

E-Counselling Implementation: Consideration During the Covid-19 Deepen Crisis in Nigeria

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic is and remain a major problem experienced around the world. This paper investigates E-counselling implementation consideration during the Covid-19 deepen crisis in Nigeria. School closures due to coronavirus (COVID-19) are affecting learners/clients worldwide. Therefore, the thriving concept of this paper is to ensure that the temporary measures of e-counselling benefits both learners/clients in rural and urban area and not to create inequality in the Education system in Nigeria. The paper identifies online counselling, WhatsApp, SMS message, radio, television, e-mails, internet as medium of e-counselling and to maintaining good interpersonal communications among others as significant factors that will help to bridge the gap between learners/clients in rural and urban area. The roles of stakeholders is to facilitate measures that is all encompassing that will motivate counsellors, teachers and others in exploring new online curricula modalities as a temporary measures to facilitate and promote e-counselling among others. Thus, the challenges of e-counselling facing Nigeria learners needs a collaborative effort in ameliorating their plight. Hence, this paper discusses the meaning of e-counselling, the concept of Covid-19 and e-counselling, Covid-19 crisis and Counselling, Covid-19 and technology in counselling, roles of stakeholders and effective implementation of e-counselling during the Covid-19 deepen crisis, factors that will aid e-counselling, and the general e-counselling process in Nigeria Education.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Deepen, Crisis, and Nigeria E-counselling System.

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1. Introduction

As schools move to distance learning provision, so does guidance in education and training. The availability of ICT infrastructure, previous use of ICT, as well as the attitude of the guidance practitioners and clients towards digital forms of delivery plays a major role. For all countries who closed their schools, this meant that guidance could only be provided using digital technologies and other tools and channels that can be used for communication at a distance. Only Nigerian reports that in exceptional cases, some contact support can be provided for students with a special support decision. Besides personal issues, students are also provided with support concerning: curricular difficulties, study difficulties, queries related to choice of subjects, changes in the postsecondary course requirements due to COVID-19, queries related to exams, concerns related to transition to post-secondary education, etc. This service was set up two weeks after the schools closed; it involves having calls redirected to practitioners' personal phones Cedefop (2019).

Sanders and Rosenfield (1998) define e-counselling as a counselling method through the medium of telecommunication technologies such as telephone, internet and teleconferencing. Digital counselling game is gradually emerging as an effective tool to leverage students into holistic self-management and development (Bada 2013). However, mimicking students' life challenges into digital counselling games and its related platforms is unconventional in the Nigeria context, and this is undoubtedly a new dimension of rendering counselling services to students during the Covid-19 crisis. Sedano (2010) describes the contextual digital game as hyper-contextual. Hypercontextualised game is a locally designed game which seeks to depict the context for which it is developed (Sedano 2010). Therefore, the face-to-face counselling method is nonetheless still a necessity and applicable (Zamani 2009). Tait (1999) also emphasizes the need to reconsider the face-to-face counselling method in counselling delivery. Thus, ICT needs to be integrated into the traditional face-to-face counselling for the diversity in counselling delivery (Obi et al. 2012) in order to alleviate the problems connected with the face-to-face counselling method during the Covid-19 crisis. In this regard, the efficiency of the counselling methods needs to be rigorously explored in order to meet the needs of clients. Counselling in the Nigeria senior high schools has existed for years until the outbreak of Covid-19 when the Ministry of Education re-emphasize the need to resource the centres with state-of-the-art facilities in order to augment the services (NERIC 2007). Conversely, the first researcher's prior experience as a teacher confirms that some educational counsellors in Nigeria are reluctant to adapt to the emerging counselling technologies, and this is mainly due to their incapacity to use technology.

E-counselling seems to be a phenomenon within the counselling parlance. It is a modern means of communication between counsellor(s) and client(s) in sessions via internet within a stipulated period of at least

once a week in a year or six months with a singular purpose of assisting clients in discovering themselves and making useful choices in relation to their educational, vocational and personal-social needs. Ecounselling or telecounselling is an extension of information and communication technology which Ivowi (2005) prescribed as generic term employed in describing the generation, storage, dissemination and eliciting of relevant information for therapeutic encounter. Most counsellors seem to be regressive in relation to familiarization and use of information technology. Their lack of competency in the use of electronic services could deter them from relating effectively with clients who are not within their immediate reach. Electronic communication involves the use of e-mails, internet and communication aided strategies in counselling clients (Adika, 2011). Adika further added that counsellors are not left out in this all-important phenomenon which has potential to transform not only counselling practices but education as well. Counsellors who lack basic skills in electronic services may not be able to email and make internet contact with distant clients that need such help. This may have been necessitated by lack of access to the electronic gadgets or lack of training in their usage. Taking into consideration that not all career counsellors have a psychology background there is an emergent need of training counsellors how to provide basic psychological support and/or partner with professional psychologists to address this need of their clients". The digital gap among practitioners in Nigeria, in many regions, implies that there is the need to train most of the practitioners in order to provide career guidance services remotely.

By implication, the lockdown therefore, points to an increased risk that those who greatly need tailored guidance and support will suffer the most from adverse consequences of the lockdown, thus deepening social inequality. Again, experiences in the countries during the crisis period needs investigation, also in terms of the potential for tailored support using digital technologies. Even if online services and education have been expanded, access to WIFI, particularly in rural areas, may be a barrier to accessing these provisions.

2. The Meaning of E-counselling

Following the closure of schools and further education settings due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, school counsellors working at the centres of educational resources and assistance are delivering remote/online counselling and guidance for students and distance psychopedagogical assistance services for parents/ guardians and teachers. For example, they offer free resources on: bullying and cyberbullying, well-being activities, stress prevention, how to spend your time at home – tips for children, etc. Therefore, E-counselling seems to be a new phenomenon within the counselling parlance. It is a modern means of communication between counsellor(s) and client(s) in sessions via internet within a stipulated period of at least once a week in a year or six months with a singular purpose of assisting clients in discovering themselves and making useful choices in relation to their educational, vocational and personal-social needs. Ecounselling or telecounselling is an extension of information and communication technology which Ivowi (2005) prescribed as generic term employed in describing the generation, storage, dissemination and eliciting of relevant information for therapeutic encounter. Most counsellors seem to be regressive in relation to familiarization and use of information technology. Their lack of competency in the use of electronic services could deter them from relating effectively with clients who are not within their immediate reach. Electronic communication involves the use of e-mails, internet and communication aided strategies in counselling clients (Adika, 2011). Adika further added that counsellors are not left out in this all-important phenomenon which has potential to transform not only counselling practices but education as well. Counsellors who lack basic skills in electronic services may not be able to email and make internet contact with distant clients that need such help. This may have been necessitated by lack of access to the electronic gadgets or lack of training in their usage.

3. The Concept of Covid-19 and E-counselling

Guidance professionals are already organised as a network within secondary schools. They work in a complementary way with teachers in charge of classes in order to keep information on guidance procedures up to date and to support and accompany the guidance of pupils who are in a problematic situation. Continuity has been established with the teachers through telephone interviews and emails. This also seems to be the case in Nigeria, where the teaching staff of the educational unit collaborates with the school counsellors and speech therapists. In Nigeria, career practitioners are actively sharing their expertise in working at a distance using their internal communication channels. The companies who are developing online learning solutions have united their forces to give free access to their materials (including career education) and help the teachers discover how new educational tools can be used or how to complement their traditional way of working. In additional local initiatives from different NGOs appeared in this period, dedicated to online counselling. The Nigeria Career Guidance Association which is a voluntary organisation that represents career guidance practitioners is extending its services to the community where its volunteers can answer any questions through e-mail, chat or online calls. The service includes guidance related to choice of subjects, career-related queries, employability skills, course information and adult participation in lifelong learning. This service was promoted on the Association's Facebook page and website and was shared by various members. In addition, the Association has updated its

website and included a dedicated area related to COVID-19 queries in terms of employment and education. The page consolidates information issued from various government entities such as those in education, government assistance and job searching services.

4. Covid-19 Crisis and E-Counselling

After an initial shock and discontinuance of activity, countries have necessarily built on existing tools and infrastructures, rapidly adapting their services to the new circumstances. Countries in which digital forms of guidance provision are established, as well as countries that have existing multichannel capacity (different channels to provide guidance: phone, on-line services, face-to-face) seem to have been faster and more effective in transitioning to the new reality where all support services and careers learning are provided remotely. The lockdown appears to have triggered the use of web-based interactive guidance tools and services (e.g. video-communication with counsellors, YouTube-live or webinars including a chat function and facilitation) in countries where this was previously not common, such as in Nigeria.

The particular value of online platforms during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic and longer periods of lockdown is becoming apparent, even if their use has not yet been fully evaluated in the context of the pandemic. They appear to present an element of continuity, in theory, accessible for all who have the necessary technical equipment at home. Depending on their scope, these platforms can include a relatively comprehensive offer for a structured process of information and decision-making for identifying optimal choices for education and training and job searches nationally and/or across Europe, or within adult learning. According to the information collected, key ingredients include general information on learning opportunities and job vacancies, trends in labour and skills demand, information including videos or podcasts on occupations. Some web-platforms offer personalised tools, for example, the option to enter a personal skills and qualifications profile, self-exploration tools and tests matching interests with fields of education, training or occupations or competence-based matching of jobseeker profiles with jobs.

With the temporary discontinuation of face-to-face and other guidance services, existing webpages have been the first and most obvious response to reach the public, mainly as vehicles of information provision and dissemination of example practices and to provide support for careers-related teaching and learning. Webpages have been updated and enhanced with targeted information for user groups, both for those who wish to benefit from guidance and for career guidance professionals and practitioners. Websites have also been used to host digital self-help services and information on further training of practitioners, both short-term or modular, and full degree programmes for upskilling, but also to inform guidance counsellors of offers for their beneficiaries/users. Web portals are also used for information on labour market intelligence.

While the use of online platforms and tools ensures a basic offer of career guidance even during the lockdown, many individuals need more in-depth and intense guidance support to define their choices and next steps, depending on stage of the process of transition and orientation, and their personal situation and context. Having looked at comprehensive information may create the need for support in structuring and prioritizing; having completed an interest test may yield new questions about next steps. Vulnerable groups who are confronted with their complex personal and social needs may need additional support found in social work approaches.

To cope with increasing demand, many countries have increased their offer in telephone or online guidance and video chats as far as line capacities, other technical infrastructure and staff capacities allow. Telephone communication in Nigeria, for example, was suggested as useful for supporting students during the transitions to assisted preparatory courses choice of VET or another educational pathway. Therefore, school guidance counsellors, in communication with professional colleagues, have reminded each other that the telephone is also a legitimate means for contacting students even if other internet-based options, are available. Thus, the National Careers Service area-based contractors have now been allocated a new responsibility for delivering the National careers helpline to young people, to complement their existing work with adults.

5. Covid-19 and Technology in Counselling

Zamani (2009) and Shiller (2009) identified email, chat, video-conferencing and text messaging or short message system (SMS) as widely used e-counselling tools in counselling sessions. Futurebased simulation with role-playing (game) in which learners' imaginations are engaged (Jarvis and Gangitano, 2007) is one of the most effective strategies for learning and to develop a career and life management.

5.1. Counselling games Game is a competition among players or against oneself. Bada (2013) describes games as a set of activities that involves one or more players who has goals, constraints, payoffs and consequence. The motivational aspect of a game is to win or play for fun (Bada, 2013). The thrilling part is the failure to attain the desired winning points. This, intention drives people to continue playing. Students may have perceived winning as the motivational factor, but games are usually meant to carry a message or to educate. Digitizing a real life situation in the form of game is currently an important tool to sensitize and expose students to the realities of life.

5.2. Email Electronic mail, widely known as email, is a form of communication transmitted electronically using computers. It is tremendously faster than all previous means of communication, for instance sending letters using the traditional postal system. It is therefore not surprising that email has been widely adopted by a large section of the world's population as their preferred means of communication. It is widely used in business communication because of its nearly instantaneous nature. Sending email is free, except the cost of paying for the infrastructure such as a computer and Internet connection. Zamani (2009) points out that email is an ideal platform or medium for people with different time schedules, providing an opportunity for introspective responses. Nevertheless, sending email is associated with security issues which makes it difficult for a counsellor to guarantee a water-tight confidentiality. Ralls (2011) worries about the confidentiality issues associated with the use of email in counselling, and cautions that email conversations are not secured without any means to protect it. However, he advocates that confidential information on the internet can be shared over a secured server; otherwise, only general information could be requested and provided. Indeed, emails can also be encrypted over the internet for secure confidential materials.

5.3. Instant messaging and chat Instant messaging and chat are communication technologies which use text-based communication (Jennings et al. 2006). The communication often involves two or more people over the Internet or other related networks. Instant messaging (IM) is a private network communication between two users, whereas a chat session is the network communication between two or more users (Jennings et al. 2006). Chat provides virtual group session for chatting, and permits more than one person for information sharing or counselling services. Counsellors could virtually engage students into counselling with the intent of providing group or individual counselling. Zamani (2009) described chat and IM as synchronous (happens in real-time), and noted that participants have to be logged on at the same time for chatting or messaging. In this regard, time and scheduling become vital since parties have to be on the platform at the same time. Chat or IM sessions can either be private, where each user is invited to join the session, or public, where users also join the session on their own initiative (Jennings et al. 2006). In addition, some IM systems allow file transfers, webcam usage, using privacy controls, maintaining buddy lists, voice chat sessions, and other options (Jennings et al., 2006). Grohol (2003) also identified chat as one of the widely use forums for online counselling in the world. Chats and IM platforms virtually run on portable device, ranging from standard mobile phones (Aker and Mbiti, 2010) to smart phones.

5.4. Video conferencing Down (2009) described video-conferencing as a method of conferencing between two or more locations where both sound and vision are transmitted and received. The platform allows simultaneous interactive communication between users. Optional sources include still images and/or moving sequences from a video recorder, a DVD or a PC (Down 2009). Suler (2000) describes video conferencing as synchronous and provides participants with the visual and spoken communication. According to Down (2009) a basic video conference requires a television camera to capture images of the participants, a microphone to pick up their speech and a means of transferring sound and vision information to the remote location. Video Conferencing requires the participants to sit in front of a camera and are indeed expected to have compatible video equipment (Zamani 2009). Suler (2000) discussed the importance of video conferencing in psychotherapy in cyberspace for which he discovered that video conferencing provides multiple sensory cues, such as visual appearance, body language and vocal expression that can provide valuable information for understanding the client. Zamani (2009) also argued that video conferencing may be less ambiguous than typed text, which may lead to fewer misunderstandings. As much as speaking is faster than typing, video conferencing conveys information more quickly, and readily has a consequential benefit to those who express themselves better through speaking than writing. Down (2009) indicated that the quality of the received images can be compromised by the technology. The body language can be lost if movement is jerky or picture quality is reduced (Down, 2009). Also, there may be delays in the sound. When this happens, it is not good to continue exchanging information using the platform. The session becomes inappropriate because the sound comes in pieces and it becomes extremely difficult to put the pieces together in order to understand each other (Down, 2009).

5.5. The lockdown appears to have triggered the use of web-based interactive guidance tools and services (e.g. video-communication with counsellors, YouTube-live or webinars with chat function, and facilitation), even in countries where these technologies were not previously common in guidance delivery. On the other hand, the telephone appears to feature as a practical tool for one-to-one communication, despite the other channels available. In some cases, the telephone is preferred for making personal contact with students, such as to support those at risk of early school leaving from education and training.

5.6. There are indications that the extent of ICT infrastructure and level of lifelong guidance system development have had a strong influence on how (and if) guidance services and careers learning have been delivered, and the nature of those services, during the crisis period; these aspects also appear to be shaping the development of further policies and plans, and other steering tools.

5.7. With the lack of face-to-face contact support and sudden move to near exclusive use of digital technologies in guidance, the interrelated issues of access and quality came to the fore. These are themes that are not new to

guidance experts nor to governments, but the crisis shed new light on the most critical problems. Governments and guidance experts have started to discuss which are the main barriers to access that students and adult beneficiaries have faced during the crisis. This was linked to practitioner training suited to wholly ICT-based delivery methods, so that teachers and counsellors are able to reach all users. Flexibility toward multi-method and channel delivery also requires training and experience.

5.8. Guidance professionals have been under pressure to adapt to the sudden change to providing guidance and support at a distance, including using multichannel digital technologies, without contact support and face-to-face teaching. Mindsets of practitioners appear to be changing, for now, to rapidly fit into a new way of working, and, likewise, at organisational level, systems were implemented to ensure continuity of service.

5.9. Participation in online further training among guidance practitioners appears to be on the increase during the crisis. Where these courses are made available, practitioners seem to seize the opportunity to upskill. Participation in specific types of training are mentioned that are associated with the shift to online support and the need for digital skills relevant to guidance delivery, such as use of video-calling or one-to-one chat facility. Increases in participation in general courses designed to increase other types of practitioner knowledge and competencies are also observed. Where online practitioner training is not available/less accessible, there are calls for further training opportunities and more information online, targeted to practitioners.

5.10. There is some indication of an intensification of stakeholder collaboration, cooperation among guidance professionals and with public, private and community actors, including new ones in some countries, such as healthcare workers and suppliers of digital services and statistics. These themes were also raised in the absence of active cooperation and effective communication during the crisis, so that all actors in guidance are better prepared.

5.11. There appear to be differences in the education & training and employment sectors, in how the pandemic and ensuring government precautionary measures such as school and office closures, have had an impact on lifelong guidance service delivery and careers learning. There is, of course, a general disruption of guidance delivery and activities requiring physical face-to-face contact (including individual guidance appointments, group visits to career centres, workplace visits and work experience school programmes, group counselling in schools, universities or for unemployed or mass events such job fairs).

5.12. Concerning guidance delivery in the employment sector and settings during the crisis, in many countries guidance counsellors and practitioners in public employment settings are being redeployed as current priorities have shifted away from usual career services to processing new unemployment claims.

5.13. Multiple web portals of guidance providers are being adapted for the dissemination of guidance-related information, self-help tools and resources and advice targeted to specific user groups and more generally. This has been an immediate strategy and has entailed supplementing or commenting on existing information or new resources created during this crisis.

5.14. The experts report that in response to the crisis some countries have changed plans for launching guidance initiatives, scheduled strategies and similar policy measures that include guidance, sometimes ahead of schedule or they are delayed in response to the crisis. New or adapted guidelines have also been produced and disseminated.

6. Role of Stakeholders and Effective Implementation of E-Counselling During Covid-19 Deepen Crisis:

What is needed to improve the system and ultimately benefit individuals, especially those most in need. These ideas are grouped according to categories listed below.

- Implementation of the recommendations of the national review would create an overarching national guidance strategy, to include an interim plan for the current responses needed, to involve all relevant stakeholders; formal coordinated, considered plan for guidance policy across government departments and for guidance delivery now and into the future; funding allocated specifically to ICT developments to include a national/regional/local approach to online career guidance information and service provision.
- Locate guidance mechanisms or policy strategies that will provide an appropriate response to the problems countries are facing. Address the key issues in guidance stemming from the crisis: how to respond to early school leaving from education and training (VET and apprenticeships); how to manage professional transitions; how to reduce the digital divide and inequalities that the pandemic threw into relief.
 - Other issues for adults: change of professions for those facing health risks; dropout from apprenticeships loss of company funding; unemployment, etc.
 - Other issues for youth and younger students: social digital gap increases - those who have digital tools and those who do not; higher dropout rate in VET; geographical disparities; decreased student mobility towards metropolitan France; increased anxiety or psychological disorders

- Funding for career guidance should be part of a package of measures (Nigeria).
- Implement and support digitalisation of guidance services
- Support digitalisation and e-governance in guidance at Nigeria level including a conceptual discussion for which cases and for which target groups physical face-to-face services are needed and in which cases the future will be focusing on interactive online career counselling sessions.
- Digitalise interventions and services due to the social-distancing measures. Telephone, digital interviews, webchats are attractive. Long-term professional integration and individual empowerment in the use of digital technologies is vital.
- Greater investment in technical infrastructures and workforce development is often needed at national level in order to support more effective use of ICT during and after the pandemic.

6.1 Improve cooperation, collaboration and knowledge-building and exchange:

- Strengthen the evidence-base by capturing current impacts and recommendations to national, regional and/or local decision-makers.
- Strengthen an exchange at national and at regional level among main guidance providers in the field of education and employment on service concepts, tools, ethical considerations, data protection, staff competences and training manuals to foster both customer-oriented interactive web tools and professional service provision.
- Guidance experts should support, train, share knowledge with, practitioners and relevant ministries, to raise awareness and find concrete actions to implement.
- The pandemic has shed light on how to improve coordination and communication. Gaps are being exposed in school-level networks and teamwork that can hinder efforts in social and educational counselling. In Nigeria, for example, schools without functional teamwork are those who are facing greater difficulties in providing these supports to all students.
- Now more than ever we need to further strengthen collaboration with national and local organisations to further support our clients in their needs (i.e. economic and social needs) – hence collaborating with the public employment service, social services, disability services, etc. – so clients feel supported in all ways. This means reshaping the design of career delivery in a way where there is less compartmentalisation of services and where we move towards innovative and diverse ways of service delivery.
- A single practitioner, professional group or organisation could no longer be able to respond to this crisis. This implies the need to create multi-professional and cross-sectoral networks. Moreover, two new key actors have been identified: health and well-being professionals; and data providers. Greater networking possibilities need to be promoted by using digital technologies during the pandemic and after the pandemic with a blend of face-to-face.
- Career guidance is an example of an area where there should be shared policy and administrative responsibility among several ministries at national and regional levels. Key features in a well-functioning service network are collaborative creation of knowledge, inclusive collaboration and emergent development of leadership and management in networks. This is significantly valid and pivotal during and after the pandemic.
- Support collection of practices: Interactive online guidance - (service concept, processes, data protection, staff competences and training and analysis); use of AI in guidance – collection of practices and analysis including ethical considerations.

6.2 Use a holistic perspective to guidance:

- In these times of crisis, the provision of career guidance should be diversified, based on two underlying approaches. Firstly, career guidance should be offered to potential clients as part of multidisciplinary array of psychosocial services, such as counselling and social work. This will enable those individuals who have been worst hit by this crisis (most often those people within the lower spheres of society) to access psychosocial services and thus improve their current situation. Subsequently, the provision of career guidance should also take into consideration the future, once the spread of the pandemic has been controlled by the respective authorities. Hence, efforts should be made to help potential clients get the necessary skills and competencies to return to the world of work as soon as possible.
- Career guidance has to help people understand how the pandemic shapes /will shape their lives, jobs, relations and future plans with a holistic perspective. In addition to supporting the individuals in educational, training and career development domains, the individuals need to be supported for their well-being.

6.3 Provide additional resources and information to guidance teachers:

- Regarding VET, the creation of virtual counselling opportunities centrally for different target groups has paid off in Nigeria; systems need to be developed that are more convenient for VET schools. As the main support to students and parents in VET is carried out by the schools in Nigeria, teachers need flexible means for their own support and valuable knowhow. Various resources are suggested: embedding links to (mailing) and the counselling services in schools' intranets; webinars for teachers; creation centrally of materials and manuals for the most common e-platforms; boost in sharing best practices shared among schools.
- Self-learning tools and platforms that offer different career information, self-assessment, etc. tools, have proved to be important during the crisis period. There are several such tools already existing in Nigeria. However, the provision of information about these tools as well as motivation of students to use them is needed. Key actors in providing this kind of information are teachers as career practitioners so the focus of support should also be on this target group.

6.4 Increase dissemination of updated support information for all:

- Increase targeted and updated information to all, such as guidelines, user manuals, etc (Nigeria). For example: o online information o guiding online towards mail exchange; telephone contacts and expand capacities for this; and towards interactive video exchange and develop, expand line capacities for this (cannot be established at the short term if technical equipment is not in place, in general - push introduction of interactive tools and service concepts in case this is not in place.
- Both employers and job seekers should be made aware of the new digital initiatives through public television and radio, advertisements on social media and private web pages, and mass mailing of all the partner-employers of the PES (Nigeria).

6.5 Support updating of skills, knowledge and competences:

- Ensure the evolution of career development and career management skills in education and training. Supporting individuals to review their skills and competences to identify upskilling needs to support career progression and opportunities (Nigeria).
- Career guidance practices should give more emphasis to the issues of flexibility, adaptability and resilience, in responding to challenges faced. This applies to everyday practices of career guidance professionals as well as the beneficiaries they serve (Nigeria).
- Job search procedures and skills development during the pandemic should be explored in relation to lessons learned from the employment and digital transformation (e.g. 3D printing in health products) (Nigeria).

Hooley, T., Sultana R.S. and Thomsen, R. (2020) in 'Why a social justice informed approach to career guidance matters in the time of coronavirus' state that "career guidance needs to radically and quickly reform its messages". This has great implications as to how we are going to help our clients approach building their careers after the COVID 19 pandemic – we need to work on helping them have the knowledge, competences and abilities which will allow them to explore a range of different solutions, to think critically which solution best serves them – empowering them to seek approaches that they are entitled to. To survive in such turbulent water, clients need specific employability skills - flexibility, self-confidence, adaptability and resilience, amongst others.

7. Conclusion

This pandemic may introduce new ways and new mentalities of reaching and working with individuals. There are skills that need to be prioritised in guidance interventions during the pandemic. The important thing is to help others become more resilient. The counsellors are in a good position to help explore feelings of their clients in order to support their general well-being. This crisis has jump-started the process of improving online services and it is providing all of us the necessary experience to be able to fine tune such online services. Many mentioned that in future entities will be in a better position to use technology to enhance their service. This pandemic has broadened our way of doing things, new ways of working which practitioners might not have tried out, tending to rely on traditional methods. Many colleagues who work in the education and employment sector are emphasising the importance of reaching out to their students/jobseekers through telephone, emails, chat, Facebook, Zoom, video conferencing, etc. However, since we are dealing with video conferencing/sessions quite frequently – some aspects are to be re-examined such as GDPR, online recording issues and rights and obligations for both the clients and the career guidance practitioner. There is a need now to reflect on the role that digital technology should have in the future of education and career guidance, e.g. for personalisation of learning/career guidance. A powered system could have helped teachers, students and parents, employers and

unemployed people navigate the range of digital learning resources out there if they were more available and ready to use. Employers should move recruitment online and make more development activities virtual. Efficient tools to host job fairs online are needed.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations for Managing Challenges of E-Counselling during the Covid-19 Deepen Crisis in Nigeria
Educational reform and sustainability is attainable if only the following recommendations that will allow for effective e-counselling in times like this are enforced.

1. Government, federal and state ministries of education and school heads should as a matter of policy have annual allocation of fund that will be sufficient to manage e-counselling in critical time like this.
2. Government should make available e-counselling facilities that could enhance counselling activities both in school and non-school setting.
3. Organizations and schools with e-counselling facilities should imbibe maintenance culture that will enable equipment such as computer, office furniture, tapes and others serve for a long period of time.
4. Scholarship and subventions should be made available for e-counsellors by government and NGOs in order to give themselves to adequate training.
5. More effort should be made by the government to train and retrain counsellors in E-communication. It gives room for a wider range of counselling activities. Individuals will have opportunity to relate with counsellors online as it is in developed countries.
6. Government and NGO's should establish more e-counselling centers in every field of organizations in government custody. There should be at least three counsellor to a school from nursery to tertiary institutions depending on the population strength. It creates an atmosphere for early introduction of children to e-counselling practice which is intended to foster quality education.

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