

**NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

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**VOL. 8, ISSN 1119-28 IX
JUNE, 2009**

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All correspondence concerning payments and order for subscriptions, advertisement and back number should be addressed to the publisher: Department of Social Work, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

The Journal is published twice yearly in June and December; these two constitute one volume.

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Editorial

This eighth volume of the **Nigerian Journal of Social Work Education** is a welcomed selection from numerous manuscripts submitted for consideration from scholars with diverse disciplines and background, which include Education, Agriculture Sciences and the Social Sciences.

The ten selected papers are considered most outstanding ideas, reflecting our contemporary social reality in the pure and applied sense. That is, the ideas and information presented reflect the social reality of our society, mostly the need for an accelerated socio-economic development thereby enhancing the quality of life.

I have deliberated highlighted some of the striking features of each article serving as a mere invitation for incentive to reading the whole text. In other words, each paper should be read for fuller understanding and appreciation of the entire volume.

I do not follow any particular order, subject-matter-wise. The reader can choose to read any article or series of articles as he pleases or as the need arises; this is possible because each paper is finely written analyzing comprehensively a specific subject. The first article by T. Ayo Hammed, a descriptive survey, reveals critical predisposing factors leading the adolescents to gangsterism, such as parental/family relationship, peer affiliation, media exposure and self-efficacy of the adolescents.

The second paper by E.M. Ajala is an overview of the activities off the occupational social workers and the prospects for the future, while the third article by Mary O. Adedokun focuses on community development as relates to urban agricultural practices. The recommendations will interest government and policy makers. The next article by Meludu Nkiru focuses on the determinants of food insecurity and nutritional status of children in rural communities, it reveals various associated problems. Article 5, by B.A. Oyewo is a comparative analysis of health risk-taking behaviour. The study, perhaps as expected, reveals that adolescent students from Lagos states manifest higher risk level than those from Ogun State.

Article 6 is a collaborative work by A.M. Momoh and Nwogu G. Ayodeji. The study reveals that capacity building is all about changes, this implies development/progress. The authors

advocate greater attention to socio- environmental factors. Still on development, K.O. Ojokheta's article 7, stresses the importance of problem-solving skills by distance learning students to enhance their efficiency and capability. O. Olajide's article 8 reveals the relationship between demographic characteristics off the market women in Bodija market and micro-finance institution credit facilities.

Article 9 by David O. Fakaye reveals the fact that English language teachers perceive assessment as a vital and important tool in teaching and learning of the language. The paper however, recommends appropriate type of assessment tool in the curriculum, finally, the last paper, article 10, authored by O.A. Fakolade, an investigation of the effect of psychological problems on the academic performance of the high achieving students, concludes that such students should be adequately nurtured which will eventually enhance their mental ability.

I consider the volume indispensable to professionals and students alike, in addition, I recommend it to anyone who is seriously interested in the application of knowledge for the benefit of mankind.

Professor Adewale Oke
Guest Editor

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ATTAINMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL GOALS IN INDUSTRIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORKER

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Abstract

The proliferation of human service programmes and the emergence of the social work profession in the workplace soften the distinction between the world of work (aiming at production goals) and world of employees (individual employees and their families). The role of social work became clearer in industries and became centered on job-related problems, individual problems that require therapy, casework services and family issues. Social workers now counsel employees on a wide range of personal, family and social problems, present policy positions on community relations to corporate executives, mediate in disputes; develop and conduct stress management programmes and assist on issues of layoffs and retirement. The paper concludes that occupational social workers will continue, both now and in future, to balance the world of work with the world of the family for effective and efficient survival of both the employees and the employers.

Introduction

The focus of the social work profession has always been on the human community. However, the workplace, the crossroads of life, has frequently been an ignored component of this community (Reynolds, 1975), hence the non reference of social work in the workplace. This dichotomized idea of social work in the community and the workplace still exists in Nigeria even in the 21st century. However, in the advanced countries, since 1970s, social workers as well as other professionals have rediscovered that the workplace is not for work alone (but)a unique and important site where employers can and should be informed about non-work related services and where actual diagnosis of selected needs and delivery of selected services can take place (Spiegel, 1974). The proliferation of human service programmes and the emergence of the

social work profession in the workplace soften the distraction between the world of work (aiming at production goals) and world of employees (individual employees and their families) and ascertain the survival of the organization and the employees through increased productivity and profitability.

According to Straussner (1990), the current interest of social workers in the world of work and the increasing employment opportunities in this field are the consequences of the changing interplay of economic, political, social, demographic and legal forces. The connection of these forces has made employers to provide a number of programmes and services, not only to those who are or have been employed, but also for their family members (Kamerman and Kingston, 1985; McGowan, 1984). In today industrial/occupational settings, workers can receive employer and union sponsored assistance for a wide range of personal and social needs which benefit the young, the middle-aged and the old, and range from child care to pre-and postretirement counseling.

At the workplace, there is always conflict of interest/goals between the employer and the employees. For instance, there is always the problem of integrating the profit-related goals and need of companies and the needs and goals of the individual. This always leads to industrial conflict. Furthermore, due to a non vivid or observable illness, and a worker cannot fulfill his task any more, the worker becomes afraid to discuss with his/her supervisor for fear of losing his work. Also, due to mental illness of a worker, he is isolated by both employer and co-workers, thereby aggravating his sickness which could have been managed by a social worker. A work setting change of role or duty by management due to change in production process without due recourse to employees can lead to frictions and stress among employees thereby affecting level of productivity. The personal interrelationship between co-workers is sometimes not given serious considerations by management and this results in decline productivity. Family/domestic problems dove-tailing into the workplace and the resultant effect on productivity has not been given serious attention in workplace that does not have social workers. Also workers get warning to be fired because of absenteeism and decline in work quality. All the aforementioned features that exist at the workplace but are not properly managed by personnel or resource managers lead to

the need for a professional social worker in solving them to the benefit and survival of both workers and organization.

What is Industrial/Occupational Social Work?

The movement of the world economy to the post-industrial economy as made the use of the phrase "industrial social work" to become out of date in the description of social work in the workplace. Secondly, social workers are not the sole practitioners found in the human service positions at the workplace. While social work is the only profession that articulate a field of practice, many other professionals, quasi-professionals and paraprofessionals (for example, sociologists, social scientists etc.) occupy similar positions in companies (Googin and Godfrey, 1987), hence the use of broader term "Human Services in the Workplace". However, the specific practice by social workers is been referred to as "occupational social work". Therefore, in some text, both title "industrial social work" or "occupational social work" are used inter-changeably. Occupational/Industrial social work has not been accorded recognition in all facets of learning be it in schools of social work or in pleasure. Stahl (1977) mentioned that, in Germany, schools of social work provide only a basic education and very limited specialization. Students of social work are seldom interested in social work in industry because they "don't want to work in a capitalistic structured company". She also saw a problem because "the goals of social work in industry have not been clearly defined". These Stahl's views are still operational in the Nigeria context up till this 21st century.

However, occupational social work is policies and services, delivered through the auspices of employers and trade unions, to workers and to those who seek entry into the workplace (Akabas, 1995). Barker (1995), also saw occupational social work as the provision of professional human services in the workplace through such employer-funded programmes as employee assistance programmes (EAPs). The inference that one can make of Barker's view is that the goal of occupational social work is to help employees meet their human and social work needs by providing service and dealing with emotional problems, social relationship conflicts, and other personal problems. It is thus a field where a social worker addresses the human and social needs of the work community

through a variety of interventions which aim to foster optimal adaptation between individuals and their environment.

The occupational social worker utilizes social work knowledge, skills, and values to provide services, programmes, and policy directions with and/or for workers and work organizations. Therefore, it is a combination of activities involving policy, planning and service delivery at workplace intersecting with social work (Akabas, 1983:132). Among such activities are employee assistance programmes, health promotion, management of health care, affirmative action, child and elder care, human resource development, organizational development, career development and training, work with the unemployed and those experiencing job retrenchment, corporate social responsibility, employee benefits, occupational health and safety, job development, pre-and postretirement planning, and relocation assistance (NASW, 1987).

Over time, the personnel department has been performing the role of social worker with the assumption that once work issues relating to an individual is solved, social problems have equally been solved. Even in the developed countries, before 2000, the division of social work has been part of the personnel department; and its activities were coordinated with other divisions by the director of personnel. However, the role of social work has become clearer in industries and it has centered on job-related problems, individual problems (which require therapy and casework services), as well as family issues. de Vries, Elise quoted by Masi (1982), outlined the following social issues which social workers are expected to address in a company: On-the-job adjustment problems (these include: first employment experience, older worker versus younger supervisor, women who are new to the job, and general job adjustments); communication problems (which exist between workers and their supervisors, between management levels, and among disparate groups); promotion problems (such as irrational prejudices that cause supervisors to neglect or penalise workers and motivational factors); listening to individual problems; for instance, both supervisors and workers often need an objective person to share their concerns or to offer concrete help. Lastly, personal problems which affect job efficiency are brought to the place of work. These problems may be financial, medical interpersonal among others. Workers' productivity is usually affected by these

problems. Social worker services also include financial aid, case-work services, or referrals to other agencies for specific or on-going help. Most times, these attributes are absent in Human Resource Managers

Services provided by occupational social worker

The services provided by social workers for the attainment of both employer and employees goals and aspirations include the following:

- Traditionally, from time immemorial, social workers work with disadvantaged persons using counselling and therapy to solve individuals' and family's problem(s). It is imperative to state that such services are now needed in the workplace. Therefore, the first service provided by the occupational social worker is the direct service through the provision of social services in business or industrial organization(s) for the benefit of the individuals and their families. Such social services include: the understanding of their problems in social relationships, attending to such problems, considering the alternatives, and moving ahead with action that best gives solution (Skidmore, Thackeray and Farley, 1997).
- Since prevention is a major function in social work practice, the occupational social work prevents problems from happening to workers, be it in and out of workplace, with the resultant significant savings in the lives of people, as well as financially. Social worker in the industries actively use their skills to prevent or reduce problems associated with alcoholism, drug abuse, tension, and family or marital conflicts among workers so as to boost productivity (Ajala, 2008a).
- The role of occupational social worker in organization(s) is also to enrich the living standards of the workers in the workplace. Since enrichment is based on the premise that all persons and families can have an enriched taste of life, occupational social worker, through family counselling, provides assistance on issues relating to conflicts in marriage, parenting, human sexuality, crises handling and emotional understanding. These counseling jobs, according to Ajala (2008b), are the major role of social work in form of peace education. He, therefore, recommended peace education as a harbinger for conducive workplace environment.

- Social workers in the workplace, show concern to older and healthy adults who are interested in continuing to work. Mor-Barak and Tynan (1993) suggested several areas to occupational social workers to aid elderly but healthy workers who wish to continue to work through advocacy, linking older job seekers with interested employers, advising organisations on work arrangements and training programmes, and counselling older workers and their families.
- Occupational social workers also perform the role of community relation officers. Many organizations, in the modern world, consider themselves as part of the communities where they operate. In like manner, the communities are expected to have an abiding interest in the work organisations. Therefore, the function of promoting effective relation between the community and the work organization, vice versa, is carried out by the occupational social workers through the assessment of plant-community problems, the development of programmes that will help the organization to better understand the communities before the introduction of new manufacturing operations within their domain.
- A growing awareness of the interdependence between organizations and the larger society has necessitated the establishment of the department of social corporate responsibility in many large organizations. The nature and the role of this department tally with the training and value orientation of the social work profession. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) exhibits corporate giving, consultation with town/city planners, and involvement with community organizations. Activities in this area, which mostly involve occupational social workers, are the establishment and maintenance of corporate giving programmes, working with local communities on joint partnerships in housing, schools, employment training, and economic development, and assisting the organization by involving its members in civic and community groups. When these activities are carried out, they function as true agents of change in order to improve the conditions of human dignity and community values.

Methods used in Occupational Social Work

All the traditional social work methods, known in literature, are utilised in workplace setting for the attainment of both individual and organizational goals. These methods are:

- i. Casework: Most social work services, in workplace settings, are based on clinical or direct practice by working mainly with individuals and/or their families. This is based on the premise that if a person is upset, arising from individual or family action, he or she may not be an efficient and productive employee and become counterproductive to the organizational goals. The casework approach usually involves a series of interviews with the employees in order to provide the necessary assistance from the social worker. Literature has shown that employees who received casework help from social workers were able to perform better on the job, thereby meeting the expectations of both the employer and the employees (Skidmore, Thackeray and Farley, 1997).
- ii. Group work: This is the interaction and the utilisation of a group, with a common problem, as a therapeutic tool. In industrial setting, such group meets often under the direction of qualified social work practitioners to consider their common problems, share feelings and experiences, plan together, and help each other. This method helps to improve the understanding of people and the relationships among themselves, thereby improving the productive capabilities within the workplace.
- iii. Community organization: This is a process which taps and ties together community resources. Social workers, in industrial setting, can, and do, make referrals to specific specialised agencies in the community that can assist people with particular kinds of individual or family problems. Social workers help business organizations to understand the totality of the community where they operate and utilise the community's resources for the benefit of the community and the organisations. They help the organizations to understand the community's social problems; legislate and take actions that may help strengthen the community, for the survival of the community is the survival of the organisation.

- iv. **Research:** This method is used to ascertain facts and truth. Therefore, social workers use it to help organizations understand realities in employer-employee relationships and their problems as well as the actions that need be taken to solve these problems so as to achieve both the employees and the organizational goals.
- v. **Administration:** Social work administration is the process of translating social policies into services. So, in industrial setting, it is an attempt to translate industrial policies and goals into action. Social workers are employed and used in industries as consultants and advisors for management and labour, or both, and, in most cases, are at the centre of helping to solve management and, or labour problems as well as helping to foster better relationships with them. A typical technique often used to accomplish these tasks is the shadow consultation (Resnik and King, 1985). The social worker consultant frequently comes into contact with the managers during a typical day of work through meetings, conferences, and telephone calls. At the end of the day, they discuss feedback that is related to the "manager's effectiveness in organizing, directing and supervising his or her associates and team".

Conclusion: From the discussions of this paper, it is clearly seen that the need for occupational social workers will continue and probably increase in the future. Given their training, which emphasises a generalist systemic perspective and a multi-dimensional appreciation of individual and large systems, occupational social workers are capable of helping individuals balance the world of work with the world of the family. They can help workers deal with such issues as: child care, pre-retirement planning, occupational hazard, job loss, and the myriad of other problems experienced by the workers. Social workers can counsel employees on a wide range of personal, family and social problems, present policy positions on community relations to corporate executives, mediate in disputes, develop and conduct stress management programmes and lastly, assist on issues of layoffs and retirement.

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