

## Restoring School Discipline for Rebuilding Trust in School Counselling in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined restoring of school discipline for rebuilding of trust in school counsellors in Nigeria. The paper discussed the meaning of discipline and its effect in secondary school students. The role the school counsellors will play in order to make sure the students, teacher and the school administrators regain the trust they have in them. The meaning of trust and restoration of trust was discussed. The key component of rebuilding trust was discussed, such key components were benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness. Conclusions were made by encouraging the school counsellors to develop more trust among the students, teachers and the school administrators. Also, recommendations were made among which are that the school counsellors should help in instilling discipline among the students and the school administrators through effective communication.*

**Keywords:** Discipline, School Counsellor, Trust, Restoration.

### **Introduction**

In some disciplines and climes, the terms, values and ethics are used interchangeably. Values pertain to beliefs and attitudes that provide direction to everyday living whereas ethics pertains beliefs that people hold about what constitute right conduct. Ethics are moral principles adopted by individual or group to provide rules for right conduct. Ethical conduct grows out of sound character that leads one to respond with maturity, judgment, discretion, wisdom and prudence. Community standards (or morals) of discipline vary on an interdisciplinary theoretical and geographical basis. Ethical issues in the mental health professions are regulated by both laws and professional codes. Laws and ethics codes provide guidelines, yet neither offer clear out answers to situational problems. Laws define the minimum standards society will tolerate; these standards are enforced by the government. All codes of ethics states that counsellors must act in accordance with the relevant federal and state government rules and regulations as stipulated in school, discipline is managed by providing rules and regulations to students, holding school meetings where students address issues which would have otherwise caused tension, resulting to indiscipline.

### **The Concept of Discipline**

On the other hand, Shertzer and Stone (1986) sees discipline as a positive force, connected with training, not correcting, guiding not punishing, arranging condition for learning not restricting. However, Adewole, (2017) sees discipline as involving submission to rules which structure what one has to learn, whether these rules are of a subject, language, games or living in a society. According to Uche and Enuokoha (2014), discipline is the display of behaviour that is socially agreed upon as appropriate at a given situation or time. Having seen

different definitions of discipline, it can be said that discipline is a constructive life style of a human being involving the maintaining of human relationship with others. It involves training that develops good character, orderliness and promotes efficiency and maximum profitability.

Discipline is part of a very long tradition that may have been there from the beginning of human existence. It is through guidance and counselling that school administrators can manage discipline to students. Discipline is a rudimentary ingredient that plays a crucial role in school system and insists on upholding the moral values of students. It is intended to suppress, control and redirect behaviour. In a school system all students must be aware of the rules before disciplinary action can be administered, Franken (2018). Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya (2012) defines discipline as an educative order. That is, trying to teach the right rules for its intrinsic values.

The concept of matching discipline with guidance and counselling helps to determine the value of Guidance and Counselling to students in schools. Parents and schools share the responsibility of promoting values and standards which we hope will help younger people to establish sound behavioural codes for their lives, hence they ensure good discipline is maintained among students. There is great effort made by the Ministry of Education to offer guidance and counselling services to schools but still cases of indiscipline in public secondary schools are always being reported. In fact, educators and government authorities recognise discipline as a precursor of success in all school curricular and co-curricular activities (Simatwa, 2012). In basic terms, discipline is a positive method of teaching a child self-control and confidence.

### **Concept of Education and School Counselling**

Ngagi (2017) described education as a process. She is quoted as saying education “is a system of passing on and acquiring knowledge, experience, values and skills. It is a lifelong process”. In distinguishing between African indigenous education system and the modern European system, she says that African indigenous education was informal but integrated and comprehensive. Its concern was character formation and dissemination of holistic values, while the modern education system is about memory and passing examinations with less emphasis for character and unique value formation.

On the other hand, Collins (2012) says that school guidance counsellors is important because they provide insight on working knowledge, skills and attitudes. They are necessary to assist young people to be disciplined and be able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their ever changing environment, understand themselves, their academic social and physical environment, realize their potentials, as well as identify opportunities in a world where chances for further training, employment and advancement continue to dwindle. Learners are counselled to alter any maladjusted behaviour. Since most citizens are involved in education process directly or indirectly, the impacts of school guidance counsellors are real to them.

Education is the bedrock to the success and development of any society. Without a sound and quality education, the future of such a society becomes blink. Succinctly put, education is the main driver of development. Most importantly, the type of educational foundation laid is equally paramount if a bright future is so desired. Hence, it is noteworthy that all individuals are given sound educational foundation in a bid towards achieving values that are paramount. Education must be something worthwhile and being worthwhile has value implication.

Cultural values are those collective conceptions of things that are considered good, desirable and proper in a people’s culture (Okolo 2011). The negative values include bribery and

corruption, human trafficking, kidnapping, economic sabotage, tribal and religious division, ritual killing, rape, robbery, terrorism, cultism, wanton destruction of government and individual property in the society.

Denga (2003) perceived values as representing reasons, beliefs, convictions or virtues that guide people's action. The acquisition of good values will enable the individual to determine how reasonable, right or wrong, true or appropriate his actions, attitude as well as relationship with others are. Therefore, if all learning and training cannot make one of good value, then education is a failure.

Education is expected to be a transmitter of worthwhile values (Israelashvili and Wegman-Rozi, 2012). Iwe (2009) posited that values are the indices of what a society expect of its members. Values are conceived of in term of what is accepted in any social system. Value is more or less a consistent body of standards which gives meaning or direction to an attitude (Umeh and Anyakoha, 2007). Huit (2003) identified important value for successful living to include autonomy, benevolence, compassion, curtesy, honesty, integrity, responsibility, trustworthiness and truthfulness. The value system of each society emanates from the environment and how the individual in such environment use that environment. It is also transferred to upcoming generations of the environment as they act on the environment.

On the other hand, one cannot begin to analyse what moral values are without first having an understanding of what morality and moral education are. Morality is derived from the Latin word *mores* which means "manners" or "morals". In the words of Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006), morality is "an accepted code of human conduct in a society". Morality entails "having laws that will regulate dealings of men who can choose to abide by these laws because they know it is good sense to do so" (Uyanga and Amingo, 2010). Being moral or being morally conscious means adopting standards or principles to guide ones actions and conduct in society. Moral education is a programme of study which teaches the students about behaving in accordance with what is good while rejecting the bad. It is a holistic approach to stimulate character building and moral development (Okoh, 2003).

Moral education should lead youths to develop from a stage of anomie; often characterized by pre-morality to a stage where an individual is not forced to be moral and is personally convinced on standards that ought to guide his/her conduct in society. Moral values are taught in moral education as certain acceptable, valuable and cherished qualities that are worthwhile in developing a sound character. Ekpiwre (2008) defines values as "things considered worthwhile, desirable, right and good and thus craved for and applied on a daily basis to enhance existence by the people". Values determine people's identity and cultural continuity.

Moral values are essential values that determine individuals' perception of morality and moral consciousness in society. Moral values include truthfulness, patience, obedience, honesty, integrity, hard work, responsibility, respect, tolerance, loyalty, public spiritedness, freedom, respect for human life and dignity of persons. Others include justice, fairness and equality. Moral values are taught to be imbibed by members of the society to enhance character development and promote good moral upbringing and moral health in individuals. As Amingo (2003: 10) argues "moral health is manifested in individuals when a person becomes capable of understanding the principles of moral conduct and is committed to behaving morally in his dealings with others". Principles of moral conduct can only be effectively understood and practiced when moral values are strongly adhered to by individuals in a given society.

### **The Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools**

The practice of guidance and counselling programme include bringing to the students an increased understanding of the educational, vocational and social information needed to make wise choices. Ipaye in Obi, Oye & Moh'd (2012) opined that guidance within the Nigeria culture complies a quest- parental style of steering the child towards behaviours or decisions deemed to be good. Obi (2012) is of the opinion that guidance is a programme that provides service to individual students based upon their needs and understanding of their immediate environment factor have on the students and the unique features of process and techniques used by a counsellor to assist individual to cope with the problems in the area of his/her life, so that he/she can become useful and contribute to the society in which he lives. One can assert that guidance and counselling is a process, developmental in nature by which an individual is assisted to understand, concept and utilize his/her abilities, aptitudes, interest and attitudinal patterns in relation to his/her aspiration.

Today, the services of guidance and counselling has gained prominence in the Nigerian educational system and many are becoming interested in counselling the youths especially students in making wise educational, vocational and social decisions. Counselling Service is one of the recent disciplines introduced into Nigerian Educational system. With the current trends in technological development and globalization, it has become imperative to refocus counselling and widen its scope to meet with the challenges of the modern society especially in Nigerian secondary schools. Counselling, according to Obi, etal is an interpersonal relationship in which one person attempts to help another person to understand and cope with his problems in the area of education, vocation and family relationship. The Federal Ministry of Education initiated the establishment of guidance and counselling in all secondary schools as a result of the apparent prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among the school children. One of the challenges being faced by counsellors in Nigeria is establishing credibility and securing recognition for guidance and counselling as a vital force for the advancement of human resource in a developing economy. Coupled with this, is lack of the necessary wherewithal to translate counselling theories into practice. To better appreciate the roles of school counsellors in human resource development, the job descriptions of the school counsellors as itemised by Counselling Association of Nigeria, CASSON (2013) are hereby highlighted;

- i. Orientation of new students
- ii. Educational counselling
- iii. Vocational counselling
- iv. Personal/social counselling
- v. Referral services
- vi. Follow-up services
- vii. Liaison and follow-up services
- viii. Keeping of students' records etc.

### **The Concept of Trust**

Trust is a difficult notion to define because of its complex and multifaceted nature. Despite the fact that trust had been studied by scholars for many years, there appears to be no consensus on the best definition of trust. What is common across most definitions of trust, either explicitly or implicitly, is the willingness to risk in the face of vulnerability. Through the synthesis of common definitions of trust, one have come to understand trust as the extent to which one engages in a reciprocal interaction and a relationship in such a way that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with a degree of confidence that the

other party will possess some semblance of benevolence, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, wisdom, and care (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2008; Daly 2009; Day 2009).

Moreover, as Bottery (2014) argued, trust is a critical existential need for the functioning at the societal, institutional, interpersonal and personal levels. At the societal level, it is essential in building the relationships necessary for a flourishing society, as well as fostering good relationships between governments and school employees. At the institutional level, it is crucial in building better relationships within a learning community in which knowledge is socially created and shared, and in building the kinds of group relationships that boost student achievement. At the interpersonal level, it is central to individual integrity and good leadership. And finally, at the personal level trust is vital to individual morale, self-esteem and self-worth, and is central to dealing with uncertainty, unpredictability and risk.

Most often, trust in schools is broken by betrayal, breach of confidentiality, deception, dishonesty, breach of integrity, corruption, coercion, overuse of power, exclusion of others or divisiveness among the counsellors and the school community (O'Neill, 2012 & Tschannen-Moran 2014). With respect to counselling, the most serious issues that schools face is the problem of broken trust on the part of the school counsellors and it is necessary for the restoration now. (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2008). The breakdown of trust results in the emergence of two parties: the violator(s) and the victim(s). This may occur at various levels of interpersonal relationships within schools. When trust is broken between the counsellor and the student, suspicion and punishment are the likely consequences, factors that are dysfunctional to cognitive and social-emotional developments. When trust is broken between the counsellor and teacher and the principal of a school, the probable consequences are hypervigilance, punishment and getting even, typically, these are destructive forces that undermine the effectiveness of the school. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2008) suggested that 'revenge does have a way of equalizing power differentials in the school, but it also can lead to escalation of the conflict and produce harm and violations that may be irreversible'. Furthermore, as they noted, 'when trust fails or weakens in small or informally organized communities, the members may use various means of informal social control - ridicule, ostracism, unhelpfulness and the like - to bring an untrustworthy actor into line'. In order to deal with such consequences, trust needs to be rebuilt or restored at the school levels or individual levels. The question remains, how trust can be rebuilt among counsellors in schools for effective and efficient discharge of their duties within the school system.

### **Restoring School Discipline through Rebuilding Trust in School Counsellors in Nigeria**

School counsellors as leaders and moral agents are called to model trust in order to make efforts in research, plan, build, support and partner with others to create change. They have the courage and willingness to do what is best for the school community whether in a situation when they are rebuilding trusting relationships with other stakeholders or when they help others in this process. School Counsellors and other stakeholders in schools are dependent on each other, and it is this interdependency that makes involved parties vulnerable and in need of trusting relationships. An understanding of the conditions and processes that enable counsellors and other stakeholders to learn to trust and co-operate is critical as schools increasingly face changing expectations. More than a decade ago, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2008) called for studies that examine the process of rebuilding broken trust in schools as necessary and essential to begin to break through the barriers of building more trustful school cultures.

For school counsellors to build trust among the students, they must first build a solid foundation for school-wide reform. Such foundations are characterized by trust among school

members, student relationships, and support, as well as a shared vision for all. But while it seems to be generally assumed that trust is a core criterion of successful school improvement efforts, few publications address the issue explicitly or examine it in much depth. Part of the problem, no doubt, is the fuzzy nature of the word “trust.” Although most of us can easily identify relationships in which trust is or is not present, pinning down precisely what trust entails is harder to do. From the perspective of educational researchers, the level of trust present within a school counsellor is a difficult thing to measure, much less connect to concrete outcomes such as counsellor retention, parent involvement, or student involvement. While it may be clear, intuitively, that trust “matters,” questions about why and how are not so easily addressed. This paper examined the issue of trust within the context of school counsellor’s improvement, looking specifically at counsellor student relationships.

### Key Components of Trust

In general terms, trust relationships involve risk, reliability, vulnerability, and expectation (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Young, 2008). If there is nothing at stake, or if one party does not require anything of the other, trust is not an issue. In school settings, however, risk and expectations abound. Counsellors and students alike are constantly put in positions in which they are not only expected to perform certain duties but in which their well-being depends upon others fulfilling certain obligations as well. As researchers Bryk and Schneider (2003) explained, distinct role relationships characterize the social exchanges of schooling: counsellors with students, counsellors with other teachers, counsellors with parents, and all groups with the school principal.

Each school counsellor in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role’s obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other people in the school community. For a school community to work well, it must have an agreement in each role relationship in terms of the understandings held about these personal obligations and expectations of others. A more precise definition of trust, drawn from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s (2008) comprehensive review of the literature stated five key components commonly used to measure trustworthiness and they are as follows;

**Benevolence:** This means having confidence that another person has your best interests at heart and to protect your interests is a key ingredient of trust and this is one of the ways a school counsellor can use to rebuild trust on students and to other members of the school community. The school counsellors can achieve this through the school guidance and counselling programme by helping the students to identify those personal and interpersonal skills that will help them to cope with their problem of growing up because guidance and counselling are geared towards preventive rather than curative.

**Reliability:** Reliability refers to the extent to which one can depend upon another person to come through for them, to act consistently, and to follow through. This goes together with confidentiality which is also how a school counsellor can help rebuild trust on his students for this can help him in the process of trying to discipline them. Guidance counsellors felt personal or professional responsibility to make sure relationships among all teachers and the students were restored, and were confident in their ability to accomplish this through open and honest communication, integrity, respect, caring, consistency and credibility.

**Competence:** Similar to reliability, competence has to do with belief in another person’s ability to perform the tasks required by his or her position. For example, if a counsellor means well but lacks necessary counselling skills, he or she is not likely to be trusted to do the work of

counselling the students. The school counsellor should be grounded in the techniques of handling clients before he could be trusted to handle a student. As a school counsellor, he should be able to know the various techniques to be applied in the management of several behavioural problems or indiscipline being committed by these students.

**Honesty:** A person's integrity, character, and authenticity are all dimensions of trust. The degree to which a school counsellor can be counted on to represent situations fairly makes a huge difference in whether or not he or she is trusted by others in the school community or not. The school counsellor should be able relate to the authorities of the school honestly should there be any time there is crisis between him and his student.

**Openness:** Judgments about openness have to do with how freely another person that is the counsellor shares information with others. Guarded communication, for instance, provokes distrust because people wonder what is being withheld and why. Openness is crucial to the development of trust between counsellors and students, teachers and the principal of the school particularly in times of increased vulnerability for the students. The school counsellor should be able to inform the school authorities any hidden information so as to build a firm trust between him and school community. According to Tschannen-Moran (2014), trust may be facilitated by working for good communication, being meticulously reliable and using persuasion rather than coercion. A counsellor may restore trustworthiness through five factors, namely behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, sharing and delegation of control, communication and demonstration of concern.

### **Conclusion**

The role of guidance and counselling in restoring discipline and trust in the school was discussed and it was found out that school counsellors can rebuild the trust the teachers and students have them through open communication, honesty, competence, reliability and benevolence. School counsellors as leaders and moral agents are called to model trust in order to make efforts in research, plan, build, support and partner with others to create change. They have the courage and willingness to do what is best for the school community whether in a situation when they are rebuilding trusting relationships with other stakeholders or when they help others in this process. The paper equally concluded that guidance and counselling is important in secondary schools and was offered in the schools. Guidance and counselling services offered were educational guidance, career guidance and psychological and social guidance. Also, there will be less personal problems among the students and the teachers in the school when they are well disciplined which will go a long way in improving their academic performance as a result of guidance and counselling.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this paper the following further recommendations were made:

1. That School counsellors should have the ability to demonstrate that they can be trusted. They can do this by being communicating to the school authorities on the outcome of their relationship with their students and other members within the school community as well as maintaining their integrity.
2. There should be constant renewal of this trust both on the part of the counsellors and school authorities. This can be achieved through holding of seminars, talks and conferences relating to maintenance mutual trust and understanding within the school.

3. Counsellors should build trust among the students and the school authorities. They can do this by first of all building a solid foundation of trust within the school and outside the school environment by maintaining a good personality.
4. Counsellors should know that they have enormous responsibility to uphold the school trust and they can achieve this by going on training, improving in their education as well as understand and work with ethical application of counselling practices, in particular because counsellors often practice behind closed doors with little oversight.
5. That counsellors, when they would have built the trust will be able to discipline students and direct them in the right way to behaviour so as to avoid deviant behaviours that would have lead them into more problem thereby avoiding an act of indiscipline within the school and outside the school.

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