As job opportunities evolve and traditional career paths become less stable, individuals require professional assistance to navigate complex choices. Counsellors provide information about careers, training opportunities, and employment trends, enabling clients to plan realistically and strategically (Brown & Lent, 2019).

The process of career counselling is not a one-time event but a continuous developmental journey that spans across different life stages. From early childhood, individuals begin forming ideas about work and success, influenced by family, school, and social environment. During adolescence, career guidance becomes more structured, involving career exploration, subject selection, and skill development. In adulthood, counselling may focus on career advancement, job transitions, and work-life balance (Super, 1990).

1.2 Historical Development of Career-Guidance and Counselling

The roots of Career-Guidance and counselling can be traced back to the early 20th century, particularly in the United States, where Frank Parsons is regarded as the father of vocational guidance. Parsons emphasized the importance of understanding individual

traits, knowledge of occupations, and logical reasoning in making career choices. His work laid the foundation for systematic career counselling practices (Parsons, 1909).

During the industrial revolution, rapid urbanization and expansion of industries created new job opportunities but also increased confusion among young people regarding career choices. Schools began introducing guidance programs to assist students in selecting appropriate educational and vocational paths. Over time, the scope of guidance expanded beyond vocational concerns to include personal, social, and educational development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

In Nigeria, Career-Guidance and counselling gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s as part of educational reforms aimed at improving manpower development. The government recognized the need to guide students toward careers that matched national development goals. Guidance counsellors were introduced into secondary schools to assist students with academic planning, career exploration, and personal challenges (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

Today, career-guidance and counselling has evolved into a specialized professional field with trained practitioners, ethical standards, and evidence-based practices. It is now recognized as an essential component of educational systems, workforce development, and mental health services worldwide.

1.3 Objectives of Career-Guidance and Counselling

The primary objective of Career-Guidance and counselling is to help individuals achieve self-understanding and make informed life decisions. Counsellors assist clients in identifying their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and aspirations, which are crucial for personal and career development. By fostering self-awareness, individuals can set realistic goals and pursue meaningful career paths (Corey, 2017).

Another important objective is to provide accurate and up-to-date information about educational and occupational opportunities. Many individuals make poor career decisions due to lack of information or misinformation. Guidance counsellors bridge this gap by

offering career resources, labour market information, and training opportunities (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Career-Guidance and counselling also aim to enhance decision-making and problem-solving skills. Rather than simply telling clients what to do, counsellors empower them to evaluate options, consider consequences, and make independent choices. This approach promotes lifelong career management skills (Savickas, 2013).

Additionally, guidance counselling supports individuals in overcoming personal and social barriers to career success, such as low self-esteem, family pressure, financial constraints, and cultural expectations. Through counselling interventions, clients develop coping strategies and resilience to face challenges (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

1.4 Importance of Career: Guidance and Counselling in Society

Career-Guidance and counselling play a crucial role in individual development and societal progress. At the individual level, it helps people find fulfilling careers that align with their abilities and interests, leading to greater job satisfaction and productivity. Individuals who receive proper guidance are more likely to make stable career choices and experience less stress and frustration (Super, 1990).

In educational institutions, guidance programs support students' academic success by helping them choose suitable subjects, set educational goals, and develop effective study habits. Counsellors also address behavioural and emotional issues that may hinder learning (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

From a societal perspective, Career-Guidance and counselling contributes to workforce development by aligning human resources with labour market needs. When individuals are guided into careers that match their skills and national priorities, it leads to economic growth and reduced unemployment (Brown & Lent, 2019).

In Nigeria, where youth unemployment remains a major challenge, effective career counselling can help young people explore diverse career options beyond traditional

professions and develop entrepreneurial skills. This can promote self-reliance and national development (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

Skills Required for Effective Career-Guidance and Counselling

2.1 Communication Skills

Communication is one of the most fundamental skills required for effective career and guidance counselling. It involves both verbal and non-verbal processes through which counsellors interact with clients to understand their concerns, convey information, and facilitate personal growth. Effective communication creates a supportive environment where clients feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, emotions, and aspirations (Corey, 2017).

Verbal communication includes the use of clear, simple, and appropriate language when discussing career options, educational pathways, and personal challenges. Counsellors must be able to ask open-ended questions that encourage clients to elaborate on their experiences and feelings. For example, instead of asking “Do you like science subjects?” a counsellor may ask “What subjects do you enjoy most and why?” Such questions provide deeper insights into clients’ interests and motivations (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, facial expressions, posture, and tone of voice, also plays a crucial role in counselling. Positive non-verbal cues can convey empathy, attentiveness, and acceptance, while negative cues may discourage clients from opening up. Counsellors who maintain appropriate eye contact and use encouraging gestures help build trust and rapport with clients (Corey, 2017).

Active listening is a key component of communication skills in counselling. It involves giving full attention to the client, understanding both spoken words and underlying emotions, and responding in ways that demonstrate understanding. Through techniques such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and reflecting feelings, counsellors show that they value the client’s experiences and perspectives (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Effective communication also includes the ability to present career information clearly and accurately. Counsellors must explain complex concepts, such as labour market trends, educational requirements, and career progression pathways, in ways that clients can easily understand. This helps clients make informed decisions about their futures.

2.2 Empathy and Interpersonal Skills

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. In career and guidance counselling, empathy allows counsellors to connect with clients on an emotional level and appreciate their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. When clients feel understood and accepted, they are more likely to engage actively in the counselling process (Corey, 2017).

Interpersonal skills involve the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with clients, colleagues, parents, teachers, and employers. Counsellors often work with diverse individuals from different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Strong interpersonal skills enable them to communicate effectively across these differences and provide culturally sensitive guidance (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

Empathetic counsellors avoid judging clients' choices or imposing their own values. Instead, they respect clients' autonomy and support them in exploring their own goals and preferences. This client-centred approach fosters self-confidence and independence in decision-making (Rogers, 1951).

Interpersonal skills also include conflict resolution and negotiation abilities. Counsellors may need to mediate between students and parents regarding career choices or help clients address workplace challenges. By using effective interpersonal strategies, counsellors can facilitate constructive dialogue and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, empathy and interpersonal skills contribute to creating a safe and supportive counselling environment. Clients who feel emotionally supported are more likely to discuss sensitive issues such as fear of failure, family pressure, or uncertainty

about the future. Addressing these emotional factors is essential for effective career planning and personal development (Brown & Lent, 2019).

2.3 Assessment and Diagnostic Skills

Assessment skills are essential for understanding clients' abilities, interests, personality traits, and values. Career counsellors use various tools and techniques, such as aptitude tests, interest inventories, personality assessments, and interviews, to gather relevant information about clients. These assessments help identify suitable career options and educational pathways (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Diagnostic skills involve interpreting assessment results accurately and integrating them with other client information to form a comprehensive understanding of the client's needs and potential. Counsellors must be trained to administer tests ethically and explain results in ways that clients can understand and use constructively (Brown & Lent, 2019).

It is important for counsellors to recognize that assessment tools are not absolute predictors of success but rather guides to support decision-making. Clients' personal experiences, cultural background, and life circumstances should also be considered in the counselling process (Savickas, 2013).

In educational settings, assessment skills help counsellors identify students who may require additional support, such as those struggling academically or facing emotional challenges. Early identification allows for timely intervention and improved outcomes.

Moreover, assessment skills enable counsellors to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling interventions. By monitoring clients' progress and outcomes, counsellors can adjust their strategies to better meet clients' needs and ensure continuous improvement in service delivery (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

2.4 Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills

Career-Guidance and counsellors frequently assist clients in addressing complex personal and career-related problems. Problem-solving skills involve identifying issues,

exploring possible solutions, evaluating alternatives, and implementing appropriate actions. Counsellors guide clients through this process rather than solving problems for them (Corey, 2017).

Decision-making skills are particularly important in career counselling, where clients must choose educational programs, career paths, or job opportunities. Counsellors help clients clarify their goals, consider their strengths and limitations, and weigh the pros and cons of different options (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Various decision-making models, such as rational decision-making and career construction approaches, are used to support clients in making informed choices. These models encourage clients to gather relevant information, reflect on personal values, and anticipate potential outcomes (Savickas, 2013).

Problem-solving and decision-making skills also involve helping clients cope with uncertainty and change. In today's dynamic labour market, individuals may experience job loss, career transitions, or shifting interests. Counsellors support clients in adapting to these changes and viewing them as opportunities for growth (Super, 1990).

By developing clients' problem-solving and decision-making abilities, counsellors empower them to manage their careers effectively throughout their lives. This promotes self-reliance and resilience in the face of challenges.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Career-Guidance-Counsellor

3.1 Providing Career Information and Awareness

One of the primary roles of a career and guidance counsellor is to provide accurate, current, and relevant information about educational opportunities, vocational training, and occupational fields. Many individuals lack sufficient knowledge about the wide range of careers available to them, often limiting their choices to a few popular professions such as medicine, law, or engineering. Counsellors broaden clients' perspectives by introducing

them to diverse career options that align with their interests and abilities (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Career information includes details about job requirements, educational qualifications, skills needed, salary expectations, working conditions, and career progression opportunities. Counsellors obtain this information from various sources such as labour market reports, educational institutions, professional organizations, and government agencies. By organizing and presenting this information in a user-friendly manner, counsellors help clients make informed decisions (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

In school settings, counsellors organize career talks, workshops, seminars, and career fairs where professionals from different fields share their experiences with students. These activities expose students to real-world career experiences and inspire them to explore various career paths. Counsellors may also distribute career brochures, maintain career libraries, and use digital platforms to provide access to career resources (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

In Nigeria, career counsellors play an important role in promoting vocational and technical education as viable career options. By highlighting opportunities in trades, entrepreneurship, and emerging industries, counsellors help reduce overdependence on white-collar jobs and encourage self-employment (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

3.2 Assisting with Career Planning and Goal Setting

Another major responsibility of career and guidance counsellors is to assist individuals in developing realistic and achievable career plans. Career planning involves identifying career goals and outlining the steps required to achieve them, including educational choices, skill development, and work experiences (Super, 1990).

Counsellors guide clients through self-assessment processes to help them understand their strengths, interests, values, and personality traits. This self-knowledge forms the foundation for setting meaningful career goals. For example, a student who

demonstrates strong analytical skills and interest in technology may be guided toward careers in engineering, computer science, or data analysis (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Goal setting is an important aspect of career planning. Counsellors help clients set short-term and long-term goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Short-term goals may include completing certain courses, acquiring specific skills, or gaining work experience, while long-term goals may involve attaining a particular profession or leadership position (Corey, 2017).

Career counsellors also help clients anticipate potential challenges and develop strategies to overcome them. These challenges may include financial constraints, academic difficulties, family expectations, or limited job opportunities. By addressing these issues proactively, counsellors enhance clients' chances of success.

Furthermore, counsellors regularly review and adjust career plans as clients' interests and circumstances change. This flexibility is important in a rapidly changing world where new careers emerge and traditional jobs decline. Continuous guidance ensures that career plans remain relevant and achievable (Savickas, 2013).

3.3 Offering Personal and Emotional Support

Career-Guidance and counselling go beyond providing information and planning assistance; it also involves offering personal and emotional support to clients. Many individuals experience anxiety, confusion, fear, and self-doubt when making career decisions. Counsellors help clients cope with these emotional challenges and build confidence in their abilities (Corey, 2017).

Students may struggle with academic pressure, peer influence, or family expectations regarding career choices. For example, a student may be pressured to pursue a particular profession despite lacking interest or aptitude. Counsellors provide a safe space for clients to express their concerns and explore alternative options that align with their personal goals (Rogers, 1951).

In addition, counsellors support clients dealing with personal issues such as low self-esteem, poor motivation, or interpersonal conflicts that may affect their academic and career performance. Through counselling sessions, clients learn coping strategies, stress management techniques, and problem-solving skills that enhance their overall well-being (Brown & Lent, 2019).

In workplace settings, career counsellors may assist employees facing job dissatisfaction, career stagnation, or work-related stress. By addressing these issues, counsellors contribute to improved job satisfaction, productivity, and mental health.

In the Nigerian context, where socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty are prevalent, emotional support from counsellors is particularly important. Counsellors help clients maintain hope, resilience, and a positive outlook despite difficult circumstances (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

3.4 Monitoring Progress and Follow-Up

An essential responsibility of Career-Guidance and counsellors is to monitor clients' progress and provide follow-up support. Career development is an ongoing process, and clients may encounter new challenges or changes in circumstances that require additional guidance (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Counsellors regularly assess whether clients are making progress toward their goals and whether the counselling interventions are effective. This may involve reviewing academic performance, evaluating job search efforts, or discussing clients' experiences in training programs or workplaces.

Follow-up sessions allow counsellors to address emerging issues and adjust career plans as needed. For instance, a client who discovers that a chosen career path does not meet expectations may need guidance in exploring alternative options. Counsellors help clients reflect on their experiences and make informed adjustments.

Monitoring and follow-up also strengthen the counsellor-client relationship and demonstrate the counsellor's commitment to clients' success. Clients who receive continuous support are more likely to remain motivated and achieve their goals (Super, 1990).

Moreover, counsellors may collaborate with teachers, parents, employers, and other professionals to provide comprehensive support to clients. This collaborative approach ensures that clients receive consistent guidance across different areas of their lives.

3.5 Methods of Disseminating Career Information to Students

Disseminating career information involves making available the information gathered and planned for the benefit of students. The counsellor can devise many strategies of giving career information to students. This is done through individual or group methods. Career information can be given to students during an orientation talk to students, linking the subjects they are offering to the job they aspire to take to later in life; this will help them make meaningful plans. Also, some inventories on vocation such as Bakare's Vocational Interest Inventory (VII, 1977) can be administered on the students. This is to find the interest areas of the students. The following methods can be used to disseminate career information to students, either on individual or group below:

1. Career day/week

A school, be it primary, secondary or tertiary institutions could organize career day or week for the students. This involves individuals who are established and successful in their occupation to speak to the students about their careers. These individuals should cut across all works of life not necessarily selecting from the most popular careers students know. The school will have to make use of prominent personalities and those who have served as role models in the society.

2. School Assembly

One of the easiest and commonest ways of disseminating information to students is through the school assembly. Here the principal gives the counsellor opportunity to tell the students about the school's plan on career development.

3. Bulletin Board

One of the most effective ways of disseminating information to students is through bulletin boards. This is very similar to the notice boards found in strategic places in school for all manner of information. In the case of the bulletin board, it is meant for any useful information on guidance and counselling. Career information can be pasted there for students to see and read.

4. Career Conferences

Conferences are very important because they bring about the rubbing of minds of people from different walks of life. People come to share their experiences, failures on a job and give reports of researches carried out in the different careers they do. Students at such career conferences should be exposed to occupational information that would be of benefit to them. Students and teachers should be encouraged to attend such conferences by making resources and funds available to them. During the conference, opportunities should be given to students to learn more about careers by allowing them to ask questions. At the end of such experiences, the entire programme should be evaluated to determine if there is the need to have more of such conferences or not.

5. Excursions/Plant Visit

Another effective way of disseminating career information is to take students on excursion and plant visit. Excursion could be to anywhere but related to particular subject the students are offering while plant visit is specific and definite. It could be a factory or company where an item is made or constructed. As a follow-up to such visitation, the student should be asked to "out" or role-play what they have seen with respect to the

occupations and career chosen by people. It will help students understand important aspects of various jobs.

6. Career Files

Creating and using career files is strange to most students. Students should be taught how to develop a career file. This can be done by investigating or asking their parents, teachers, older siblings, about what they do when they go to their working places. The information to be developed and kept in the file may include the type of job done, where the job is located, how many hours spent on the job before closing, does it involve "shift", difficulties in the job etc.

7. Career Library

One of the services that the counsellor can render to students is to make available information to students in the career library.

A section of the school library should be reserved specifically for career information. When students need career information from books, journals, magazines, tape recorded cassettes it should be made readily available to the students from the career library. The students should be taught how to look for useful information from that section.

8. Electronic Media

The counsellor can disseminate career information to students by using either audio cassettes, playing it to the hearing of students and asking them to put down their questions to be discussed after listening to the tapes. It could be on any aspect of student's life.

The counsellor could also use television and video tape recorders. The fact that students see what is been talked about might live an unforgettable experience in their minds. The students could be asked to role play some activities and shown to them later; by so doing they are been given information.

The introduction of computers into the educational system has brought a lot of innovation to the educational system and has made learning interesting for schools that can afford computers. Different types of career information can be given to the students.

Counselling Techniques and Strategies in Career Guidance

4.1 Individual Counselling Technique

Individual counselling is one of the most commonly used techniques in career and guidance counselling. It involves a one-on-one interaction between the counsellor and the client, allowing for personalized attention and in-depth exploration of the client's concerns, interests, and goals. This technique is particularly effective for addressing sensitive issues and providing tailored guidance (Corey, 2017).

During individual counselling sessions, the counsellor begins by establishing rapport and building a trusting relationship with the client. This creates a safe environment where the client feels comfortable sharing personal experiences and challenges. The counsellor then uses questioning, active listening, and reflective techniques to help the client gain self-awareness and clarify career goals (Rogers, 1951).

Individual counselling allows for the use of assessment tools such as aptitude tests, interest inventories, and personality assessments. The results of these assessments are discussed with the client to identify suitable career options. For example, a student with high verbal abilities and strong social interests may be guided toward careers in teaching, journalism, or counselling (Brown & Lent, 2019).

This technique also enables counsellors to address emotional and psychological barriers to career development, such as fear of failure, low self-esteem, and lack of motivation. By helping clients overcome these challenges, counsellors enhance their readiness to make informed decisions and pursue career goals.

In Nigeria, individual counselling is widely used in schools and tertiary institutions to support students in subject selection, career planning, and personal development. It is

also utilized in employment agencies and private counselling centers to assist job seekers and professionals.

4.2 Group Counselling and Guidance Activities

Group counselling involves working with a small group of individuals who share similar concerns or goals. This technique is effective for career exploration, skill development, and peer support. In group settings, participants learn from each other's experiences and gain different perspectives on career issues (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Group guidance activities may include career workshops, seminars, role-playing exercises, and discussion sessions. For example, a group of students may participate in a workshop on resume writing, interview skills, or job search strategies. These activities equip participants with practical skills needed for career success (Brown & Lent, 2019)

One of the advantages of group counselling is its efficiency, as it allows counsellors to reach many individuals at once. It also fosters a sense of community and mutual support among participants. Individuals may feel less isolated when they realize others face similar challenges.

Group counselling encourages collaboration, communication, and teamwork skills, which are valuable in both educational and workplace settings. Through group discussions, participants practice expressing their ideas, listening to others, and resolving conflicts constructively (Corey, 2017).

In Nigerian schools, group guidance is commonly used during assemblies, classroom sessions, and career days. Counsellors may address topics such as career awareness, study skills, peer pressure, and goal setting. These activities complement individual counselling and enhance students' overall development.

4.3 Use of Career Information Resources

Career information resources are essential tools in career and guidance counselling. These resources provide clients with detailed information about occupations, educational

programs, training institutions, and labour market trends. Counsellors use various materials such as books, brochures, online databases, videos, and career websites to support clients' career exploration (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Career libraries or resource centers are often established in schools and counselling centers to provide easy access to career information. These centers may include occupational handbooks, university prospectuses, scholarship information, and vocational training guides. Counsellors guide clients on how to use these resources effectively.

The use of technology has greatly expanded access to career information. Online career assessment tools, virtual career fairs, and job search platforms enable clients to explore career options and opportunities from anywhere. Counsellors help clients navigate these digital resources and evaluate the credibility of online information (Brown & Lent, 2019).

In addition to providing information, counsellors teach clients research skills that enable them to independently gather and analyze career-related data. This promotes lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing job market (Savickas, 2013).

In Nigeria, increasing access to the internet and mobile technology presents new opportunities for delivering career guidance services, especially to underserved communities. Counsellors can use digital platforms to reach a wider audience and provide up-to-date career information.

4.4 Career Development Programs and Workshops

Career development programs and workshops are structured activities designed to enhance individuals' career readiness and personal development. These programs may focus on career exploration, skill development, employability training, and transition planning (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Workshops on topics such as goal setting, time management, communication skills, and entrepreneurship help participants develop competencies essential for career success.

For example, an entrepreneurship workshop may teach participants how to identify business opportunities, develop business plans, and manage finances.

Career development programs often involve collaboration with schools, employers, training institutions, and community organizations. Guest speakers, mentors, and industry professionals may be invited to share insights and provide practical guidance. This exposure helps participants gain realistic understanding of different career fields (Brown & Lent, 2019).

These programs also support students transitioning from school to higher education or the workforce. Transition planning workshops may cover topics such as choosing courses, preparing for entrance examinations, job search strategies, and workplace expectations.

In Nigeria, career development programs are increasingly used to address youth unemployment and promote entrepreneurship. By equipping young people with relevant skills and knowledge, these programs contribute to economic empowerment and national development (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

Challenges in Career-Guidance and Counselling Practice

5.1 Inadequate Resources and Facilities

One of the major challenges facing career and guidance counselling is the lack of adequate resources and facilities. Effective counselling requires access to career information materials, assessment tools, counselling offices, and technological resources such as computers and internet connectivity. However, many schools and counselling centers, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, lack these essential facilities (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

In many public schools, guidance counsellors operate without well-equipped counselling units. Career libraries are often nonexistent, and where they exist, they may contain outdated materials that do not reflect current labour market trends. This limits

counsellors' ability to provide accurate and comprehensive career information to students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Assessment tools such as aptitude tests and interest inventories are also costly and may not be readily available. As a result, counsellors rely heavily on informal methods such as interviews and observations, which may not provide a complete picture of clients' abilities and interests (Brown & Lent, 2019).

The lack of technological resources further hinders access to online career platforms, virtual training programs, and digital counselling services. In rural areas, poor internet connectivity makes it difficult for counsellors and clients to benefit from modern career guidance tools.

To address this challenge, governments and educational institutions must invest in counselling infrastructure and provide necessary resources to support effective career guidance services.

5.2 Shortage of Trained Professional Counsellors

Another significant challenge is the shortage of trained and qualified career and guidance counsellors. In many schools and institutions, counselling duties are assigned to teachers who may not have specialized training in counselling. This affects the quality and effectiveness of guidance services provided to students (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Professional counsellors require specialized education and training in counselling theories, assessment techniques, ethics, and career development. Without proper training, individuals performing counselling roles may lack the skills needed to address clients' complex personal and career issues (Corey, 2017).

In Nigeria, the number of professionally trained counsellors is insufficient to meet the needs of the growing student population. This results in high counsellor-to-student ratios, limiting the amount of individual attention each student receives (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

The shortage of counsellors also leads to increased workload and burnout among existing professionals. Overworked counsellors may struggle to provide comprehensive services such as individual counselling, group guidance, career planning, and follow-up support.

To overcome this challenge, there is a need for increased training opportunities, professional development programs, and recruitment of qualified counsellors in educational institutions and community settings.

5.3 Lack of Awareness and Recognition of Counselling Services

Many individuals, including students, parents, and school administrators, lack awareness of the importance and benefits of career and guidance counselling. As a result, counselling services are often undervalued and underutilized (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Some parents view counselling as unnecessary or believe that career decisions should be made solely by the family. This may lead to resistance when counsellors suggest career paths that differ from parental expectations. In such cases, students may feel torn between their personal interests and family pressure (Rogers, 1951).

In schools, administrators may prioritize academic instruction over counselling services, allocating limited resources and time to guidance programs. Counsellors may be excluded from decision-making processes related to student development and school planning.

Cultural beliefs and misconceptions about counselling may also discourage individuals from seeking help. Some people associate counselling with mental illness or weakness, leading to stigma and reluctance to access services (Corey, 2017).

To improve awareness and recognition, there is a need for advocacy, public education campaigns, and integration of counselling services into school programs and community initiatives.

5.4 Socio-Economic and Cultural Barriers

Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to education pose significant challenges to career and guidance counselling. Many individuals may have aspirations that are constrained by financial limitations or lack of educational opportunities (Brown & Lent, 2019).

For example, a student may have the ability and interest to pursue higher education but may be unable to afford tuition fees or transportation costs. Counsellors must help clients explore alternative pathways such as scholarships, vocational training, or part-time work.

Cultural norms and gender roles may also influence career choices. In some societies, certain professions may be considered inappropriate for women or men. These cultural expectations can limit individuals' career options and personal fulfillment (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

Family pressure is another cultural barrier, where parents insist on specific career paths based on tradition, social status, or perceived financial security. Counsellors often need to mediate between clients and their families to promote understanding and support for clients' aspirations.

Addressing socio-economic and cultural barriers requires counsellors to adopt culturally sensitive approaches and collaborate with community organizations, educational institutions, and policymakers to expand opportunities for individuals.

Strategies to Enhance Effectiveness of Career-Guidance and Counselling

6.1 Professional Development and Training

One of the most effective strategies for enhancing career and guidance counselling is continuous professional development and training for counsellors. Counselling is a dynamic field influenced by evolving labour markets, technological advancements, and

societal changes. Therefore, counsellors must regularly update their knowledge and skills to provide relevant and evidence-based services (Shertzer & Stone, 2014).

Professional development can include workshops, seminars, certification programs, and advanced degrees in counselling or related disciplines. These programs equip counsellors with new techniques for assessment, career planning, and psychological support. For instance, training in digital career platforms, online counselling tools, and modern assessment instruments enables counsellors to reach more clients effectively and efficiently (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Mentorship and peer learning are also critical components of professional development. Experienced counsellors can guide novices in practical counselling methods, ethical decision-making, and dealing with complex client situations. Collaboration with peers allows counsellors to share experiences, resources, and innovative strategies for improving service delivery.

In Nigeria, enhancing the professional capacity of counsellors is particularly important due to the limited number of trained personnel and the growing demand for career guidance services in schools and communities (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015). Governments, educational institutions, and professional associations should prioritize investment in counsellor training to improve the quality and accessibility of career services.

6.2 Integration of Technology in Counselling

The integration of technology in career and guidance counselling has become increasingly important in addressing resource limitations and improving access. Digital tools, online career platforms, virtual assessments, and e-learning programs allow counsellors to provide timely and accurate information to clients regardless of location (Savickas, 2013).

For example, online aptitude and personality tests can quickly assess clients' interests and abilities, while career databases provide information on job descriptions, required qualifications, and employment trends. Virtual workshops and webinars can reach

large audiences at once, making group counselling and career education more accessible (Brown & Lent, 2019).

Social media and mobile applications also serve as tools for disseminating career information and connecting clients with mentors, employers, and training institutions. Counsellors can guide clients on how to leverage these platforms for career exploration and job search purposes.

In Nigeria, where rural areas often face limited access to counselling services, technology can bridge the gap by providing digital platforms for remote guidance. However, counsellors must ensure that clients are equipped with the necessary digital literacy skills and access to the internet to benefit fully from technological interventions.

6.3 Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

Increasing public awareness about the importance of career and guidance counselling is a key strategy for enhancing effectiveness. Advocacy efforts target students, parents, educators, and policymakers to emphasize the benefits of structured guidance programs (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Awareness campaigns can be conducted through school assemblies, community forums, radio and television programs, and social media. These campaigns highlight how career counselling helps individuals make informed decisions, reduce career-related stress, and align personal goals with labour market needs.

In addition, advocacy can promote policy changes that prioritize counselling services in educational institutions. Governments can be encouraged to allocate budgets for counsellor recruitment, training, and resource development, thereby institutionalizing guidance programs and ensuring their sustainability (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2015).

6.4 Collaboration with Stakeholders

Collaboration with stakeholders such as teachers, parents, employers, training institutions, and government agencies is essential for effective career guidance.

Counsellors cannot operate in isolation; they require support from the wider community to provide holistic services (Brown & Lent, 2019).

For example, collaboration with teachers helps identify students who need additional guidance, while partnerships with employers provide opportunities for internships, job shadowing, and career exposure programs. Engagement with parents ensures that family expectations align with students' personal interests and abilities.

Government agencies and professional bodies can provide labour market data, scholarship programs, and policy support to enhance counselling effectiveness. Non-governmental organizations can assist in delivering career development programs, particularly in underserved communities.

By leveraging collaboration, counsellors can overcome resource limitations, extend the reach of their services, and ensure that clients receive comprehensive support for their career development.

6.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Counselling Programs

To enhance effectiveness, counselling programs should incorporate regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This involves assessing the impact of counselling activities on clients' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and career outcomes (Super, 1990).

Evaluation methods may include pre- and post-assessment of clients' career awareness, surveys, feedback forms, and follow-up interviews. The data collected helps counsellors refine their strategies, identify areas for improvement, and measure the success of interventions.

Monitoring and evaluation also ensure accountability, as counsellors can demonstrate the value and effectiveness of their programs to school administrators, policymakers, and funding bodies. A systematic approach to evaluation contributes to continuous improvement and sustainability of career and guidance counselling services.

Conclusion

Career-Guidance-counselling is a critical component of personal, educational, and professional development. It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their careers and life goals. Through the systematic application of counselling principles, techniques, and strategies, counsellors assist clients in understanding their strengths, interests, values, and personality traits, thereby fostering self-awareness and career readiness. This seminar paper has highlighted several core aspects of career guidance-counselling. Firstly, the introduction and historical background emphasized the evolution of counselling as a professional field and its relevance in modern society, especially in addressing the dynamic demands of the labour market. Secondly, the discussion on skills required for effective counselling—including communication, empathy, assessment, and problem-solving skills—underscored the competencies necessary for counsellors to provide quality services.

The roles and responsibilities of counsellors were also explored, focusing on providing career information, assisting with planning and goal setting, offering emotional support, and monitoring clients' progress. Additionally, the seminar examined counselling techniques and strategies, such as individual and group counselling, use of career resources, and career development programs, which facilitate meaningful client engagement and development. The seminar also addressed challenges that impede effective counselling, including inadequate resources, shortage of trained counsellors, low awareness of counselling services, and socio-economic or cultural barriers. Recognizing these challenges is essential for developing strategies to enhance service delivery.

Finally, the discussion on strategies to enhance effectiveness emphasized continuous professional development, integration of technology, advocacy and awareness campaigns, collaboration with stakeholders, and systematic monitoring and evaluation. These strategies provide a roadmap for improving career guidance services and ensuring that clients receive comprehensive, relevant, and supportive counselling. Career and guidance counselling is not just a professional service but a vital societal tool for personal

growth, workforce development, and national progress. By investing in resources, training, awareness, and technology, educational institutions, governments, and communities can maximize the impact of counselling services, helping individuals navigate their career paths successfully and contribute meaningfully to society.

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