

## Research Article

Career Guidance for Nigerian Adolescents of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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**Abstract:** Adolescence is a transitional period in the human life span linking childhood and adulthood. It is a period that marks the departure of a child from childhood to adulthood. As a developmental period, adolescence is a “stop-gap moment” whereby the adolescents undergo changes in their physical, cognitive and social-emotional development for proper adjustment. As such they are expected to weather the stormy and stressful condition of adolescence. The 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescents are not immune to the turbulent and conflicting nature of the adolescence period occasioned by unemployment, uncertainty and gross neglect by significant others. They are daily being assailed and influenced by activities of peer group, the mass media, internet and more recently the social media. Unfortunately, these young people are segregated from the adult society and such segregation serves as an important contribution to deviant behaviours such as cybercrimes, suicide bombing, militancy, political thuggery, school bullying, kidnapping, illegal migration and human trafficking. The process of learning new experiences, examining resources of inner strength and fathom the strength of inner ability should have career guidance input. As young stars who have recently transitioned from childhood, the adolescents lack the ability to bring their powers to bear most effectively on the solution of the problems meaningful to them; therefore, they need expert guidance if they are to experience a successful adolescence. To this end, proper career guidance should be embarked upon to assuage the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescents increased concern for the future by assisting them to determine and prepare for career and entrance into the job market. What adolescents need is access to a range of legitimate opportunities and to long-term support from career guardians that deeply care about them. This is a necessary condition that will ensure youth disengagement from illegitimate activities such as cybercrimes, suicide bombing, political thuggery school bullying, kidnapping, illegal migration and human trafficking. It is how the Career Guardian Counsellor can successfully help the 21<sup>st</sup> Nigerian adolescents disengage from such illegal activities that this paper sets out to achieve.

**Keywords:** Career, Guidance, Nigerian Adolescents.

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## INTRODUCTION

Career guidance and counselling, at a narrow and non-professional understanding is giving advice on issues such as career exploration, career change, personal /career development and indeed other career related issues. This makes it different from other types of counselling and guidance services, for example, marriage counselling, which of course focuses on marriage related issues. However, there are similarities in all types of professional counselling practices in that the role of practitioners irrespective of type of counselling activity combines giving advice on their topic of expertise with counselling techniques that support clients in making complex decisions and facing difficult situations (Wikipedia, 2017<sup>a</sup>).

However, at an elaborate and professional level of understanding, career guidance is not limited to

information about jobs and guidance to others in their decisions, but it also helps the recipients in selecting the skills needed for developing and executing their long-term goals as a fundamental element of human capital (Gazier, 1999). This is an obvious indication that rather than view career guidance service as a one-off event, it is indeed a process that begins by helping the counsellee to select the right kind of knowledge and skills and matching same with his personality trait and the ever changing world of work.

On the other hand adolescence can be considered as a “stopgap moment” whereby the adolescent is expected to undergo changes in his/her physical, cognitive and social-emotional development for proper social adjustment. He is expected to think ideas through, to delay gratification, and possess firmer sense of identity, increased independence and self-reliance and good peer relationship among other

cognitive and social-emotional development attributes as well as possession of secondary sexual characteristics.

The changes in the adolescent stage of life have no doubt imposed a huge developmental task on the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescents. The 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescent is under tremendous pressure to fulfill among other developmental tasks as outlined by Havinghurst (1948), the determination and preparation for a career and entrance into the job market. A failure to successfully meet this expectation may often result in incidence of social-maladjustment in an individual. Sadly enough, this is the recent situation of the significant portion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescent population segment that are found to be engaging in illegitimate activities such as cybercrimes, suicide bombing, school bullying, kidnapping, illegal migration and human trafficking.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Career guidance at the rudimentary and non-professional understanding relates to the notion of advice and information about careers that helps especially the adolescents to decide on careers and to as well encourage them on how to achieve their chosen careers. The notion of career guidance portrays the concept as an event rather than a process which must consider the adolescent's personality traits, performance at school and matching of these attributes with the demand of the labour market.

According to Young & Collins (2000), changes in the labour market (like the development of information technology, globalization) have challenged the relevance of the establish, narrow view of career transition as a one-off event at an early stage of an individual's development, replacing it with a broader understanding of how transitions into, and through, education training, and employment are more complex, more prolong and often span life; adding that on examination of the evidence, what becomes career is the increasing complexity and changing patterns of employment and career. Today's adolescents face demands and expectation, as well as risks and temptations. They appear to be more numerous and complex than those faced by adolescents only a generation ago (Santrock, 2006). Adolescents are expected to weather the stressful and stormy condition of adolescent. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian adolescents are not immured to both the turbulent and conflicting nature of adolescent as well as the dynamic world of work, with the expectation of acquiring a proper work identity imposes on them.

Recently, definitions of career guidance service by some scholars have expanded the scope of career guidance and counselling to accommodate the changes in the labour market and sophistication of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Mckay (2017), career

guidance consists of services that help people to successfully manage their career development. As an aspect of human development, Mckay opined that, it is the process through which an individual's work identity emerges.

The Council of European Union (2004) defines career guidance as a series of activities that train individuals of any age at a given moment of their lives, to identify their own abilities, competencies and interests, to make decisions that affect their education, work, and other areas where they might gain and apply abilities and competencies. On the other hand, the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004) defines career guidance as the series of service and activities organized to assist individuals of any age at any point moment of their lives, which enable them to make educational, training and occupational choices, and manage such choices. As to where such services can be rendered, OECD (2004) identified, schools, universities, colleges, training institution, public employment/workplaces, voluntary/community sector and the private sector. OECD (2004) went further to state that career guidance/counselling could be organized on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (through help lines and/or web sites). The tools available to the counsellors include counselling interviews, career education programmes, and work search programmes.

The concept of career guidance and counselling surpasses the initial choices of school and profession, and includes the matching of the individual's professional and private roles, job leisure, and mental health (Prelovsky, 2017). On their part, Wath & Fretwell (2004) cited in Loan & Van (2015) held that career guidance and orientation services are services intended to assist individuals of any age and any point throughout their life empowering them to make educational training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. The three main elements that aid the understanding of career guidance are career information, career counselling and career education.

The implications of these definitions for career guidance service is evident in the sense that current understanding of career guidance activity is to help students make decisions based on their interests, passion and abilities, while taking into account current and future opportunities (Loan & Van, 2015). It implies that the psychological nature of the adolescent must be considered in connection to the dynamic nature of the world of work. The important role of the school should not also be neglected in the career guidance effort at preparing the youths by equipping them with the right set of skills and knowledge, so that they can continue to remain relevant at all times within the ever-changing labour market.

Scholars in their empirical findings have observed the roles of career guidance in socio-economic development, labour market efficiency and education system. Watt (1996) cited in Loan & Van (2015) for instance observed that career guidance empowers students by equipping them with better decision-making skills and making them well aware of learning opportunities. In addition, it increases job exploration and search activities among job seekers, thus, it is proven to be helpful in reducing unemployment and underemployment by informing people to improve their qualification and seek new kinds of job in different areas (Bysshe, Hughes & Bowes, 2002). Furthermore, a study conducted in America found that making professional guidance services available to students at schools can have a positive impact on quality of the school (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997).

As a venue that offers the opportunity for the large assemblage of youths, the school should have career guidance services as part of its educational curriculum in order to assist groups of individuals to develop their competence to manage their career interests and development.

### Career Guidance in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the role of a counsellor in a formalized educational setting dates back to 1957 at St. Theresa's College, Ibadan where some Irish Reverend Sisters assisted in guiding young secondary school students in seeking admission for further studies, employment opportunities or adjusting to life in general. However, the nature of the guidance services was vocation-oriented (Aluede, 2006).

The historical perspective of the role of the school counsellor in the late 1800's and prior to 1940 within the school system was referred to as "guidance" programmes. Moreover, according to reviewed literature, the word "counselling" was extremely rare guidance programmes were vocational education (Coy, 1999). Nonetheless, the literature reviewed indicated that counselling in Nigerian schools was the responsibility of the career masters/mistresses who provided a balance between prevention and intervention counselling services (Aluede, 2006).

After so many years of experimentation and concrete practices career guidance counselling have not only come to stay, it can be said to have taken a definite pattern as there are now trained guidance counsellors who provide specialized services in our schools (Adomeh, 2015). Among the services career counsellors provide to our in-school adolescents include the under listed ones:

1. Provision of individual and small counselling services to in-school adolescents; in order to help them adjust to their social personal, academic and vocational needs.
2. Consultations with parents regarding special concerns and needs of students in a collaborative

manner so that the parents can be well informed about their wards' academic progress.

3. Interactions within the school personnel where teachers and school administrators are consulted for counselling needs for the students.
4. Provision of leadership role in organizing, developing and supervising counselling programmers in their respective schools.
5. Training and coordinating peer facilitators for peer group counselling.
6. Organizing and leading large group guidance units' sessions and activities in their various schools.
7. The development of specific career guidance programmers that evolved from the needs of the students.
8. Serving as resource professionals to teacher-advisors for behaviour change in the classroom for effective classroom management.
9. Identifying students with special needs/concern and helping them to find alternative education or guidance services.
10. Coordinating other guidance related services such as students' assessment, advisement, community resources, special education and placement.

In addition to the above roles the career counsellors perform, they are also involved in the career development of the in-school adolescents, through appraisal, information dissemination, planning, placement, orientation, evaluation, referral, research and follow-up services. The career counsellor render these services through four major intervention strategies, namely, counselling individual and group, large group guidance, consultation and coordination.

Although career guidance evolved from the school system in Nigeria, career counsellors are also mindful of the fact that career guidance and development are life long processes. In this regard, Prelovsky (2017) had remarked that professional career guidance service represents an organized system of social and professional work on providing continuing help to the individual for the entire duration and orientation, in education and professional activity, with the goal of achieving a professional identity, in accordance with personal traits and the labour market demand for specific occupations. In essence, professional career guidance and orientation service can be said to be a well-entrenched tradition in education system in some countries where they have adopted it as "an organized activity that helps the individual realize his competencies and trains him to plan the appropriated steps to develop essential skills that will lead to personal, educational, economic, and social advancement for the individual, family, society and nation" (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 2001). In countries where it is institutionally well-established, Prelovsky (2017) noted that it is regarded as systematic social and professional support to the development of human resources, in

accordance with the developmental policy and plans of the country.

In Nigeria, despite the effort of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) to replicate the picture painted by Prelovsky (2017) in our school system, the challenges have been enormous. In fact the gap between the school environment and the work environment is increasing by the day. Employers of labour now find school leavers unemployable because there is a glaring fact of mismatch between workforce supply and job demand as a result of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and globalization. The result is that there is a lacuna between the skills possessed by job seekers and available jobs. Adolescents must therefore be guided in making informed decisions on their future careers, based on comprehensive review of the nation's educational, training and employment markets situation and awareness of their own interests and strengths.

Ipaye (1989) traced the weakness in the Nigerian education system to the British colonial education model. The British education model as presented to Nigerians then knew nothing of vocational guidance. In fact the first Christian missionaries arrived on the Western shores of Nigeria in 1842. As they came in, one denomination after the other, they established schools in their missions which they colonial administrators later took interest in and started to fund by giving grants-in-aid to the mission schools.

The school's curriculum was structured to satisfy the yearning of the students to only know how to read and write. Of course, the qualifications required of them were mainly literacy and numeracy, ability to speak the English language. Ipaye (1989) noted further that the world of work for school leavers at that time did not extend beyond four areas, namely, teaching, Church work (translating the Bible and explaining its content to the people), work as clerks in company or in government service.

However, in the post-colonial era, two deliberate attempts were made to establish and entrench career guidance services in the Nigerian education system after the 1957 efforts by the religious Sisters in St. Theresa's College, Ibadan. The two attempts were contained in the Ashy Report which was released on the eve of Nigeria independence in 1960 and National Policy on Education document that was first published in 1977 and revised in 1981 and later also revised in 2004. While the Ashy Report gave birth to the concept and appointment of career masters in secondary schools because of the concern of some teachers about the lack of educational and vocational information in schools; the National Policy on Education carried the first official government documented interest in career guidance, which stated that in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects

and in view of personality maladjustment among school children career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post primary institutions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

In both documents, the emphasis is on appointment of career masters/officers and counsellors. The implementation has suffered a great deal over the years. Therefore it is not surprising that there is a glaring incident of mismatch between the nation's labour force as produced by the school system and the demand of the labour market. The result is an army of unemployed youths who now prefer to engage themselves in illegal activities like cybercrimes, suicide bombing, militancy, political thuggery, school bullying, kidnapping, illegal migration and human trafficking.

### **Career Guidance for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigerian Adolescents**

As it has been it is the responsibility of the career counsellor to provide career guidance for his clients, the adolescents within school and out of school. Since man had made great strides in the area of science and technology, new ways of engaging in illegal activities by the 21<sup>st</sup> adolescents have also emerged, which in turn had created fresh challenges in career guidance. To this end this paper intends to suggest the way forward for the Nigerian Career Counsellors who aimed at assisting their clients in any of the under listed situations.

#### **Cybercrimes:**

Moore (2005) describes cyber crime as a computer related crime that involves the use of a computer and a network. Earlier Warren, Kruse, Jay and Heiser (2002) have opined that for a crime to be so designated a cyber crime the computer may have been used in the commission of the crime or it may be the target. Today these cybercrimes have assumed high-profile level with adolescents using modern telecommunication networks such as Internet and mobile phones. Because most of these crimes targeted against individuals across the borders and the issue of privacy on the part of service providers it is difficult to combat the cyber criminals who carry out the fraud in the comfort of their homes.

However, at the national and international levels cyber crime encompasses a broad range of activities, namely, internet fraud (the use of computer to dishonestly obtain financial benefit from an innocent victim), cyber terrorism (launching a computer-based attack against computers or networks of either government or organization), cyber extortion (malicious hacking of a website, e-mail server, or computer system that deny of regular service) and cyber warfare (cyber-attacks by a nation against another nation's cyberspace in a show of military might).

When the individual is the main target of cybercrime, human weaknesses are generally exploited in a dishonest manner by the criminals. The career counsellor is expected to target the clients at both the individual and group levels by creating awareness of the damage done to the victim(s).

### **Suicide bombing:**

This is the use of explosives to destroy a target in a high magnitude including the user. Because the suicide bomber intends to die in the process, he does not wish anyone within the vicinity should survive the attack. He plans and executes the act secretly in such a manner that everyone except himself is caught unaware as to his advantage. Until recently suicide bombing was foreign to the Nigerian culture. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that suicide and bombing as separate acts were not common as quick means of terminating lives either that of an individual or a group of persons for whatever reason(s). Suicide bombing as a more recent phenomenon is one of the greatest weapons of terrorists. In recent past terrorists have used suicide bombing as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with government over prevailing political situations in Nigeria.

Surprisingly many have wondered why under aged children have been used to undertake such a deadly mission. Undoubtedly, the Boko Haram terrorist group members that introduced suicide bombing into Nigeria were politically and religiously motivated to do so in 2009 during the presidency of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan in Nigeria and they have employed varied means to recruit youngsters to carry out suicide bombing ever since. Methods used for such recruitment include, the use of force, manipulation, brainwashing, drugs, charms and hypnosis. They also sometimes take advantage of the youngsters' ignorance and physical or mental instability.

With the aforementioned reasons at his disposal, the career counsellor needs to engage in serious education of the Nigerian adolescents that no one needs to die as a mean of expressing his grievances. A better option is through dialogue and if necessary peaceful demonstration. Although the Nigerian military authority prefer the term "de-radicalization" of rescued suicide bombers (Vanguard, 2017), it depends entirely what the term means for them.

### **Youth militancy:**

Like suicide bombing in Nigeria, it is a modern era problem in our society. Simply put it is the use of arm to forcefully takeover the natural resources in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In order to achieve this the youth in the region use means which include kidnapping of foreign nationals exploring crude oil in the region, vandalization of oil pipe lines and bombing of oil installations.

In the beginning the youth in the larger numbers troop out to challenge the multi-national companies for neglecting to develop their various communities where oil is extracted and refusing to employ indigenes. As their complain fell on deaf ears they decided to take their destiny in their own hands. Although there had been counter argument most of the aggrieved youths are unemployable in designated areas since they lack the necessary skills, the blame still rests on the companies' management for failing to provide the necessary education environment in the area.

The counselling strategies required here is to persuade both the multi-national companies and Federal government of Nigeria to do the needful. Once that is done lasting peace would be restored to the region.

### **Political Thuggery:**

Thug had been identified as an individual with an intimidating and unseemly personality and mannerisms who treats others violently and roughly for hire. Thugs have existed in Nigeria outside the political scene in various parts of the country with names, such as 'Area Boys', 'Bakassi Boys', 'Egbesu Boys', 'Yan Tauri' etc depending on the part of the country they are operating, who their sponsors are and for what purpose. But with the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1990, greedy politicians converted and recruited many of them to do the dirty job for them, namely, harassment of political opponents, and intimidation of perceived political enemies and snatching of ballot boxes.

The irony of it all is that after each successful election, in which they have done the job they are paid for, the politicians abandon them until another election year. This is while career counselling is of utmost importance. These youths must be counselled not to obfuscate their future.

### **School Bullying:**

Bullying is an act that inflicts pain on a victim that is less powerful than the perpetrator. Conversely school bullying is simply the type of bullying that takes place in an educational setting, which could be verbal, physical, emotional or sexual in nature. In educational setting, two forms of bullying had been identified, namely, vertical (teacher-related bullying) and horizontal (student-related bullying). Among the possible characteristics of school bullying are provocation, distress, hostile intent, imbalance of power and repetition (Goldsmid, & Howie, 2014 and Burger, Strohmeier, Spröber, Bauman, & Rigby, 2015). Among the underlying causes of school bullying are discriminatory gender norms, gender inequality, prevalence of violence against women in society, legitimization of the use of violence to maintain discipline and control, the use of corporal punishment, tolerance of violence in and out of school, environmental factors and gang violence (UNESCO, 2017). The consequences of school bullying include

depression, anxiety, anger, stress, helplessness, poor academic performance, feeling of insecurity, lack of trust, hyper vigilant, extreme sensitivity, mental illness and bullycide. With these in mind Aluede (2017) opined that our Nigerian schools are not safe.

With unsafe schools for the in-school adolescents, which will translate into unsafe larger society tomorrow the career counsellor must be up and doing. Among the short term counselling measures he must engage in include, the organization of programmers that will create awareness that will focus on the evil of school bullying. Among the long term measures are that school personnel (counsellors, teachers and school heads), parents and significant others must be vigilant in identifying bullying cases and engaging all concern, namely, bullies, victims and witnesses.

#### **Kidnapping:**

Kidnapping had been defined as the forceful and unlawful abduction of a person and transporting him from one destination to another in order to hold him captive against his will. In the process ransom may be demanded in exchange for the victim's release from concealment (Cornell University Law School, 2017). In Nigeria two forms of kidnapping predated the colonial era, namely, bride kidnapping and child kidnapping. Both forms of abduction were done against the will of their parents. The formal could be undertaken by the bridegroom who feels the bride's parents are unnecessarily delaying in allowing him to take their daughter home as his wife after meeting all the set marriage conditions. In the case of the latter, which is child abduction it could take either of the following forms, child abduction for ritual purposes or in exchange as payment for a criminal act (murder) committed by the father.

Modern kidnapping is an emerging business enterprise in Nigeria. Kidnapping had been so described because it is now one of the highly organized lucrative crimes in Nigeria. Human personnel are now being recruited to play different roles right from the point of identifying targets, through actual kidnapping, concealment, demanding and collection of ransom and final release of the victim or execution as the case may be. In addition to the recruitment of personnel, sophisticated technological equipment's are also involved. These include hi-tech cell phones (for communication) vehicles (for transportation) and buildings (for accommodation).

The modern type of kidnapping emerged in the Niger Delta region when militants abducted foreign nationals in order to draw attention of the multi-national companies to the plight of the indigenes that were neglected in the area. From little ransom that were paid after town hall meetings and negotiation mainly to prepare the indigenes for greater things a head, full

scale kidnapping emerged. Because the security personnel deployed to the Niger-Delta region meant to stop oil theft, the kidnappers had no logistic challenges in successful exchanging money for the return of the victim. So the business continue to boom and by the year 1999 Nigeria ranked eighth in the ten listed countries considered global kidnapping hot-spots (Briggs, 2001). By 2014 Nigeria overtook three other countries to occupy fifth position (Risk Map Report, 2015). Nigeria was able to achieve this because of the emergence of the Boko Haram terrorists group in 2009 in the North East region of Nigeria. And as Perri, Lichtenwald & MacKenzie (2009), had observed terrorist organizations are known to obtain their funds from kidnapping business enterprises.

The counselling role in combating kidnapping as a national crime cannot be under estimated. Group counselling is quiet effective in this regard and the career counsellor must employ this option.

#### **Illegal Immigration:**

Migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons across a country's border with the intent to live and work and remain in the new country. When such movement violates the laws of the destination country, it is said to be illegal. Generally, Taylor, (2007) account for such movement as a result poverty being experienced by the immigrants in their home country that motivated them to want to move to countries' of perceived greener pasture. However, because of the derogatory nature of the term 'illegal' some countries have suggested that terms like 'Undocumented Immigrants' and 'unauthorized immigrants' should be used because the human persons involved cannot be described as 'illegal persons' (Associated Press, 2013).

Generally, there is hardly any country in the world that does not experience the unauthorized movement of persons from other countries of the world because of the availability of three tie of jobs in all the nations of the world, namely 'white-collar jobs' (for skilled persons), 'blue-collar jobs' (for semi-skilled persons) and 'bottom-tier jobs' (reserved for unskilled persons). Ironically the same immigrants who refused to take up bottom-tier jobs in their home country go to countries of their destination to seek those same jobs which citizens of that country reject irrespective of the wages (Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003). The Nigerian experience is an eye opener as reports have that there are 1,497 illegal migration points entry into the country (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2017). What this translates into is that there are also 1,497 illegal exists from Nigeria.

The implication of this is that since migration is a personal decision, solving the problem involves career guidance right from the onset at the career development stage in the secondary schools and making

our schools curriculum employment oriented. This, the career counsellor must ensure at that point.

### Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking is more or less modern-day slavery, which involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labour or commercial sex act (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2017). The UN Palermo Protocol (2001:10) cited in Arhedo (2016) gave more elaborate definition of human trafficking as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by the means of threat, or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation". The reasons for this could be for forced labour and sexual exploitation; tissue, cells and organ sales.

The Career Counsellor is expected to look out for adolescents who look favourably disposed to human trafficking and engage them on individual counselling. In addition group counselling in school should also be organized for in-school adolescents where the participants will be informed of the danger of this trade to the victims. These approaches will dissuade youngsters from making themselves available for trafficking or better still avoid occasions that could make them victims.

## CONCLUSION

It is envisaged that having exposed the danger involved in Nigerian adolescents' deviant behaviours such as cybercrimes, suicide bombing, militancy, political thuggery, school bullying, kidnapping, illegal migration and human trafficking; and the career counselling required, the 21<sup>st</sup> Nigerian adolescents and adolescents globally will be better for it. In fact bibliocounselling, which is, learning new experiences, examining resources of inner strength and fathoming the strength of inner ability that has career guidance input is all that the 21<sup>st</sup> adolescents globally require. This is very apt now amidst the fast growth of the artificial intelligence entrepreneurship.

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