

**A COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST'S RECONSTRUCTION JOURNEY: THE CALL
FOR RELEVANCE**

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BY

**PROFESSOR SAMUEL OLAYINKA SALAMI
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this lecture was to discuss counselling psychology and demonstrate my role as a counselling psychologist in reconstructing the individual's life and existence in the natural and human-made environment in order to attain optimum human functioning and national development. Guidance, counselling and psychotherapy were defined and differences between them were explained. The attributes of the counsellor including the stages in the counselling process were discussed. The challenges in the current practice of guidance and counselling in Nigeria were presented. The relevance of the counsellor in counselling for optimum, performance of students, workers and national development considering academic, career/vocational and personal-social counselling were explained.

The authors' contributions to achievement of optimal performance of students and workers and national development in Nigeria through counselling were explored through the findings from his different research works that involved his personal efforts and collaborations with his students and colleagues. In the area of students' academic problems, the author investigated the link between some psychological and social factors, attitudes towards schooling and academic performance of students. Effects of some counselling intervention strategies in enhancing academic performance, decision-making competence and quality of school life of students were examined. In areas of students' career/vocational problems, some factors influencing career aspirations, vocational preferences, career decision-making and career maturity of students were identified. Effectiveness of some counselling intervention strategies for fostering career decision-making, career maturity, and job interview skills of students were demonstrated.

Regarding the career/vocational problems of workers some factors influencing work adjustment, work attitudes, job performance, job stress and burnout of some Nigerian workers and retirees were identified. Use of some counselling intervention strategies for managing stress among teachers were shown. In respect of personal-social problems of students, some factors influencing attitudes, post-traumatic stress disorders and adjustment to college of students were identified. Efficacy of some counselling intervention strategies on post-prison adjustment of inmates and social anxiety of primary school pupils were presented.

To reposition guidance and counselling for optimum performance of individuals and national development in Nigeria some recommendations were made: (1) A separate section in the

National Policy on Education should be devoted to guidance and counselling stating the philosophy, content, rationale/objectives, processes and evaluation procedures of guidance and counselling. (2) Philosophy of guidance and counselling in Nigeria should integrate guidance and counselling models from developed or developing countries which have workable guidance and counselling system. (3) Qualified counsellors should be appointed on full time basis to take up guidance and counselling duties. (4) Adequate budgetary provision should be made for guidance and counselling by the state and federal government. (5) Various people concerned with guidance and counselling should develop more positive attitudes toward counselling. (6) Counsellors in Nigeria should not only focus on school setting, they should be involved in the business, industrial, hospital, private and rehabilitation settings. (7) The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should implement the report of the Certification and Licensure Board to allow for the development of a national register for professional counsellors.