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## 6 Abstract

This paper attempts to x-ray the significance of psychological testing sometimes referred to appraisal or testing service in counselling. The paper is considered the specific and general uses of counselling in both within and outside the school setting. Furthermore, the paper focused basically on the specific uses of psychological testing in the areas of classroom management and functions; guidance as well as administrative functions. Finally a close look at aptitude testing was considered alongside its uses in counseling practice.

## 2 Introduction

Psychological testing is an indispensable tool for effective counseling and indeed a significant parameter for evaluating the entire educational system. It is valuable to classroom teachers, guidance counsellors, school administrators, policy makers and admission officers at both the primary, secondary and tertiary level of education. Itsuokor. (1993) reported that "at present the readiest use to which psychological test especially intelligence can be put, is the prediction of aptitude", a concept which has been defined as "Performance Potential in relation to a particular task" (Silvery, 1964). It was this idea that led Alfred Binet the acclaim "Father of Scientific intelligence testing" to development the first intelligence test in France in 1905 for the purpose of predicting and selecting pupils who would profit from public instruction.

On a more general note, Thorndike and Hagen (1977) see testing as serving the purpose of selecting students into educational programmes: classification of students; certification

after graduation from one level of education to another; prediction of future performance or potentials; verification and evaluation individual behaviour pattern or academic programmes as well as the provision of significant data and vital information for counselling diagnosis or interview.

From the above, the following 8 can be summarized as the function which psychological testing serves in counselling.

#### Specific Uses of Tests in Counselling:

- i. To prepare evidence or data to guide the counselling relationship or interview.
- ii. To identify students who need special diagnostic study and remedial instruction.
- iii. To identify gifted students who need appropriate help in counselling.
- iv. To help group students into classes on the basis of their mental ability.
- v. To help in setting educational and vocational goals.
- vi. To help evaluate the school as a unit of instruction.
- vii. To provide significant research data for teachers, school administrators and guidance counsellor.
- viii. To identify aptitudinal dispositions that will guide vocational counselling (William, 1980).

#### General Uses 4 of Psychological Tests

In a study on the counsellor's use of psychological test Williams (1980) identified three implications first. that lack of agreement between measured interest and aptitudes abilities is to be expected in a fairly large number cases and is not to be taken as sufficient evidence to prove invalidity of one or both test. The school implication, is that, it is wise to be sensitive to the possible presence of some of the factors emphasized by current theories as being source of discrepancy between interests and abilities, family pressure. emotional disturbance and lack of experience in utilizing certain abilities which the individual is relatively unaware of. Third, the realization that there are multiple vocational outlets for any given occupation should reassure both counsellor and client even when

there is considerable disagreement between interests and abilities.

Therefore <sup>2</sup> the importance of psychological testing cannot be over emphasized as the goals of counselling include building of realistic self-concept on the part of the student.

Thus, Anastasi (1976) noted that Counsellor who administers tests must be competent in their use. The qualification of the user will of course depend upon the types for example; Freelih and Hoyt (1975) noted that in a clinically oriented view, a counsellor must make judgment about the client with or without a psychological tests. This implies that, <sup>5</sup> the use of test in counselling to which one subscribes. Consequently the clinical counsellor who sees diagnosis as an important process in counselling is more to use tests and other appraisal data than the counsellor whose approach is basically client-centred (Cronbach, 1970).

Writing on the purposes of standardized test, Bakare (1987) stated that the various kinds of standardized test whether aptitude intelligence, achievement, interest, personality or attitudes are mainly used for instructional Guidance. Administrative and Research Purposes. These broad purposes of standardized test according to him, include evaluating, learning out-comes, teaching method, general curriculum learning diagnosis, as well as selecting, classifying, placing and certification of students after graduation and more importantly the provision of significant data and vital information for research undertakings.

Another <sup>4</sup> use of psychological tests according to Itsuokor ((1993) is in the area of vocational selection. Psychological test according to him enable employers recruit staff who would easily be trained in different specialties of the industry. An example of such test is the vocational interest inventory (VII) developed by Bakare (1974), which have being used <sup>2</sup> in the process of educational and vocational counselling in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.

Considering the numerous use of psychological testing discussed above, it is obvious that the use of psychological tests in counselling has gradually broadened from narrowly defined guidance regarding educational and vocational plans to an involvement with all aspects of human life. These aspects of human include emotional well-being, interpersonal

relationships, self-understanding, development changes, decision-making processes, identification of psychological traits, measurement of group differences and generation of research data (Anastasi, 1976).

9 On the basis of the findings of Cronbach (1970), Thorndike and Hagen (1976), Anastasi (1976), Ebel. (1979), Williams (1980), Makinde (1988), and Iisuokor (1993), a summary of the uses or functions of psychological testing can be attempted as follows:

#### A. Classroom Functions

1. They are used to identify pupils who need special diagnostic study and
2. They are used for grouping students within a class for instructions, e.g. instructions. achievement tests.
3. They guide the planning of activities for specific individual students or pupils, such as individualized instructions
4. They help in identifying gifted pupils and to offer them appropriate help. Gifted pupils are those whose IQ ranges from 130 and above.
5. They are used in evaluating the discrepancy between potentiality and achievement in individual pupils.
6. They are used in assigning grades to pupils.

#### B. Guidance Functions

1. To prepare evidence or data to guide the discussion with parents about their children or wards.
2. To build realistic self-images among pupils. Especially those children who have negative self-image that needs to be corrected.
3. It helps to set educational and vocational goals
4. Personality tests aid psychotherapists and counsellors to treat or correct maladaptive behaviours.

### C. Administrative Functions

1. It helps the teacher to form and to assign pupils to classroom groups.
2. It is used for placing new students in class.
3. It helps to determine legibility for special group.
4. It helps to determine who should be promoted.
5. To evaluate teachers as regards syllabus and content coverage.
6. It helps to evaluate the school as a unit.
7. It helps to improve the public relations of the school.
- 8 It is used for providing information for outside agencies.
- 6 <sup>3</sup> It is used to determine who should be admitted to the school.
10. It is also used for research purposes by teachers, school administrators, school psychologists, guidance counsellors, and policy makers (Williams, 1980).

### Specific Uses of Aptitude Test in Guidance and Counselling

As a psychological tool, aptitudetests <sup>1</sup> serve both diagnostic and prognostic functions in a counselling relationship. In a study of the use of psychological tests in counselling, Williams (1980) reported that:

Different Aptitudes Tests (DAT) serves a number of purpose in a counselling relationship such as preparing evidence or data that will guide the counselling interview, helping to build realistic self-inage among counselees; Setting educational and vocational goals that need to be achieved and providing significant data and vital information that could help in placement and making reasonable decision and realistic occupational choices.

In a related study, Cronbach (1970) noted that testing particularly aptitude test is essential to guidance as a means of helping the students evaluate themselves and their varying possibilities with respect to their aptitudinal dispositions. The information and scores derived from aptitude tests help in understanding the child by those who are concerned with <sup>2</sup> the development of the child. This understanding helps the guidance counsellor in

the placement of the child into educational and vocational programme. This is possible through accurate self-estimate of the child's level of achievement, intelligence, interest and probably more importantly, his aptitudinal dispositions as may be reflected in his aptitude tests score.

Writing on the functions of psychological test generally, Anastasi, (1976) stated that the **educational and guidance use** of test is to enhance self-understanding and personal development within the frame work that test scores are part of the information given to the individual as aid to his own decision making process. Anastasi. (1976) further noted that schools are at present the largest users of tests. This is however, not surprising, considering the fact that **schools use tests in the classification of students with reference to their ability** to profit **from different types of school** instruction; the identification of the intellectually gifted on one hand and the mentally retarded on the other: the diagnosis of academic failure, the educational and vocational counselling of student and other school and counselling uses.

Infact, the use of tests generally and aptitude in particular broadened from narrowly defined guidance with respects to educational and vocational planning to involve all the aspects of the individual life such as emotional well-being interpersonal relationship and social adjustment. All these according to Anastasi (1976) are increasingly becoming the objectives of counselling.

Therefore, the guidance counsellor as an agent of the society and as a facilitator of students' educational and vocational plans and more importantly as a prospector of human resources uses aptitude tests materials as prospecting tool for making their job easier and more efficient. Thus, the counsellor has the obligation at all time to probe the counsellee's level of achievement, intelligence, interest, aptitudinal disposition and other personality traits and bring them to the surface.

All these stated above can be achieved through the administration of aptitude tests on the clients and the counsellor using the test scores to assists the clients to identify and define their needs and talents and also to become aware of the national needs so that some

choices might be made on patriotic basis to alleviate impending manpower shortage in some important areas of human endeavour that is significant **2** in the process of national development both culturally, socially, economically, politically and technologically.

From the above analysis, the uses of aptitude tests in guidance cannot be over emphasized. Infact, the following can be summarized as the uses of aptitude tests in guidance and counselling:

1. To identify aptitudinal dispositions that will guide vocational counselling.
2. **3** To identify students who need special diagnostic study and remedial instruction.
3. To identify students who are gifted in some area of human endeavour that needs to be nature.
4. To help classify students into classes.
5. To provide significant research data for teachers counsellors and policy makers.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this paper has being on the relevance **2** of psychological testing in counselling practices in school and non-school setting. The paper noted that **psychological testing as an** indispensable service in counselling require an indepth understanding by all professional trained counsellor.

Consequently, the paper recommends that the training of professional counsellors should by all means emphasis **the subject matter of** psychological testing. Therefore, the trainee counsellor and indeed the practicing professional counsellor should be in a position to construct, validate, administer a psychological test and apply the score generated **3** for **the purpose of** counselling relationship.

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