



## Neglect of Guidance and Counselling Service in Cameroon Schools: Is it Only Teaching and Administration that is Relevant to Make Schools Run Effectively?

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**Abstract:** Since 1982 when guidance and counseling was introduced as a learning program in the department of science of education (ecole normale superieure, yaounde), hundreds if not thousands have been trained in various secondary school teacher training institutions scattered all over Cameroon. Their services have been deployed in many secondary schools and universities; but from observation and utterances, it would appear a school can function effectively without the activity of a guidance counselor meanwhile counseling represents one of the most important activity in ensuring a realistic and productive existence of young people. This paper endeavor to unravel why guidance and counseling is neglected in schools and to unveil why a school in Cameroon can function normally without the important service of guidance and counseling which in the most part should function concurrently with teaching and administration in school. Methodology used is basically analytical using secondary sources of information mostly articles and some online articles related to the theme of the paper. Strategies/recommendations was postulated for guidance and counseling to have a place in our schools not mere posting of guidance counselors for routine counseling of few students.

**Keywords:** guidance and counseling, teaching and administration, school, Cameroon.

### INTRODUCTION

It is worth noting that guidance and counseling represents one of the most important activity in ensuring a realistic and productive existence of young people. Unfortunately, counseling service is most neglected in our schools. Emphasis is placed on instruction (teaching) and administration: when the instructional and administrative function are performed without the complementary function of counseling, the individual student fails to achieve self fulfillment. Counseling fosters the client's self awareness and knowledge about his reactions to his environment. It facilitates the learning process by helping the individual to acquire and accumulate responses that he may implement in different conditions.

In Cameroon, the phenomenon of counseling has experienced timid follow up and the counseling movement is seen as an optional or extra activity for some students; whereas it is suppose to be an integral part of the educational process for all stakeholders. Guidance counselors are education's insurance that the individual will not be submerged in the group. Unfortunately, a few well placed individuals shrug their shoulders on hearing the word "counseling". Some say it is not necessary and that they seem to manage alright without counseling. It is worth noting that guidance and counseling is a helping career which is a moulding, rebuilding and rehabilitating process Tita (2016). It is a self

informative relationship, and it is both pre-emptive and restorative of maladaptive and self-destructive tendencies. Guidance and counseling focuses on individual and its highly required in the schools, colleges, higher education, hospitals, in courts, in industries and companies; but for the purpose of this paper, the main focus is on guidance counseling programs in secondary schools.

### **BRIEF CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND**

Guidance and counseling service in Cameroon secondary and high schools has not been given the attention it deserves. Lots of neglect is suffered by this vital service and until attention is given to this form of education service, majority of secondary and high school students will continue to have much difficulties especially career decision making. Why the neglect? According to Einstein (2003), counseling is neglected in our schools due to doubt about the efficacy of guidance and counseling; some people such as uninitiated colleagues, teachers, principals or administrators doubt the efficacy of counseling. They are skeptical about reliance on its use (Akinde, 2002 quoted in Einstein, 2003).

Einstein, 2003 says another reason for neglect is the issue of confidentiality. Clients expect that their secrets be kept confidential. However, teachers, peers, parents, principals expect such information be divulged to them and failure of the counselor to reveal such secrets raise the degree of suspicion of his activities and releasing such information only goes to weaken the integrity of the counseling movement in the eyes of stakeholders. Another reason for the neglect according to Einstein is counselors created problems. Some counselors push the counseling activity to be neglected. Many who have no passion for the profession are not fully committed. They do not have any organized plan of action and hence give school administrators a negative view of the education activity. Instead of being serious-minded in their counseling duties, some join the unnecessary staff room discussions.

Another point put forth is some school personnel still see the counselor as having a hidden agenda.

They give counselors negative or derogatory labels. This is more so where the other workers doubt the moral integrity of counselors who give individual counseling to young ones. This feeling becomes more serious when a male counselor treats female students and give the interaction high confidentiality (Olanajo, 2006 quoted in Einstein 2003). Finally, another reason put forth by Makinde 1980 and quoted by Einstein 2003 is the blurred role of the guidance counselor. Several people in the society do not know the specific roles of the counselor. Even in the school setting where awareness is expected to be high, school personnel such as teachers and principals do not understand or they misconstrue the functions of the counselors. Makinde (1980) wrote that head teachers see them as rivals instead of helpers.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Basically, the methodology used was analytical using secondary sources of information from physical articles and online articles.

### **WHY GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICE SHOULD BE A FORCE TO RECKON WITH IN A SCHOOL SETTING.**

According to [counseling.online.wfu.edu/blog](http://counseling.online.wfu.edu/blog) and [onlinecounselingprograms.com/co](http://onlinecounselingprograms.com/co). ---there are six powerful roles guidance counselors can effectively put into action for the counseling service to have a significant place in the school: role of counseling, organization, support, information, consultation and networking. All needed is for the guidance counselor to have a good plan for its execution. Let's briefly look at each:

**Counseling:** counseling within the school setting is to empower students to make decisions, solve problems, change behavior and solve issues in their lives; such counseling may be personal counseling, educational counseling, career counseling or a combination of all three. Counseling is a key part of the school guidance program offered on an individual or group as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis.

**Organize:** The counselor needs to organize the guidance activities into a coherent program in conjunction with management, administration and staff of the school.

**Support:** counselor need to provide support to students, parents, teachers, the principal, board of management and referral agencies in assisting the personal, social, career and educational development of students. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student.

**Information:** counselors assist students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal, social, educational and career development.

**Consultation:** one of the role of counselors is consulting with parents, management, school staff and students.

**Networking:** A key role of counselors is to develop and maintain link with employers, relevant agencies institutions and past students to enhance the guidance and counseling work.

According to [counseling.online.wfu.edu>blog](http://counseling.online.wfu.edu/blog) and [onlinecounselingprogram.com>co.----](http://onlinecounselingprogram.com/co.----), the six roles elaborated above constitute broad responsibilities of counselors which if well handled by guidance counselors will go a long way to manifest in the school system; moving side by side with education activity of teaching and administration. What is needed is good planning at the beginning of the school year for its execution. As it is often said in any endeavor; failing to plan is planning to fail.

### **TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION: THE FORCE BEHIND AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL**

It is often said that teaching and administration are the school activities that makes a school function normally. Teaching according to [www.uopeople.edu>blog>the-im-----](http://www.uopeople.edu/blog>the-im-----), is pertinent because teachers provide the power of education to today's youths, thereby giving them the possibility for a better future. Teachers simplify the complex, and make abstract concepts accessible to students. To put it simply, teaching and learning is the reason why schools operate and is the one thing school policy makers and implementers look up to. without teaching, learning cannot occur in a place call school ([www.edutopia.org>redefining-role----](http://www.edutopia.org>redefining-role----)).

The pertinence of school administration according to [learn.org>articles>what-is-scho-----](http://learn.org>articles>what-is-scho-----), lies in management of all school operations from creating a safe learning environment to managing the school budget. School administration keeps in direct contact with the community, provides it with care and proper environment that would academically qualify students well, leading eventually to progress of community and upgrades its level. To put it in simple terms, school administration makes sure all activities in the school environment move on well.

Inevitably, from the above, we now see evidence why teaching and administration act as engine of the vehicle we call school. Without these two education activities, school may not exist. Conversely, the activity of guidance and counseling even though is suppose to be a catalyst for the school to achieve its objectives, is still to be a veritable force as compared to teaching and administration. As earlier explained, forces militate against the guidance and counseling movement.

### **CONCLUSION**

It has been demonstrated clearly that guidance and counseling service in our schools is not given utmost attention as compared to teaching and administration. Doubts regarding its efficacy, issues related to confidentiality, problems created by counselors themselves and blurred roles performed by counselors are some reasons outlined why counseling service is sidelined in our schools. It was also shown why teaching and administration continue to play frontline roles in schools thereby acting as the engine of the vehicle call school.

### **STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING A FORCE IN SCHOOLS**

- 1) Recruitment of people who believe and have passion for guidance and counseling as a career.
- 2) Guidance counselors should imbibe the six roles of counseling, organize, support, information, consultation and networking. They should plan on how to execute them in their various schools.
- 3) Counselors should always be ready to collaborate with all stake holders in the education community.

- 4) At all times counselors must give a good impression of what their service is all about and clear off any doubts regarding their actual roles in the schools.
- 5) There is need for serious enlightenment on the part of the public to accept guidance and counseling. This will help develop strategies for school administrators and teachers to achieve a realistic perception of students in their school environment.
- 6) Counselors should keep students and other school stakeholders secrets with utmost confidentiality.
- 7) Guidance and counseling should be made an integral part of the school program and therefore supported by all concerned.
- 8) Counselors should understand their limits in helping the students and therefore make use of referrals.

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