

Research Article

Guidance and Counseling in Islam and Moral Development of Higher Institutions' Students in Nigeria

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Abstract. Guidance and counseling in Islam aims at equipping human beings with worthwhile character, knowledge, skills, and values contained in the Qur'an and Hadith of the prophet (saw) for prosperous life. Good values seem eroded in our educational institutions in the present day Nigeria. This paper contends that Islamic guidance and Counseling is crucial for moral development of higher institution's students in Nigeria given the spate of moral decadence such as; excessive absence language, telling lies, stealing, violation of school rules, cultism, sexual deviations, exam malpractice among others. To this end, the paper examines the relevance of Islamic guidance and Counseling in replacing bad behaviors and transmitting good moral behaviors in the higher institutions students, there by producing graduates who are knowledgeable and conscious of God. It is concluded that, moral development is very crucial in higher institutions of learning due to the fact that, knowledge without morality will do more harm to the society than good.

Keywords: Islamic counseling, morality, moral development.

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a complete and comprehensive way of life. It is ideology and civilization globally, its message is suitable and universal to all times and conditions. It encompasses the totality of human as it leaves no any parcel untouched. As an all encompassing way of life, Islam has its own system of life politically, economically, culturally, constitutionally, judicially, spiritually, morally, and educationally. Glorious Qur'an is the embodiment and origin of all knowledge because all knowledge emanates from Allah (swt), the Qur'an contains clear and unambiguous references to all field of knowledge such as Biological sciences, Geomorphology, Climatology, Human Psychology, Embryology, Mathematics, to mention but a few.

Morality and education are two sides of the same coin. They are inextricably linked and cannot be divorced from one another because both lead to correct judgments. Judging from historical aspect, Syaifulah, N, Ratna. W, & Anafetriani, (2022), write that, the glory of Islam in the classical period has left traces of the greatness and glory of Islam in various fields of life that cannot be separated from the world of education. Every developing nation goes through a number of error- and problem-filled phases before reaching the developed stage. The level of knowledge attained by the populace leads to positive improvements in social relations and all other sectors of the nation. The cause of worry in our country is that, the more some of our people get educated the less they become in perpetrating good. This is the case with our students in most schools. The mission of schools has been to develop in the students both the intellectual development and moral virtues such as honesty, modesty, truthfulness, responsibility and respect for others.

Research literature by various authors and researchers like Abdullahi, A. & Muhammad, T (2020), and Hassan, A (2021), have explored the type of indiscipline among students, they found that the indiscipline committed included disrespect to teachers and school rules and regulations, theft and irregular attendance, the aim was to use Islamic guidance and counseling as an instrument for positive education. Others writers like Mogbana, A, Ekwenze, A & Chimela, J. (2022), claim that moral development is very crucial in higher institutions of learning due to the fact that good values seem eroded in Nigeria today, and that guidance and counseling is one of the biggest measure to help student solve his problem independently and develop their potentials. However, most of the studies either relate their work to secondary school students, or discuss on the role of guidance and counseling in particular or education generally.

Some higher institutions students forfeit the modesty in dressing and the chastity they had before they get admitted in to higher educational institution. There is enough evidence to the willingness of some students to engage in risk – taking behaviors. They are found familiar with telling lies, stealing, and excessive obscene language, ignoring some of their academic responsibilities, amassing their colleagues and even their teachers some times, there are some students who are found guilty in many academic dishonesties. Based on this explanation, it became necessary to apply Islamic guidance and counseling which aim to instill good moral behaviors in the mind of individuals based on Islamic values. Therefore, this paper intends to discuss how Islamic guidance and counseling can be adopted to develop morality in our higher institutions students.

Guidance and counseling

The terms guidance and counseling have been variously and separately defined by different authors. Each definition is influenced by theoretical orientation of the individual defining it.

Guidance

In a common language, Guidance is means some form of help given to an individual or group of individuals in an area like educational, vocational, personal and social. The term which is derived from the word guide linguistically means to direct and inform. Shertzer and stone (1976) in Salmanu, and Yusha'u (2019), put it, "guidance is to direct, pilot or guide". In our day to day interactions, we commonly assists individuals locate the place they are looking for or to inform him/her on how take to take a decision on what is troubling him or what he need to adjust himself to a new environment. Stela, (2016), adds that, guidance involves providing information that enables you to give definite instruction to the person being helped. Generally, guidance is an umbrella term which refers to all that is done to guide the development of individual, is a help given to another in making adjustment and solving problems.

Counseling

Counseling is as old as society. In every day interactions, counseling takes place at various levels and situations, in a family setting, parents and elders counsel their children and relatives. Outside family, doctors counsel their patients, lawyers counsel their clients and teachers counsel their students.

Counseling has been defined in many ways, but in all the definitions, there is consensus on the fact that counseling is identified with rendering some form of assistance, encouragement, giving information and modification of behavior. Olujinmi, and Olubukola, (2014), see counseling as a professional and confidential relationship between a guidance counselor and a client, that s facilitated in order to

find a lasting solution to the challenge of the client, that is beyond his or her capability. According to Fakunle (2011) in Olujinmi & Olubukola, (2014), counseling is a professional assistance offered to an individual by a trained counselor to help the individual solve his developmental and adjustment problem. This means that developmental challenges faced by a client can be resolved through counseling interaction. Counseling is a face to face relationship between counselor and client through which the counselor uses his professional knowledge to help the client solve his own problem. The relationship is face to face but can carefully take place through telephone communication.

The term counseling is sometimes refers to talking therapy, in which a person (client) discusses freely his/her problems and share feeling with counselor, who helps the client in dealing with the problems. Olujinmi, A & Olubukola (2014), opine that Counseling is a professional and confidential relationship between a guidance counselor and a client, that is facilitated in order to find a lasting solution to the challenge of the client, that is beyond his or her capacity. Counseling is not giving advice or making judgments, but helping the client to use clearly the root of problems and identify the potential solutions to the issues. This means that, the role of counselor is not to impose his conclusion on the client but rather to help him see and clearly understands the nature of his problems.

There is no any organization or institution that has never got a problem at one point or the other. This is due to the fact that problems and confusion are inevitable in day to day life. Educational institution where students gather to acquire knowledge and skills meet many problems and confusion that need to be attended. Yusuf, et. al (2019), mention that, guidance and counseling is a noble profession whose importance in the field of educational system of Nigeria is becoming increasingly recognized by the country's educational planners and policy makers. From the above definitions of Guidance and Counseling, two important substances can easily be deducted:

1. Guidance and counseling is the process of giving assistance from someone (counselor) to others who are the "client".
2. Guidance and counseling is a conscious effort, and has the purpose to build self-ability of individual or society and to overcome their life difficulties and challenges.

Guidance and Counseling in Islam

It is inevitable that the existence of mankind in this universe carry out responsible as a servant and khalif on earth. As servants, human beings should make themselves as servant of Allah; meanwhile, people should represent the wishes of Allah (swt) one of which is to bring human beings to keep the values of humanity. The task of humanizing human in the service is among others, be done through services of guidance and Islamic counseling.

Islam as mentioned earlier is guidance and counseling by its nature. Islam guides human beings, males and females, rulers and the ruled, learned and the learner, believer and non believer, old and young. Islamic counseling is all embracing and encompassing. Although termed as new inclusion, Islamic counseling has been in society for as long as Islamic preaching has, as therapy, counseling is fundamentally a significant aspect of religion. Guidance and counseling in Islam is the process of giving assistance to human beings in order to enhance their potentials and stabilities by internalizing in them the values contained in Qur'an and the Sunnah of the prophet (saw) in order for them to leave in harmony and attained personal stability. Shofiyah. S. (2023) writes that Counseling in the Qur'an has the value contained in the teaching of the Qur'an so that it can be used by counselors to assist in determining the choice of positive behavior change. Numerous experts conclude that as religion plays a significant role in Clint's life, it is necessary to incorporate the religious element into counseling. Salasiah, H, & Noor, S, (2013) noted that religious approach is one of the matters emphasized in counseling today.

In Islam, counseling is intended to assist individuals to interpret facts and explore the meaning of his own life values, both present and future, improve their mental health and change their feelings and attitudes. Islamic Counseling is founded on the idea that people are more complex than meets eye. It searches for the fitra, a deeper centre present in all newborn. Life's stresses and painful events might dull or obstruct the fitra. Islamic guidance and counseling aims to assist the person in discovering their own fitra and inner voice by clearing the life's stresses and painful events and allow the light of clarity shine. Abdurrahman (2020), Islamic counseling is oriented towards the life of sakinah, mutmainnah, achieving happiness in the life of the world and the hereafter because it is always close to Allah. For the client, re-actualization of his or her self-concept is simply purging immoral behaviors from the heart in order to achieve Qalban-saliman.

Islamic counseling is a set of procedures performed by qualified counselors with individuals with the goal of assisting people in resolving their own issues through the application of Islamic teachings and reasoned reasoning in order to achieve worldly and after life satisfaction.

Morality

It is very difficult to give a particular definition of the term Morality. Philosophically, morality is a set of conduct adopted by a group and accepted by the members of that group. According to Akande & Jawndo (2008) in Adewole & Elizabeth (2017), morality refers to as behaviors or actions that are considered by most members of a group to be right. It is the principles relating to right or wrong, good or bad behaviors. Nigerians have various ways of life, but still there are some principles which are considered desirables by all. For example, honesty, hard work, tolerance, respect for others. Trustworthiness, integrity, obedience to an established

laws and good cultures among others. Ajiboye, (2003) recommends these as parts of what the society wants its members to imbibe.

Islam is a whole way of life, and a key component of its worldview is comprehensive moral code. These days, good and evil are frequently viewed as relative notions. Islam, on the other hand, maintains that moral beliefs are absolute and establishes a universal standard by which deeds are considered moral or immoral. Morality addresses every aspect of a Muslim's life, from greeting to international relations. It is universal in its scope and in its applicability. Asma'u, (2013) notes that Qur'an provides the believers with a series of moral teachings regarding personal ethics, family, social, business and political ethics to mention to name a few. Morality is set of values and beliefs ongoing in a society about character and conduct. It has to do with set of ideas and rules regarding the conduct and behavior of the people living in a society. An examination of the terms Islam and morality reveal that the two concepts are related, both of them talk of righteousness or otherwise of an action and avoidance of evil in totality. Therefore, Odudele. R, (2014) sees moral values as those things in human character, conduct and social relations which are judged as good or bad, right or wrong, progressive and unprogressive, noble and ignoble.

Moral values are associated with values and development. It is apparent that, as societal values change with development, a corresponding change in the moral values of the citizens occurs, change is the only permanent thing in nature. Presently, Nigeria as a nation has witnessed a deteriorated of its moral, social and educational values. The deterioration reflects in the open behavior of her citizens, children, youth and adults. Odudele, R, (2014), asserts that, Cultism in Nigerian institutions of higher learning is one of the deteriorations and the effect is almost causing the destruction of an educational system the nation had spent years to build.

Moral development

The word Moral comes from a latin root (mos moris) and means the code or customs of a people, the social glue that defines how individuals should live together. Morality is a system of beliefs about what is right and good compared to what is wrong or bad. Morality can be seen as good behavior or character, good relationship with people in a society. Olaniyi, & Oyelade, (2018) see Morality develops across a life time and is influenced by an individual's experiences and their behavior when faced with moral issues through different period's physical and cognitive development. Morality concerns an individual's growing sense of what is right and wrong, it is for this point that young children have different moral judgments and character than that of a grown adult. Okeke, (1983) in Oyelade, gives his own impression of morality as acceptance of social norms and ability to behave according to the knowledge of right and wrong. Wikipedia (2019), refers morality to a certain code of conduct that is derived from one's culture, religion or personal

philosophy that guides one's actions, behaviors and thought. Moral development refers to changes in moral beliefs as a person grows older and gains maturity. Moral development is the process through which children develop proper attitudes and behaviors towards other people in society based on the social and cultural norms, rules and laws which is aided by the positive use of good knowledge for the benefit of individual in particular and society in general.

Islamic Counseling and morality

Education by its nature should be a means of high morality which is to reflect in the overt behavior of its receiver rather than gathering chains of certificates. A good understanding of what education is to our students will tell you that our students have misconception of the concept of education. Some of the evils (both social and spiritual) of our society are committed by so called educated people. Think of robbery, cybercrime, sexual immoralities and high degree of kidnapping etc are perpetrated by graduates and undergraduates due to their expositions to internet. This calls for rehabilitating our students through Islamic counseling. Sofyan, A, Dwie, & Sa'adah S, (2020), believe that one of the duties of guidance and counseling teacher is to show the direction and the path the student will take. Islamic counselors work to stop pupils/students from acting in ways that harm the environment or themselves. Guidance and counseling in schools is specialized in providing services that support religious principles. Not the laws enforced by the state or educational institutions, as religious principles are fundamental, universal, and unchangeable.

Good behaviors and attitudes come from good mind and thought, so if our perception to education is positive, the process of acquiring it and what culminates from it will correspondingly be positive. Asma'u, (2013) writes that teacher's efforts should focus on moral development and character building. Education should therefore, be a gateway to high morality and a positive use of knowledge for individual and societal benefits.

One of the important aims of Muslim counselor is the behavior modification of individuals. Sofyan, et. al (2020) write that Islamic counseling focuses on morals, aimed at things that purify spiritually, draw closer to Allah (swt) and praiseworthy qualities, such as patience, tawakkul, qana'a and so on. Counselor want to see students improving both in learning and morality, he help students through guidance services acquire those virtues or moral habit that will help them individually to live good lives and at the same time become productive and contributory members of their communities. In this view, education should contribute not only to the students as individual, but also to the social cohesion of a community.

Students over powered by evil inclination to do bad deeds should be assisted to free themselves from such disaster. Life is generally more than a school life or an

examination time. It needs to be planned and budgeted. Students should be aware of the importance of planning for the rigorous nature of life, they should plan well a study that will build their future, they need to prepare themselves to tackle all the present social vices rampant in the society when they step out of the college, they need to be assisted to review their objective of being in the school thereby opening the big gate for a brighter future career. Agus, R, Budi, P, Retno, T. H, (2020) Mention that the goal of therapy in Islamic counseling is for continuous improvement in the client's mood and behavior. This is one of the surest ways to avoid confusion and psychological disaster. Islamic guidance and counseling services should include students and their parents, as well as teachers and all subordinate staff in the schools and colleges. This makes the service very crucial and even indispensable.

The rise in crime and social vices in schools such as; drug abuse, alcohol abuse, gang, exam malpractice, indecent dressing, disrespect academic and non academic staff, and bypassing school rules and regulations are enough reasons to prove the need for guidance and counseling intervention in our higher institutions of learning. Adewole and Elizabeth, (2017), write that, the school which has been bedeviled to guide the child's behavior in his social interaction and also aims at molding the character of a learner may be acting on the contrary. This is probably due to the over emphasis on sciences alone to prepare a learner for a global, technological and information based market place which seems to relegate the general well – being of students to a mere educational priority. Schooling should not be seen only for instructional purposes but equally for moral development of the individual students (Hauwau A 2015).

Roles of Islamic Counseling in developing morality in students

Acts of immorality have become pervasive in the Nigerian higher institution to the extent that hardly a day passes without a record of some of the most serious acts of immorality. Buhari, (2015) in Oyelade, (2018), writes that, there is high moral decadence in Nigeria higher institutions because people no longer wish to follow the path of moral rectitude. Since it has an impact on the caliber of the Nigerian educational system, the undergraduate students' loss of moral and ethical values need immediate attention. The degeneration of moral values according to Dena (2020) in Sulaiman. & Amacha. (2022), anchor on examination malpractices, stealing, indecent dressing, rubbery, cultism, false evidence, indecent assault, bullying, suicide or attempting, raping and the like. It is true that, a good number of values and attitudes could be developed in the array of school courses in our higher institutions. Islamic Counseling will play a very good role here in sensitizing tutors to pay much attention to develop moral values and attitudes in students. Islamic counselor should encourage students to be religious and develop conscious of Allah; they should learn to be good ambassadors where ever they find themselves.

Muslim counseling officers should employ the assistance of respected elders, imams and other respected scholars held in high esteem by the community in solving special and delicate social problems. And of course, **Addu'a** supplication, and reading Glorious Qur'an, should be added to the special treatment of special problem.

When students' morals depart from both their religion and society's cultural norms, it is impossible to claim that any meaningful learning is occurring among them. Respect for the individual's worth and dignity, as well as moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human connections, should be instilled in students' at all educational levels. Since problems of immoralities and social vices are many and rampant in schools, many activities need to be considered in redressing the problems. Elida, H Zhang, W, & Forsbom, I (2023), urged counselor through Islamic guidance activities to provide a holistic approach by integrating Islamic values in guidance activities so that individuals understand the causes of the conflict, handle emotion and manage deviant behavior in line with the values and teaching of Islam. Counselor must actively encourage others to shun evil and sin in addition to abstaining from them. To put it another way, they have to be morally sound and supportive of society's overall moral fabric.

Moral values cannot be acquired by students without active participation of the teachers, Classroom teachers and lecturers should set an example for their students to emulate. Because moral conduct and reasoning models help people develop good character, educators should set an example of moral behavior and reasoning in the classroom. In reference to the prophet ﷺ the Qur'an says "certainly you have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the final day, and who remembers Allah" Q33: 21. The kind of *qudwa* that appeals to one's heart and mind and is founded on moral and upright behavior is the one that the Qur'an suggests. Imitation without thinking is expressly forbidden. The Kuffar are chastised in the Qur'an for blindly copying their ancestors and going along with their mischievous ways.

CONCLUSION

The rampant acts of immoral behaviors and degeneration of moral values in Nigerian higher institutions of learning does not mean the problem is insurmountable, it only requires the full participation of education stake holders, parents and counselors. Islamic guidance and counseling is an effective measure to apply to shun away immoral activities perpetrated in higher institutions of learning by the students. Islamic guidance services aim at instilling in a person behaviors that purify spiritually, draw closer to Allah (swt) and praiseworthy qualities, such as patience, *tawakkul*, *qana'a* and so on.

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