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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

We are pleased to present to our numerous readers volume 18, Number 1 edition of *The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. This edition contains ten well written and incisive articles covering different topics in Counselling and related areas. The authors of the article are as diverse as the topics. The coverage is quite good and exciting as well.

The first article sought to determine the difference in the receptive learning styles of introverts, ambiverts and extroverts in Senior High schools in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana. The second article is an examination of the role of football addiction and extraversion in football depression. The latter concluded that counsellors and psychologists need to assist youths to cope with football depression. The third article assessed emotional intelligence as a predictor of psychological adjustment to anxiety and depression among Nigerian adolescents. The study showed that emotional intelligence could serve as a therapeutic measure to prevent mal-adjustment and related emotional problems.

This edition also featured articles on Attitudes of nurses and midwives toward people living with HIV/AIDS and implications for counselling, Need for guidance and Counselling services in Almanjiri schools, and HIV/AIDS awareness in Nigerian primary schools. Other articles in this edition include causes of, and remedy to insecurity and kidnapping in Anambra state, problem-solving techniques in the management of conflicts among rural dwellers in Oyo state, and counselling for gender sensitivity in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling continues to maintain her leadership position as a repository for scientific knowledge in the area of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria. We continue to assure all our readers and contributors that our review process continues to be thorough and efficient. *The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling* is committed to providing our readers with the most outstanding research and thinking in the area of Guidance and Counselling and related areas.

Professor Alfred A. Adegoke
(Editor-in-Chief)

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling (TNJGC) (ISSN 0794-0831) is published annually by the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The journal publishes well researched and well articulated papers/articles on all issues relating to counselling and applied psychology which use a variety of appropriate approaches in the conduct of research and inquiry in theoretical, empirical and experimental studies. The editors invite submission of manuscripts from contributors for publication. Manuscripts are peer reviewed anonymously, and those that are accepted are published in the following issue of the journal.

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- Author(s) are to spell out one of their given names in full with surname in CAPITAL letters. Indicate your institutional/organizational and e-mail addresses and phone number on the title page.
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- Type all components of the manuscript using double space on A4 size sheets.
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NEED FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES IN ALMAJIRI SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Guidance and Counselling services are essential requirement for effective teaching and learning in educational institutions. Almajiri schools are newly created schools designed to bring education to the door steps of a special group of children who had been previously neglected. In view of the importance of Universal Education, this paper examines the need for guidance and counselling services in Almajiri schools in Nigeria. The historical background of Almajiri schools, the concept of guidance and counselling and the need of guidance and counselling services in Almajiri schools are highlighted the paper. Based on the review, the paper presents strategies for effective integration of students of Almajiri schools into the Nigeria education system in order to promote Universal Education.

Keywords: Almajiri, Inclusive Education and Education for All.

Introduction

Almajiri schools were established in Nigeria in order to extend educational opportunities to the less privileged especially children who roamed the streets in Northern Nigeria. However, the efforts of the present administration under the leadership of President Goodluck is yet to yield positive results because a large number of Almajiri children of school age still do not have access to formal education. The administration took a bold step by establishing Almajiri schools, yet, today the sight of Almajiri clutching plastic plates, begging for alms in every nook and cranny of Northern Nigeria still persists (Hassan, 2013). Recent statistics indicate that there are about 9.5 million Almajiris in the North, out of which the North West accounts for over five million; that is about 60 percent of the entire population nationwide (Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN; 2010).

The National Council for the Welfare of Destitute (NCWD, 2012) puts the population of the Almajiris at about 10million. These 10 million Almajiris constitute a large part of school children in Nigeria. It should be noted that no nation achieves greatness if its

children, who are its greatest assets have no access to quality education. Unfortunately, and in spite of the best efforts of the government, the goal of providing access to quality education has not been fully realised in Nigeria. The fact that the majority of these children do not attend conventional education makes the situation quite worrisome (Adetoro, 2013). This paper discussed the concept of Almajiri from the historical point of view the concept of guidance and counselling, and the need for guidance and counselling in Almajiri schools.

Historical Background of the Almajiri

The word Almajiri is derived from the Arabic “Almuhajirun”, meaning an emigrant. It usually refers to a person who migrates from the luxury of his home to other places or to a popular teacher in the quest for Islamic knowledge (Abdulmalik, 2008). It is hinged on the Islamic concept of migration which is widely practised especially when acquisition of knowledge at home is either inconvenient or insufficient. Imam Shafi’I is the greatest proponent of migration for seeking knowledge which he also extended even to business and a number of things. He likened it to a precious stone which he said is nothing unless it is mined and transported away from its soil. He summarised his view in two as follows:

Emigrate from your home in quest of excellence, and travel; for, in travel, there are five benefits: relief from sorrow and earning a livelihood, then knowledge, good manners and friendship with the famous (p.259).

Shafi’i was born in Gaza, but he travelled almost the entire Middle East seeking for knowledge until he finally settled in Egypt. Seeking knowledge through migration was not limited to the Middle East. Uthman Dan fodio of Nigeria travelled to Niger republic to learn from Sheikh Jibril and Islamic teachers (Mallams) in Zaria, Nigeria still receive students from distant places such as Mali, Cameroun, Chad, Central Africa etc. (Jafar, 2008).

During the pre-colonial era, the Almajiri education system, originally called the Tsangaya was established under the Kanem-Borno Empire, one of the oldest ruling empires in the world extending from the frontiers of Northern Nigeria across the Chadian region up to the borders of Libya. It was established as an organized and comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. It was a replica of Islamic learning centres in many Muslim countries such as the Madrasah in Pakistan, Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia. The system was funded through the state treasury and the state “Zakka” funds, the educational system was under the control of the Emirs the head of traditional government that existed before the coming of the British (Baba, 2008). Since Islam encourages charity to a wayfarer and to a student seeking knowledge, the community readily supported the Almajiris, most of whom came from faraway places to enrol in the Tsangaya schools. In return, the Almajiris offered services such as laundry, cobbling, gardening, weaving and sewing as well as a way of

giving back to the community that contributed to their well being; hence they paid back to the society what the society gave to them (Jafar, 2008).

The Amajiri system, though funded by the State was not over dependent on the state. The students were at liberty to acquire vocational and occupational skills in between their Islamic lessons and so were involved in farming, fishing, well construction, masonry, production, trade, tailoring etc. Many of them were the Northern Nigerian farmers who produced cotton and groundnut pyramids. They formed the majority of the traders in the commercial city of Kano and were the leather tanners and leather shoe and bag makers in the old Sokoto Empire. The cap weavers and Tailors in Zaria city were said to be mostly Almajiris. Thus, they formed the largest percentage of the community workforce and made a significant contribution to the economy of the society before the introduction of white collar jobs. After colonization, they were recruited by the British as columbite and tin miners in Jos city, which was then under Bauchi State before the creation of Plateau state (Abdlquadir, 2003).

Similarly, Abdulmalik (2008) observed that the Almajiri system of education has been able to produce judges, clerks, teachers etc and religious leaders. It also laid an elaborate system of administration in Northern Nigeria with the Almajiri education; Emirs in Northern Nigeria were able to keep administrative records in Arabic. They provided the colonial administration with the needed staff and record to operate and make important decisions. Such as the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, the first set of colonial staff in Northern Nigeria was provided by the Almajiri schools and this went on for years. In fact, the Almajiri system was a civilizing agent second to none before the advent of the British Colonialism led to the gradual replacement, neglect and consequent abandonment of Almajiri system of education.

Almajiri teachers and their pupils also freely provided their community with Islamic education, in addition to the development of Ajami i.e. reading and writing in Arabic alphabets. Fafunwa (2004) pointed out that there were 6000 Almajiri schools in Northern Nigeria through which writing came to the North first before any other region. Based on this system, which is founded upon the teachings of Qur'an and Hadith, the then Northern Nigeria was largely educated with a complete way of life, governance, customs, traditional craft, trade and even the mode of dressing. The chronicles of the travellers said that the Northern part of the territory was well organised, people were in walled cities, were literate and devoted Muslims (Fafunwa 2004).

Apart from being responsible for the literacy of hundreds of millions of children over a span of ten centuries, the Almajiri system is the only one today known in the Muslim World that has retained the reproduction of the Qur'an in writing direct from memory. Without looking at any copy, an Alaramma (Almajiri student) studiously writes the entire Qur'an portion by portion, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, beginning with all its consonants, then he returns to add all its vowels, then its full stops and commas, dilations and nun nation, and so many little things that vary from page to page. He does all these

largely to the current plight of the Almajiris. This is because taking care of the Almajiri children became overwhelmingly burdensome for the Mallams, who were left with no choice but to send these little boys out to beg from the good will of the society. To make ends meet, some of these Mallams began to impose on the Almajiri what is called “kudin sati”, a form of weekly fees for the lessons he derived. They were reassured that to beg was better than to steal. These boys swam into the society with no bearing, moving from street to street, house to house, vehicle to vehicle. They were everywhere including markets, car parks, restaurants and university gates. They became a burden as well as a nuisance to the society. They sang, begged and prayed, appealing to the mercy and good will of the people (Hamza, 2009).

As a result of inadequate support, many Almajiris became traders, drivers and those who could not make it engaged in menial jobs since they had no skills to engage in professional jobs. They resort to wheelbarrow pushing, touting and so on. The nomadic search for livelihood and the struggle to support the Mallam took much of their time and denied them the opportunity of knowledge and skills in learning. Though this system has produced prominent Islamic scholars of Northern extraction like Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, Late Abubakar Gumi, Jaa`far Adam and Kala Rawi, Goni Habib, an octogenarian, who produced over 300 Qur`an memorisers and run schools across various states in Northern Nigeria, noted that the Tsangaya system as it is presently run is a corruption of the original concept. He lamented that at his age (86); he sometimes feels like weeping because the present crop of Tsangaya students lack the spirit of scholarship like endurance, moral, discipline and that their intellectual capacity is low (Hassan, 2012).

Ayuba (2009) found that 6 out of 10 of Almajirs had no homes. Many were lost through street violence, ritual murder, while others through disease and hunger. According to him, with these incidences 7 million potential scholars, judges, accountants, engineers, doctors were wasted.

Need for Guidance and Counselling in Almajiri Schools

The desire of the Federal Government to provide education for all brought about the idea of Universal Basic Education, which gave birth to the inauguration of modern Almajiri schools with the sole aim of providing equal educational opportunity to every Nigerian child. Based on this the first Almajiri school was established in Sokoto in the year 2010.

The first Almajiri School was established in Sokoto where these children are many, as a pre-emptive strategy to reducing the number of Almajiris on the street. But today, it is absolutely unattainable because their number instead of decreasing has increased from the initial 9.5 million to 10million. In Gombe alone, though there is no actual data of these children in the street, but the sight of them in the busy places like markets, mechanic workshops, and at bus stops begging show that the number is on the rise. Then, the question raised by educationists is; why the increase in the number of Almajiri school children despite the efforts of the Federal government to remove them from the streets?

without a single mistake and despite the abundant minute differences in many verses or portions that appear similar. They are counterparts of the Alarammasin the Middle and the Far East, people like famous calligrapher Usman Taha of Syria who reproduced the most widely circulated Qur'an today.

The Fall of the Almajiri Education System

In 1904, the British invaded and colonized the Northern Nigeria territories and took control of the state treasury. They killed and disposed emirs who resisted foreign rule, while those who were subjugated lost control of their territories and accepted their new roles as mere traditional rulers used only for indirect rule. The British also refused to recognize the Almajiri education system as an important education system and deliberately abolished its state funding arguing that, they were mere religious schools. Boko, meaning Western education was introduced and funded instead (Hassan, 2012).

Circumstantially, all the *learned people* who were at the helm of affairs in pre-colonial north fell in ~~one~~ swoop and were considered illiterate or uneducated (at least to the government) in the new status quo, making them not only unemployed but unqualified to be employed despite being able to read and write. Islamic scholars who were revered professionally for controlling the moral fibers of the society gradually became neglected. An Imam, who may be the source of arbitration to the people of his community, was relegated only to delivering sermon once a week at the local mosque on Fridays. The same Imam was considered unqualified to have a say in government or sit in the chambers of state House of Assembly to deliberate on the laws and constitution of the state because he was considered uneducated and illiterate (Hassan, 2012).

With the loss of support from the government and the helpless Emirs, the Almajiri system of education collapsed like a pile of cards. The responsibility of the Almajiri was then taken over by the local scholars, who deemed it a moral and religious duty to educate these pupils for the sake of Allah (God). Although, there was a scarcity of funds and the overwhelming number of pupils to cater for, the system continued to flourish with the support of the immediate community and begging was still not a norm, instead they resorted to odd menial jobs to make ends meet.

Disregard for the Almajiri system in preference for Western form of education ignited animosity and antagonism from the Mallams, the pupils and the society at large. The case scenario is worsened by the belief that the Western education was of Christian-European origin and therefore anti-Islam. It bred the fear that a child with the Western belief will eventually lose his Islamic identity and embrace vices that negate the values and principles of Islam such as alcoholism, fornication, semi naked dressing, partying, abandoning the prayer, fasting, zakka etc.

Hamza (2009) submitted that increase in the level of poverty in the Nigeria contribute

largely to the current plight of the Almajiris. This is because taking care of the Almajiri children became overwhelmingly burdensome for the Mallams, who were left with no choice but to send these little boys out to beg from the good will of the society. To make ends meet, some of these Mallams began to impose on the Almajiri what is called “kudin sati”, a form of weekly fees for the lessons he derived. They were reassured that to beg was better than to steal. These boys swam into the society with no bearing, moving from street to street, house to house, vehicle to vehicle. They were everywhere including markets, car parks, restaurants and university gates. They became a burden as well as a nuisance to the society. They sang, begged and prayed, appealing to the mercy and good will of the people (Hamza, 2009).

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And another question is what are the schools' task to be achieved, and will it be achieved? The terms "guidance and counselling" have been interchangeably used in the literature. Guidance is a term which is broader than counselling and it includes counselling as one of its services. Butler (2000) makes a logical separation of the counselling process i.e. (i) adjustive and (ii) distributive phase. In the adjustive phase, the emphasis is on social, personal and emotional concerns of clients, while in the distributive phase the focus is upon educational, vocational and occupational problems (Bhatnagar & Gupta, 1999).

Guidance is a generic term which involves the provision of information to promote knowledge and self awareness. According to Willey and Andrew (2001) counselling involves two individuals, one seeking help and the other professionally trained person who helps to solve problems, to orientate and direct clients towards a goal that would lead to maximum development and growth. Counselling is an integral part of an over-all programme of guidance. Counselling is a specific process of assistance extended by an expert to a needy person (Umoh, 2000). This means the counselling situation arises when a needy person is in the face to face interaction with an expert who makes available necessary assistance to support the needy.

It is a process whereby an individual is helped through a relationship with a professionally prepared person to voluntarily change his/her behaviour, clarify his/her attitudes and goals so that his/her problems could be solved. There are different guidance services available to students; these are appraisal counselling, information, placement and follow-up services (Idowu, 2004).

There is an urgent need for guidance and counselling services in the Almajiri schools in Nigeria to meet the various needs of the students. The need to promote guidance and counselling in Almajiri schools cannot be overstressed.

Some of the reasons why guidance and counselling services should be extended to Almajiri schools are:

- i. An individual Almajiris' ability, interest, aptitude would be better tamed at the initial stage of his life if guidance is provided. Counselling at the very crucial stages of life is anathema to the development of the child. Therefore, counselling has to start at the Almajiri School level, because it will help to prepare them for useful living in the society.
- ii. Guidance and counselling services in Almajiri schools would help to address the unguarded lives of Almajiri students since the new educational system has established a schooling system that is more inclusive in nature with improved teaching and learning environment. This could help to return Almajiri school system back to its original state of producing functional citizens.
- iii. There is the need to stem the tide of maladaptive behaviours of students in Almajiri schools. Many children roaming about the streets in the name of struggling for survival could be helped to live better and more useful lives if they are exposed to counselling services at early stage of life.
- iv. There is also the need to hunt for gifted children among the Almajiri school children, just like the practice in the formal school system. These gr...

- children need special attention to develop their talents fully. This can only be done through provision of guidance and counselling services.
- v. Almajiri school children need to be provided with a sound foundation for future academic, psychological and healthy development. Acquiring useful life skills through the provision of guidance and counselling services would aid personal growth and development of the Almajiris and reduce militancy and deviant behaviours.
 - vi. The teachers in the Almajiri schools need to be guided by Counsellors on the need to provide an optimal learning climate for the Almajiris, because teachers need to understand their students in order to provide a conducive environment for learning.
 - vii. School Counsellors need to equip the Almajiris with skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships as early as possible in order to promote self-understanding and communal living. This would aid better living and harmonious living of an individual with people of different ethnic, religious and cultural affiliations.

Recommendations

Having justified the need for guidance and counselling in Almajiri schools in Nigeria, the following recommendations are considered relevant:

1. Governments should consider it as a matter of urgency to the establish guidance and counselling centres in all the Almajiri schools and make them functional by employing the services of qualified counsellors. It is highly advantageous to lay a positive social, academic and behavioural foundation for the learners of the Almajiri school stage.
2. Due to the special nature of the Almajiri schools, Almajiri school counselling should be an integral part of the curriculum content of Guidance and Counselling programmes in the Nigerian teacher training institutions
3. There should be a Guidance Committee to monitor the provision of guidance and counselling services in the Almajiri schools, because of the peculiar problems Almajiri School children face in the course of their education.
4. Counsellors should be posted to Almajiri schools to guide teachers on the best way of handling the Almajiri students. This will help orthodox method of corporal punishment which was common in schools.

Conclusion

Counselling in the Almajiri School is not only desirable; it should be functional. However, Almajiri school counselling requires a different approach from the ones needed by other group of students. It is important that the stakeholders are exposed to the rudiments of counselling in the school since the Almajiris school children require special attention. The approach should be such a way that the Almajiris should be able to integrate with the other members of the society. In the provision of guidance and counselling services for Almajiri schools, Counsellors, Mallams (teachers), parents and governments must be actively involved. This would promote collective effort and empower the students to leave peacefully and harmoniously with other and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society.

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