Guidance and Counseling has evolved and developed throughout the ages to become the scientific practice it is today. Throughout the evolutionary process, the helping profession it is today is seen to have developed from primitive practices during ancient times to scientific technical service it is in our contemporary times. Knowledge of the evolution and development of the practice is critical because it empowers practitioners with the knowledge and appreciation of the process that the guidance and counseling techniques and skills have passed through to get to the level they are today. Exposition of the historical development of guidance and counseling serves to educate the practitioners with an appreciation of the evolution of counseling skills and techniques throughout the years. It empowers the practitioners with the knowledge of how various counseling approaches, techniques and skills emerged from the practices of practitioners from different epochs in history. This knowledge therefore serves to create awareness among counseling practitioners that the discipline is a dynamic profession that reflects the changes taking place in society. This study sought to critically appraise the process of development of counseling from ancient times to the contemporary times with a view to demonstrating the changes the practice has gone through to get to its present status. Emphasis is laid on the influence of the prevailing philosophical, paradigms and schools of thought in every epoch and their implications to the counseling techniques, skills and practice.
Statement of the problem

The issue of how the various guidance and counseling techniques, skills, approaches and practices developed is not clearly known to many practitioners of counseling and other related helping profession service providers. Practitioners simply find themselves using techniques, skills, theoretical approaches and principles that they may not know how they emerged so as to appreciate the dynamic nature of the counseling practice. Knowledge of the evolutionary development of the theory and practice of counseling serves to create to sensitize practitioners on the critical requirement of aligning the profession to reflect the needs, aspirations and dynamics of society. This realization stresses the centrality of the supremacy of the clients in the evolution of techniques, skills and theoretical approaches required to effectively alleviate their suffering and promote holistic personal functioning.

The study sought to give a critical exposition of the historical journey that counseling has so far covered to get to its current status. Highlights on the evolutionary development of counseling empower practitioners with the knowledge and understanding regarding the versatility and dynamism of the profession in addressing societal needs. It inculcates in practitioners the appreciation that prevailing counseling skills, techniques and theoretical approaches are products that reflect practices and happenings in society at every given epoch.

Purpose of the study

The study purposed to critically appraise the process of development of counseling from ancient times to the contemporary times with a view to demonstrating the changes the practice has gone through to get to its present status. Emphasis is laid on the influence of the prevailing philosophical, paradigms and schools of thought in every epoch and their implications to the counseling techniques, skills and practice.

Methodology: The study was a historical critique of literature from policy documents, books, journals, magazines and internet on the evolution and practice of guidance and counseling.

Introduction

The world today is increasingly becoming complex, a phenomenon that is impacting heavily on the human person who ironically is the author of this complexity (Rao, 2003). The heavy requirements and demands imposed on the individuals by this complexity predisposes a person to seek assistance in order to cope and adjust effectively thereby avoiding personality crisis (Kiriswa, 2005).

This is not to say that guidance and counseling is a product of modernity. Counseling existed in one
form or the other since the very beginning of human civilization (Rao, 2005). Human beings must have sought comfort, help and solace from friends and close associates. However, it is in recent past that guidance and counseling has emerged and carved a niche as a specialized and distinct field of study and as a profession (Makinde, 1976; Latoma and Sikolia, 2002).

Rao (2005) reports that modern counseling is a product of the educational system fundamentally of the American educational system. It has deep roots in the concern for the individual’s freedom, rights, dignity and worth as a human person as influenced by philosophical viewpoints on human nature. Rao (2005) posits that counseling as a hygiology, is the study of the problems of normal people and prevention of incidence of serious emotional difficulties; is different from Psychiatry whose concern is the psycho-pathology of behavior.

There are variously definitions of counseling. Rogers (1967) refers to counseling as a series of direct contacts with the individual, which aims to offer assistance in changing attitudes and behavior. Effective counseling consists of a definitely structured permissive relationship which allows the client to gain an understanding of oneself to a degree that enables the client to take positive steps in the light of new orientation. Mwiti (2005) defines counseling as the process that aims to help others in any one or all of their inner being: emotional, behavioral, attitudinal, rational and spiritual within a caring relationship. Patri (2005) defines counseling as a means by which one person helps another through a purposeful communication. It is made up of a series of solution-oriented conversations. Consequently, counseling is a process of exploration by two or more people aimed at identifying problems and seeking solutions (Patri, 2005).

The British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy (2005) states that counseling takes place when a counselor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction or purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no one can be properly ‘sent’ to counseling. This definition renders a detailed and comprehensive description of the process of counseling as performed by counselors together with the problems that prompt people to seek counseling. Counselors concur that counseling is a process that involves the establishment of a therapeutic relationship in which a counselor facilitates a counselee in resolving conflicts and challenges in his or her life.

Guidance on the other hand, refers to advising, directing, informing and assisting a person to
reach desired goals in their lives (Hough, 2006; Patri, 2005; Mutie and Ndambuki, 2002). It is discernible that counseling seeks to enable a client resolve their problems and issues using the professional helping relationship between the counselor and the counselee.

A unique aspect of counseling as a profession is that its foundation is grounded in so many other disciplines; it is a hybrid of knowledge from Philosophy, Education, Psychology, Psychiatry, Sociology and Family Studies. Even today, programs that train counselors are found in academic units as diverse as Colleges of Education, Health Sciences, and departments of Psychology, Family Studies and Religious Institutions.

Counseling and the related disciplines of Psychiatry, Psychology, Social Work and Guidance have experienced an uneven progression of development. In the days of Paleolithic ancestors, the first mental health professionals were fond of drilling in holes in clients’ head to permit demons to escape (Coon and Mitterrer, 2007). Through the days of ancient Mesopotamia and Persia, the classical Greek and Roman eras and into modern times, early counselors were primarily philosophers, physicians or priests (Rao, 2005).

The primitive years of the 19th century spawned the first counselors who attempted to heal by talking even though they did so in ways nowadays considered bizarre. It is incredible to think that 100 years ago, therapeutic counseling as we know it did not exist (Jacobs, 2003). It has been only in the last 50 years that counseling has emerged as a distinct field apart from its related mental health disciplines. There are several epochs that counseling has gone through which includes:

**EPOCH OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS:**

The first counselors were leaders in the community who attempted to provide inspiration to others through their teachings. They were religious leaders like Moses (1200 B.C.), Mohammed (600 B.C.) and Buddha (500 B.C.). They were also philosophers such as Lao-tzu (600 B.C.), Confucius (500 B.C.), Socrates (450 B.C.), Plato (400 B.C.) and Aristotle (350 B.C.). Many of these philosophers and religious leaders functioned as ‘counselors’ in that they worked with a group of disciples, trying to impart wisdom, to stimulate emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth in them. Although their approaches were different from the contemporary counselors, there are a few basic tenets inherited from them such as there is no single right answer to any question worth asking, there are many possible interpretations of the same experience and any philosophy is worthless if it is not personalized and made relevant to everyday life (Kottler and Shepard, 2008). These
principles are utilized in modern day counselors’ work in helping clients find their own path to inner peace.

**EPOCH OF FIRST PSYCHIATRISTS.**

Besides those that sought to ‘heal’ others through educational and spiritual paths, other pragmatic practitioners tried and combined philosophy with what they observed about human behavior. Foremost among these was the medical philosopher Hippocrates (400 B.C.) who introduced many ideas that we now take for granted, including the concepts of homeostasis (the natural balance of body), and prognosis (the prediction of outcomes). Hippocrates emphasized the importance of obtaining a complete history before undertaking any treatment and devised the first classification of mental disorders. He is also credited with developing over 2000 years ago the first counseling interventions and for relying on many techniques that are still in use today such as the systematic diagnostic interviews, detailed history taking, trust building in a therapeutic relationship and even dream interpretation and acknowledgement of repressed feelings. There were not really many improvements on Hippocrates’ theories until the last century or two. Remember, the favored ‘treatment’ in the Middle Ages for those suffering from emotional problems was being burned at the stake (Woolfe, Dryden and Strawbridge, 2007).

When Sigmund Freud and his colleagues evolved the ‘talking cure’ of healing through catharsis, the professions of counseling and psychotherapy were truly born. Modern Counselors borrow heavily from the Freudian approaches of psychoanalysis into their treatment of their clients.

**INFLUENCES FROM PSYCHOLOGY**

About the same time Freud was laying the foundation for psychiatric counseling, another discipline was making its own contribution; the burgeoning field of psychology which developed strategies and principles of studying and modifying human behavior using scientific procedures.

**The Guidance era:** In the early part of the 20th century, a completely different movement was taking place. It was a time of great social reform, and there was an emerging recognition that social forces and individual development could be assisted, directed and more importantly guided. This awareness was especially evident in the field of education and the specialty of career guidance (Kottler and Shepard, 2009). The industrial age was then flourishing; technical training and skilled workers were becoming necessary, new programs in vocational guidance attempted to respond to these needs (Rao, 2003). Guidance movement in careers, education, and training in
organizations played a critical role in the development of counseling since counselors incorporated offering of information, directions and action plans to the clients in their effort to assist in holistic personal development of the people who sought their help.

The Counseling era: The prevailing ‘medical model’ espoused by psychiatrists and some psychologists had reigned supreme. This framework emphasized the diagnosis of psychopathology. Patients who sought therapeutic services were viewed as afflicted with a form of mental illness that could be treated by a number of medical options such as electroconvulsive shock treatment, psychosurgery (frontal lobotomies), and psychopharmacology and as a last resort, medical psychotherapy which often took the form of long term psychoanalysis (Woolfe, Dryden and Strawbridge, 2007).

Improvements have been conducted on the Rogerian model of counseling by recent counseling theorists where counseling skills such as listening and attending together with the theoretical and psychological foundations have been refined and developed through scientific research in an effort to equip the counselor with the appropriate techniques and strategies of assisting the clients effectively.

Conclusion:

Counseling thus emerged from a variety of approaches developed by the ancient philosophers, religious leaders, medical practitioners and psychologists who contributed a lot in the evolution of the modern day's scientific counseling as a profession.

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