

Enhancing Confidentiality as a Quality for Revamping Self Disclosure among Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at enhancing confidentiality as a quality for revamping self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted a description survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 59 school guidance counsellors in the existing 31 public secondary schools in the area. The number is small and manageable so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was an 11 item self structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Confidentiality and Self-Disclosure Scale (CSS). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Two from guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation. Mean with standard deviation and t-test statistic were used for data analysis. The study revealed that confidentiality enhances self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State to a great extent. Hence, self disclosure influences relationship among secondary school students to a great extent. The study concluded that male counsellors and female counsellors had uniform opinions on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure at same time self-disclosure influences relationship among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study recommended among others that State Schools Management Board should organize workshop/seminar/conferences for serving counsellors to refresh their knowledge on ethical considerations in the one -to- one relationship.

Keywords: Confidentiality, Self Disclosure and Students

INTRODUCTION

Confidentiality means maintaining private information about a client, and ensuring that no unauthorized person has access to this. In other words, a counsellor must seek a client consent before discussing any disclosed matter with a professional counsellor [1]. A client who knows that personal, private and intimate information he/she shares with a counsellor is held in confidence is more likely to feel at ease about self-disclosure. [2] in his study noted that confidentiality of the client will also aid a client to feel more able to trust their counsellor, and will want to open up and discuss their issues, concerns and difficulties more readily. Without this level of confidentiality the client-counsellor relationship has no firm foundation [3]. It is essential to know that there is however, one instance where a client's confidentiality might be breached, and that is when a client's personal safety comes into question in some way. Before the confidential

information is shared with another counselling professional, it is the counsellors' duty to inform the client of his/her intention. In any situation that the counsellor feels in need to breach client's confidentiality, the counsellor must ensure that harm to the client is minimized, and ethics and institutional laws are correctly adhered to [4]. Consequent upon the above fact, this seems to be the likely reasons why people divulge information about their self to a lawyer; the faithful to a Catholic Priest for a Confession; patients to a Doctor for a medical problem; then everyone to a counsellor. All this are fundamental options since they are based on confidentiality depending on the ethical code of each profession/vocation even though people are now afraid and asking question with the intention of knowing the extent to which they can disclose information about oneself to another [5]. The question is: how can a counsellor be efficient since he/she is in the

circle of an instrument searching for whom to use instead of depending on his/her own professional calling as a counsellor? Whiston & Sexton (2008) opined that once the counsellor loses his/her ethical code he/she loses all. His/her reputation and everything about him/her is queried. In other words, if they are to be efficient they have to keep to the ethical codes of their profession/vocation which confidentiality is one of them and is utilized to enhance self disclosure of client and among those that find themselves in a meaningful relationship. By so doing the issue of confidentiality in relation to self disclosure becomes very significant in every spheres of life since it is a quality that can be used to revamp confidentiality as a quality for enhancing self disclosure among secondary school students [6].

Consequent upon the above fact, it therefore means that confidentiality is vital in counselling. It gives courage to students to disclose their problems so as to receive a better treat in respect to the privilege information to let out to their school counsellor(s) in their bid to make, take and find lasting solution to the challenges they meet in their growth process. [7] in conviction of the above premise noted that students need to be assured that their secrets will not be unveiled. However, imagined a situation where some principals and teachers expect the counsellors to divulge an information when they are required; this is absolutely against the ethics of the profession. In this case, the counsellor finds himself between two opposing forces. If he insists on keeping such information secret, his relationship with other members of staff and the principal will be shaky. If he divulges the secrets, he loses the respect and trust the students repose on him but if he/she finally keeps it-it brings healing to the students [8]. The students' confidence in the counselling process goes a long way to revamp the effectiveness of the school counsellor in their reception of information and keeping their ethical codes [9]. Self-disclosure is an important building block for intimacy [10]. It cannot be achieved without counsellors ability in keeping to confidentiality as a code of conduct. This means that self disclosure could affect relationship if not reasonably divulged [1]. In order to maintain client confidentiality a counsellor

must be aware of certain important procedures. These can only be maintained if a counsellor accepts full responsibility for a client. Throughout the client-counsellor relationship it is the counsellor's responsibility to: ensure a client's confidentiality is not breached, provide the same level of care and support to a client, regardless of the client's background, maintain up-to-date client files and notes, support the client, and where necessary request the additional support of colleagues or more experienced counsellors, to ensure the client's counselling needs are fulfilled, process, and provide, up-to-date additional information and resources that may be useful to a client.

Subsequently, as with all forms of communication body language provides a useful additional assessment of a client, and their counselling needs. It provides information about an individual's true feelings about a situation, issue or other person. Although the majority of body language occurs unconsciously, sometimes it decides the quality of the type of communication we have with another person. Body language expresses feelings and is a useful tool for counsellors to use within a client-counsellor relationship. Hand gestures, posture, eye contact etc all communicate how someone is feeling. Whilst there are positive gestures that encourage openness there are also opposite body movements that signal impatience and lack of interest. A counsellor's skill at being able to read a patient's body language will provide a further record of how the client is expressing and experiencing the counselling process, and noted down in a client's documentation it provides additional information that must remain confidential at all times. Thus, even in disclosing stories of sexual misconduct, family issues, gayism and lesbianism, vocational problem and career crisis, the counsellor/clients need to consider the reasons for engaging in self-disclosure especially as regards to healing and social reformation of the individual clients from stored hurt [8]. With that in mind, it means that both guidance and teacher counsellors are faced with similar challenges in Nigerian schools while more challenges are faced by younger counsellors than the older ones. In all, [5] remarked that those to whom information has been given in confidence, or who have acquired

information which they regard as confidential, may not always be sure whether they should disclose this information or not. In these circumstances it may be sensible to seek advice from the person or as permitted by the code of conduct of their profession/vocation. This should be done without divulging the name of the client concerned and this will be carried out with the utmost discretion that is not against the ethical code which emphasized about the informed consent of the client. Meanwhile, there is rise of misinformation on cult activities, truant, examination malpractice among secondary school students; this is traced to lack of confidentiality and self disclosure among counsellors. The students seems not to trust their counsellors or disclose information about oneself to the counsellors, sometimes

they do know the limit to which they could divulge information- as a result, the essence of guidance counsellors seem to be defacing and begging to be revitalized and therefore calls for a serious attention. The school counsellor's gender also contributes to the ineffectiveness of enhancing confidentiality. Our society gives wrong interpretation at intimacy between a female student and a male counsellor and vice versa. The opposite gender will not be relaxed in order to avoid being labelled a womaniser or sugar mummy/daddy. This affects the proper use of confidentiality in revamping self-disclosure. Hence, it is against this background that the researcher is interested to revamp confidentiality as a quality for enhancing self disclosure among secondary school students in Agbani Education Zone of Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The general thrust of the paper is to enhance confidentiality as a quality for revamping self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent to which confidentiality enhances self disclosure

among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

2. find out the extent to which self disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. to what extent does confidentiality enhances self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

2. to what extent does self disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

This hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at .05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in the mean scores between male counsellor and female counsellors on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure among Secondary school student in

Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significance difference in the mean scores between male counsellor and female counsellors on the extent to which self disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. The population for the study consisted of 59 school counsellors in the existing 31 government owned secondary schools in the area. Of these 37 are female counsellors while 20 are male counsellors. The population is small so no

sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 11 item self structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Confidentiality and Self-Disclosure Scale (CSS). The instrument had a 4-point response scale with response category of Very great extent (VGE)---4 points; Great extent (GE)----3 points; Little Extent (LE)---2 points

and Very little extent (VLE)—1 point. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State university of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .85 for cluster 1 and .73 for cluster 2. The coefficient for the entire instrument stood at .73. The study was carried out in all the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Fifty nine copies of the questionnaire were distributed but fifty seven copies were retrieved from the respondents representing 96.61 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean with standard deviation and t-test statistic. Any mean score of 2.50 and

above was regarded as great extent while any mean below 2.50 was regarded as little extent. The one null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using t-test statistic. If the calculated t-value was less than the critical table value of ± 1.96 for the required degree of freedom of 41, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical, t-value, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 1: To what extent does confidentiality enhances self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean (\bar{X}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Confidentiality Enhances Self Disclosure among Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Female Counsellors —N=37		Male Counsellors —N=22		—Overall		Decision
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_3	SD ₃	
1.	Confidentiality help students to receive a better treat in respect to their academic performance and well being	3.05	0.94	3.04	0.99	3.05	0.97	GE
2.	Confidentiality does not help students to trust more	1.86	1.13	1.90	0.92	1.88	1.02	LE
3.	Confidentiality help students to trust more as a result enhances self disclosure	3.11	1.02	3.04	1.04	3.07	1.03	GE
4.	Confidentiality endows counsellors with respect as a result enhances self disclosure	3.10	1.19	2.68	1.29	2.89	1.24	GE
5.	Confidentiality brings healing and social reformation to the student as a result enhances self disclosure	3.14	1.13	2.77	1.07	2.95	1.10	GE
6.	Confidentiality enhances social reformation to student as a result it enhances self-disclosure	3.13	1.13	3.09	0.92	3.11	1.03	GE
	Grand Mean	2.89	1.09	2.75	1.04	2.83	1.07	GE

Research Question 2: to what extent does self-disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table2: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Self Disclosure Influence Relationship among Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Female Counsellors N=37		Male Counsellors N=22		Overall		
		X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	X ₃	SD ₃	Decision
7.	Self disclosure helps client to see counselling as a self interactive process to explore difficulties and become free	2.89	1.27	3.00	1.19	2.95	1.23	GE
8.	Self disclosure helps client to navigate the associated negative feelings by building resilience and model personal positive behaviours	3.16	0.89	3.36	0.95	3.26	0.92	GE
9.	Self disclosure helps client to explore workable solutions	2.91	0.98	2.55	1.29	2.73	1.13	GE
10.	Self disclosure gives students hope and subsequently leads to a path of healing based on the fact that their secret will not be unveiled	3.41	1.03	3.27	0.88	3.34	0.95	GE
11.	Self disclosure does not help client to explore workable solutions	2.37	1.21	2.09	1.15	2.23	1.18	LE
	Grand Mean	2.95	1.07	2.85	1.09	2.90	1.08	GE

Table 2 indicates that of the 5 items of the extent to which self-disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria, the respondents agreed with 4 items (7, 8, 9 and 10) as they recorded mean scores of (2.95, 3.26, 2.73 and 3.34) which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. . They however disagreed with 1of the items (11) with a mean score of (2.23). The standard deviation for all the items raised is 1.08 which is small signifying that the responses are loosely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents grand

mean score for the overall items raised is (2.90). Going by the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents data, the answers to research question two is that self disclosure influences relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. H01: There is no significance difference in the mean scores of male counsellor and female counsellors on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Mean Scores of Male counsellors and Female counsellors on the extent to which Confidentiality is Utilized in Enhancing Self Disclosure among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Female Counsellors	37	2.89	1.09	55	0.49	± 1.96	NS Do
Male Counsellors	20	2.75	1.04				

Significant at $P < .05$, $df = 41$, critical t-value = ± 1.96

The t-test analysis of the data in Table 3 reveals that the t-calculated value (0.49) is less than the critical t-value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom (df) of 55 and at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected as male counsellors and female counsellors do not differ significantly in their opinions on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

H_0_2 : There is no significance difference in the mean scores between male counsellor and female counsellors on the extent to which self disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Mean Scores of Male counsellors and Female counsellors on the extent to which Self Disclosure Influence Relationship among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Female Counsellors	37	2.95	1.07	55	0.33	± 1.96	NS Do
Male Counsellors	20	2.85	1.09				

Significant at $P < .05$, $df = 55$, critical t-value = ± 1.96

The t-test analysis of the data in table 4 reveals that the t-calculated value (0.33) is less than the critical t-value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom (df) of 55 and at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected as male

counsellors and female counsellors do not differ significantly in their opinions on the extent to which self disclosure influence relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Discussion of Result

The finding in Table 1 revealed that confidentiality enhances self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. This is in agreement with [5] who found that confidentiality is very significant in every spheres of life because it enhances self disclosure especially among high school students. For him, it gives courage to students to disclose their problems so as to receive a better treat in respect to their academic performance and well being within and outside the school premises

wherever they find themselves. The finding in Table 2 revealed that self disclosure influences relationship among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. This is in affirmation with [7] who averred that self-disclosure impact negatively on relationship when disclosure is not reasonably divulged. In line with the above thought, [5] remarked that with regards to disclosing stories of sexual misconduct, family issues, gayism and lesbianism, vocational problem and career crisis, the counsellor/clients need

to consider the reasons for engaging in self-disclosure especially with regards to healing and social reformation of the clients from stored hurt. In the hypothesis, results in Tables (3 and 4) revealed that male counsellors and female counsellors had uniform opinions on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure at same time self-disclosure influences relationship among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. These current finding is in line with the opinion of [4], who reported that school gender were found to have no significant difference when they are faced with similar challenges in Nigerian schools while more challenges are faced by male

counsellors than the female ones. For instance: Our society gives wrong interpretation at intimacy between a female student and a male counsellor and vice versa. The opposite gender will not be relaxed in order to avoid being labelled a womaniser or sugar mummy/daddy. In all, [8] remarked that those to whom information has been given in confidence, or who have acquired information which they regard as confidential, may not always be sure whether they should disclose this information or not. In these circumstances it may be sensible to seek advice from the person or as permitted by the code of conduct of their profession/vocation.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the study established from the above analysis and interpretations done that

1. Confidentiality enhances self disclosure among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.
2. Self disclosure influences relationship among secondary school students in Enugu

Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.

3. Male counsellors and female counsellors had uniform opinions on the extent to which confidentiality is utilized in enhancing self disclosure at same time self-disclosure influences relationship among Secondary school student in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing, the researcher proffered the following recommendations

1. Skills training should be organized by the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) for school counsellors on ethical issues in counselling bearing in mind the multicultural nature of Nigeria.

2. State Schools Management Board should organize workshop/seminar/conferences for serving counsellors to refresh their knowledge on ethical considerations in the one -to- one relationship.

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