Students’ Counseling and Teachers’ Moral Integrity Management in Science Education

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Abstract
This study investigates the concepts of Students’ Counseling and Teachers’ Moral Integrity Management in Ethno-linguistically Diverse Science Education Schools. It aims to expose a few sidelined causes of Science teachers’ moral integrity question and provides suggestions to ensure the hardworking teachers are not discouraged and the schools do not lose public trust. Having adopted a multidisciplinary approach, the study exploited oral interviews and e-library resources as data sources. The dichotomy “Theory X and Theory Y” by Douglas McGregor of 1960 was used as the theoretical frame-work to anchor the study. It was discovered that the use of incomplete statements, ambiguous words and gender sensitive statements during students’ counseling are responsible for misinterpretation of intention which often put teachers’ moral integrity at risk. It was suggested that science teachers should be gender conscious and avoid easily misunderstood statements during students counseling. Also, School Administrators and counseling association of Nigeria should organize workshop for science teachers on the needs to refer low performing students to professional counselors for proper counseling interventions.

Keywords: Guidance and counseling; Science Education; School Administration; culture and linguistically diverse students; Teachers’ Moral Integrity Management


INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa with over 250-ethnic groups and more than 500-languages was colonized by British and adopted English Language as her official Language at the eve of her independence in 1960. Up to date, Nigerian citizens are still very much diversified in culture and mentality. Fluency in a language is fundamental to an understanding of any culture and the struggle to develop the language in Science Education schools and its related symbolism,
proved to be unnaturally difficult. In fact Science was born around the time of the 16th Century as a consequence of a new philosophical approach which required evidence for the validation of all claims without exception. As described by Offorma (2016), culture refers to the attitudes, values, customs and languages that family transmit to children from one generation to another. These general ways of life have been passed down from generations of ancestors and have formed an identifiable pattern of heritage. On daily basis, culture however has pronounce influence in human way of thinking about environmental episode in school as a social organization where people of varying academic, language, economic, and religious backgrounds study or work together for the realization of common goals. In the school system, many culturally diverse students are also linguistically diverse and so, they are confusing to educators (Moloney & Saltmarsh 2016; Itwaru 2017). Thus, Nigeria; the giant of Africa, can better be described as an amphitheater of cultural and linguistically diverse schools due to her ethno-linguistic pluralism.

Language itself is an important medium of communication, which is important to understand one another in schools. Pearson (2019) explained that communicating with hearing or sight impaired is a challenge and so, is communicating with speakers of other languages. Thus; Science Education is not an exception.

In Nigeria, despite the numerous challenges bedeviling Science and Technology Education (STE), the discipline remains the best way to national development and job creation (Umar and Babalola 2016). Science itself is the concerted human effort to understand and to understand better, the history of the natural world and how the world works with observable physical evidences as the basis of that understanding (Afisi, 2016). Science systematically builds and organizes knowledge in form of testable explanations and predictions about the Universe such that it can be rationally explained and reliably applied. Modern Science is a discovery as well as an invention which cannot be compromised in a nation like Nigeria that needs development. The major work of a Scientist is to conduct research through experimentation that tries to simulate natural processes under controlled conditions. The essence of this research is to help people live in harmony in social organizations like schools irrespective of their socio-economic divides.

Science subjects such as Biology, Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry are highly cognitive demanding, such that the subjects are often reserved for highly intelligent and hardworking students. Despite this, Science students in their classrooms are still very much normally distributed academically and their teachers are expected to manage them all towards academic achievement, regardless of their cognitive abilities. So, it may be difficult to stop Science teachers from using counseling strategies to encourage low performing students who consult them for guidance. Recently, Russell, Burnham, Trescher and Knoche, (2022), stated that the reports of sexual relationships between teachers and their students have risen across the country. Russell, et, al.(2022) found that most districts use required boilerplate language about sexual harassment but lack specific guidance for navigating complex situations where boundaries seem to get crossed such as social media. Consequently, every teacher in a tertiary institution and even at the senior secondary level is now the prime suspect and their moral integrity has been questioned. Hence, this study provides the rationales for exploring the concept of students’ counseling and teachers’ moral integrity management in Science Education schools. It helps to expose the causes and provides suggestions for policy makers to implement in Science Education schools and to improve its public outlooks. It will ensure the science teachers do not lose public trust and not discouraged from contributing their quota towards the school productivity. Also, this will help the society not to develop wrong perception of Science schools as regards the morality. Therefore, solving problems related to Science Education and science teachers need urgent attention in the best interest of the nation's development which is another rationale behind this study. The process of teaching and learning science subjects in schools and colleges is termed Science Education (Umar and Babalola 2016). Considering the nature of Science subjects it is obvious, the subjects are intellectually demanding and not for lazy students.
Student counseling is a professional field of study offered at the Faculty of Education in tertiary institutions globally. It is an important Educational support services (FRN, 2014). However, technically, all trained teachers at degree level must have offered one or two undergraduate courses under the unit of Educational guidance and counseling. The essence of this is to enable them easily provide guidance service to students whenever they are in positions to do so. Unfortunately, not all teachers from Primary to tertiary institution level possess a teaching qualification which could equip them to offer counseling services to their students. For this category of Science teachers counseling service is a voluntary service offered to students to improve their academic performances and reduce drop-out rate. Many hardworking teachers have been disengaged or frustrated from the schools on daily basis due to moral laxity.

School is a bureaucratic organization where structure and hierarchy exists to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and orderliness, as well as the organizational productivity (Parlar and Cansoy, 2017). School administrator has a significant role to play in harnessing school resources in an intellectual and professional ways to bring organizational harmony and probity. The school leaders must strive to work as an intermediary between the school managers and the workers in the organization. An effective administrator protects the interest of both parties to ensure peaceful co-existence among the school stakeholders within and outside the school organization. The school stakeholders include the teachers, students’ representatives, parents and entire school host community as well as other parties who often contribute towards school production processes. It is clear that conflicts and misunderstanding cannot be completely rooted out of any social organization like school where people are working harmoniously to realize common goals. These conflicts, if properly managed can make the people involved better morally due to practical experience which justifies employers clamoring for donkey years of experience during staff recruitment. This is because, when an employee works for more than 5years they must have passed through both pleasant and unpleasant situations that will definitely make them better hands on the job. By this, organizational probity could be achieved easily. This study hereby examines students’ counseling and moral integrity management in Science schools and Science Education generally. However, important concepts used in this study were discussed as follow;

**Science Education**
Science Education is a field of study dealing with the activation of mind and other attributes of an individual to utilize science for improving life, cope with increasing technology and for dealing responsibly with science related issues (Babalola and Umar, 2016). Science education aims to produce science oriented work-force that can favorably compete globally in technological innovations. By so doing, it encompassing the teaching and learning of science subjects majorly Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. However, considering the cognitive strength required to study these science subjects, it might be difficult for low performing students to achieve excellent academic performance without effective counseling practice but school Administrators has a lot to do.

**School Administration**
School Administration is a compound word, made up of “School” and “Administration”. Therefore, there is a need to examine what School and administration connote before looking into what School Administration denotes. A school is a social organization where staffs, students and other school stakeholders work together the realization of common goals. However, the Section12, item104 of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) states that “administration” is a function of organization and structure, proprietorship and control, inspection and supervision (FRN, 2014). Administration has also been observed as the proper, effective and efficient utilization of human, material and financial resources for goal attainment (Bello, 2014). Hereby, School Administration is the process of harnessing human, material and financial resources provided by the school manager for the attainments of School goals. As reported by Babalola and
Abdullahi (2016), the school administrators are entrusted to the leadership and supervision of classroom instructions, with an aim of transforming theories into practice in order to achieve the school goals. It will be a sign of incompetence for a school administrator to be recording high rate of school drop-out compare to excellent performance rate.

**Teachers’ Moral Integrity Management**

Professionally, Science teachers in schools and colleges are expected to exhibits moral integrity as a core value to earn excellent rewards for their hardworking culture not otherwise. According to Jabaar (2016), “a man of integrity shows external consistency as well as internal coherence in his beliefs, values and conduct”. *External consistency* refers to congruence between what an individual says and what he actually does. By implication, integrity means doing what a person says he would do and he who fails to keep his words would not be a person of integrity. *Internal coherence* requires that an individual’s beliefs, values and actions are logically connected.

In another perspective, Moral integrity means integration of moral discernment, consistent behavior, and public justification (Monga, 2016). *Moral Discernment* in this context is the ability to distinguish what is morally right from what is morally wrong. This discernment should not be arbitrary but should be as a result of reflection on the meaning of good and bad as well as how the meaning applies to individual and other people. This moral discernment also includes convictions on ability to draw moral conclusions. *Consistent Behavior* on the other hand deals with the ability to constantly act on the convictions which means that a person of moral integrity would act reliably across time and situations, even in the face of temptations and adversity. *Public Justification* implies that a person who has moral integrity has no maladjustment. The attitudes, words and character of a moral integrity personality are generally acceptable in the society and also in conformity with the rule of law and management guidelines.

Management is the process of planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, staffing and supervising human, materials and financial resources of an organization for the purpose of goals attainment (Cssmbb, M. (2016). In Science Education schools, where science teachers are expected to be morally upright by showing external consistency, internal coherence, moral discernment, consistent behavior and public Justification, the importance of management cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, the management functions here are expected to be carried out by the School Manager and most importantly by the School Administrators in charge of teachers’ instructional supervision. This is because the school managers are expected to give the school policy and provide both financial and legal backing required for the implementation of such policies that will protect both the teachers’ integrity and the school public image. Ability to protect the ego of the teachers, social view of the school and justice for all parties is a measure of the administrative and managerial efficiency. However, to achieve this, both the teachers and the students must be aware of what constitutes sexual harassment, so as to guide against them. For instance, not all female students know that seductive smile/weeping while looking at a male teacher eye ball to eye ball and/or adjusting clothes in the presence of a male teacher is a sexual harassment. Similarly, not all male teachers know that twisting mouth, eyes and persistence look at a female student is sexual harassment. Observations have shown that despite the teachers are always held responsible in most of sexual harassment cases, the students as well do contribute either ignorantly or intentionally for selfish gain. Therefore, effective management of the school public outlook is a function of checkmating not only the teachers but also the students to avoid any party taking advantage of the other. This requires the school Administrators put in place Education Laws and School Code of Conduct, Dressing Codes and many more in place.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study is Multidisciplinary approach. It involves the use of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data were collected through purposive observation and oral interviews with teachers and students while the secondary sources involve review of scholarly works in the field of Educational administration, Science Education, Moral philosophy and guidance and counseling published in journals and textbooks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Epistemology: theory X and theory Y

The theory X and theory Y is a dichotomy theory of human behavior formulated by Douglas McGregor in 1960 and presented in his paper entitled “The Human side of Enterprise”. This theory is still much relevant for effective consideration of teachers’ behavior in the school so as to motivate them towards efficiency, effectiveness and school productivity. Thus, school goals and objectives are realizable through effective utilization of this theory. According to Bello (2014), the postulates of theory X could be summarized that employees naturally dislike work and will try to avoid it with any slight opportunity. Since, they dislike work; they must be forced to work for organization to achieve its set goals. Employees will avoid responsibilities and wait until formally directed to work before working. The employees in this category prioritize job security to other benefits of working and will display little or no ambition just to protect their jobs.

Conversely, the theory Y assumed that employees naturally like work and view work as fun or recreational activity. They exercise self-direction, self-control and committed to achieve objectives. They are likely to learn, seek and accept responsibilities whenever opportunity is given. They have abilities to take good decisions, even in absence of the organizational manager.

However, the school management scholars believe that the classical approach was based on theory X assumptions about people (Hussain; Haque and Baloch, 2019). Saying scientific management theory of Frederick Winslow Taylor and autocratic leadership style are the most suitable to make the set of workers under theory X work towards efficiency, effectiveness and organizational productivity. Conversely, Bello (2014) viewed that human relation’s perspective which favors good relationship between the employees and their employer is better. Unfortunately, human relation’s theory failed to explain the theory X’s workers’ needs, control strategies and how to make them partake in the school goals realization.

In Science Education schools, theory X and Y is one of the most appropriate theories for guiding management thinking. This theory viewed that science school leaders should be able to identify the class of workers in the school and motivate them towards productivity. Employees in theory X are naturally lazy; hardly can they involve in a selfless service like counseling depressed and low performing science students unless they are forced to do so. Therefore, the theory Y category of workers must be discouraged through hash treatments whenever they make mistake so as not give chance to theory X Category to mock them. Science teachers must be properly guided through orientation programs to protect their integrity and catalyze school productivity.

Staff Efficiency, Student Counseling, Effectiveness and School Productivity: The nexus

Chester Irving Barnard (1886-1961) is a behavioral scientist, public Administrator that served as the president of New Jersey bell Telephone Company and used his executive experience and extensive readings in sociology and organizational psychology to author classic management textbooks. According to Gabor and Mahoney (2010), Barnard argues that the executive (school managers) must meet two conditions if cooperation and financial success are to be attained. First, the executive must emphasize the importance of effectiveness, which is the degree to which the common purpose of the organization is achieved. Secondly, the executive must be aware of
efficiency, which is the satisfaction of "individual motives" of employees. His major point was that an organization can operate and survive only when both the organization's goal and that of the individual workers are kept at equilibrium. Managers must have both Soft Skills and technical skills to make the two conflicting goal realizable. Soft skills such as good communication skill and emotional intelligence are not only needed by the school leaders but also all science teachers.

As seen figure 1, the relationship between the school productivity, staff effectiveness, staff efficiency and the student counseling services is cordial. When the school teachers are propelled by the low academic achievement of the students and venture into students' counseling services, such students should see this as a help or privilege and not a right. Similarly, it further revealed that there is a symbiotic relationship between staff effectiveness and the school productivity as well as the school productivity and staff efficiency. This is because when workers achieve their personal goals, they develop confidence and show competency in the discharge of their responsibility towards the achievement of school productivity. Similarly, if the staff is effective in discharge of their responsibilities toward achievement of school goals, they are directly working for the organization and indirectly working toward their personal quality which could sometimes resulted into employees' turnover in term of promotion and increase in salary. However, student counseling by the teacher other than the professionally trained counselors are usually as a result of enthusiasm to prevent students from becoming a dropout.

**Staff Efficiency**
This can be defined as the degree at which individual worker realizes personal goals and indirectly upgrading the status of the organization. For instance, it is a dream comes through and important need met when a teacher acquires higher qualification. As well, it will indirectly improve the standard of the school. Individual workers’ needs and goals and how they could be achieved by the school administrator or individual workers can better be explained by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. Maslow who lived around 1943 was a psychologist. Maslow states that people could be motivated or helped to achieve certain needs which include; Physiological Needs, Safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

**Staff Effectiveness**
Staff effectiveness can be defined as the degree to which individual worker contributes to the achievement of common purposes or goals of the school organization. These goals can also be referred to as the school expected outputs. Before discussing on how to achieve effectiveness in the school organization, the goals which the school must strive to achieved includes;

(i) **Students' Academic Performance:** This entails student outstanding performances in standardized external examinations such as WAEC, NECO, NABTEB, UTME, etc.
(ii) **Teachers' job Performance:** This entails the teachers’ contribution to national and international body of knowledge all of which lead to school corporate performance. Teachers’ performance can as well be noticed through effective teaching, guidance and counseling and motivation of students towards academic achievement.

(iii) **Growth levels of students and employees:** This entails how the students’ and teachers’ academic and moral lives improve with time and in accordance to the number of years spent in the service or the school organization. It depends significantly on the experiences gained through academic and moral integrity challenges encountered in the school organization.

(iv) **Low Students' Dropout Rate:** This is a component of wastage in education which is the measure of difference between the student enrollment and graduation rate.

(v) **Employee Turn-Over:** This refers to the increase in workers’ take salary usually achieved through acquisition of higher qualifications and number of years spent.

(vi) **Staff Retention Capacity:** This is the rate at which the staff intends not willing to leave their job for a greener pasture and such organization cannot be understaffed.

(vii) **Employee Management Relations:** This involves how friendly, caring, protective, supportive and accommodative is the school administrator with the staff.

(viii) **School-Community Relations:** This is the level of symbiotic relationship that exists between the school and the host community.

(ix) **Students' Attitudes towards School:** This has to do with attractiveness, cleanliness and liveliness and school conduciveness to learning for students in particular.

(x) **Employee Job Satisfaction:** This is the level at which the workers are happy with their job which depends on the social value, respect and income of such workers.

**Student Counseling techniques and Practices in Nigeria**

Guidance and counseling is part of educational services provided in schools. Guidance and counseling comprise altruistic services meant to resolve the students’ problems and make the students useful (Egbo, 2015). He stresses that counseling is a part of guidance which is an emotional aspect of interaction that involves the client with the sole aim of resolving particular problems. This definition assumes that counseling is a helping relationship between a teacher or counselor and a client Student. Counseling involves someone seeking help meaning that a student needs to realize that s/he has a problem and must seek help willingly before given by counselor. Before counseling could occur someone must be willing to give help, the teacher must be eager to prevent student’s poor performance or dropout. Who is trained to give help means that despite that it is believed that all educationists are counselors, yet some are trained specifically to give counseling and this professionalism should be respected. In a setting that permits help this is an indication that not all setting permits the giving of counseling help. Give and receive help means that a serious teacher who is effective and committed to organization productivity must be willing to give counseling help to prevent student from dropout provided the setting permits help as earlier discussed. Also, a serious student who attends classroom regularly and punctually and yet performing below expectation must be ready and willing to receive counseling help.

**Language and Communication problems in Science Student counseling**

Communication is a process of transmitting information from one person to another. According to Nebo et al (2015), Performance of employees in relation with their duties and responsibility seems to question their communication techniques in terms of performance. Effective communication is a process by which sender of message, received feedback from receiver intended. Communication starts from the sender to receiver and said to be ineffective when receiver of the message did not decode the intended of the sender. Effective communication is said to have been achieved when the receiver understands the meaning intended and reacts accordingly. It is a transaction of ideas, directory command or guide into oral or written words, or
actions on the path of the communicator in such a way that the receiver gets the same message and reacts in manner envisaged by the communicator (Nwankwo & Akam, 2011). The components of communication which include the sender, encoding, the message, the channel, decoding, the receiver, noise and feedback have to be properly managed to achieve effective communication. Kabiru (2015) states that experienced counselors have realized that a single counseling technique will not apply universally to all situations with the same effectiveness. Thus, the following should be considered while counseling academically depressed students;

a. **Purpose**: The purpose of any counseling relationship is to assist the client gain self-understanding and self-realization thereby making the necessary adjustment to the situation. Counselors must clearly define the goal of the counseling and procedures.

b. **Flexibility**: The counseling style must fit the character such as gender, educational level and language capability of each client. These clients' characters should always dictate the style of counseling. It should be noted that counseling styles can change during the counseling session and the counselor is not limited into a single style. Many styles may be mixed to produce a better style fit to help client within the creativity of the counselor.

c. **Respect**: Client should be respected and treated as unique, complex individuals, each with a distinct set of values, beliefs and attitudes. Counselor must value clients' differences and seek a common ground to enhance the communication process.

d. **Communication style**: Establish open two-way communication using spoken language, non-verbal actions, gestures and body language. Ensuring this, counselors must observe these aspects of client's behavior (verbal and non-verbal communication) otherwise; the non-verbal aspect may likely contradict the spoken language (Kabiru, 2015).

However, Student counseling communication in Fig.2 was very wrong, though the intention was good. The teacher used many words which could be easily misinterpreted especially by the female students in a language deficient environment. If twenty female students were communicated in figure2 pattern, there is possibility that fifteen from this twenty students will imagine they are in immoral relationship with the teacher. If fifteen students condemn a teacher to be morally corrupt and discussed it with family and friends, the teacher's integrity is no more.

![Diagram of counseling communication patterns](Survey, 2017).
As great as the purpose of communication in student counseling is, the dangerous the misinterpretation of word could turn to be causing harm to teachers' integrity. Based on this background, the language problems sourced among secondary schools and tertiary institution students and teachers through oral interviews in Nigeria could be grouped under the following:

1) **Gender sensitive Idiomatic expressions**: These are words with their meaning totally different from as it was said or pronounced. Examples of these expressions include; I have won my heart, fuck up, keep abreast, open up, dig deep into you, etc.

2) **Gender sensitive languages**: These are registers which are related to female privacy and emotional affections. E.g; lovely, love, lovable, pleasurable, like, sex (gender), bottom, breast, beautiful, pretty, etc.

3) **Ambiguous expressions**: These are words with multiple meanings in which some of their meaning portrays corruption. Examples of ambiguous words include; I will help you, I will enjoy you to, pleasure, use what you have to get what you want, move with brilliant student, befriend brilliant students etc.

4) **Incomplete Statements**: These are statements which do not make complete sense. Examples include; be serious, on the mood, move with, seek help, hide you etc.

5) **Blasphemy**: These are words that may be termed disrespect, insult or attack on what other people or community hold sacred on either religious or cultural ground. Recently, Nigerian Government has pronounced this “Hate speech” which is punishable under law.

**CONCLUSION**

This work has been able to show that the productivity of Science Education Schools depends chiefly on teacher’s efficiency, moral integrity and effectiveness under the supervision of skillful administrators. However, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to know the group that the school workers belong vis-à-vis “theory X” or “theory Y” so as to know the suitable leadership style and the management perspective which could be utilized to encourage or motivate them towards efficiency, effectiveness and realization of school goals. One of the goals of Science Education which its schools must strive to achieve is reduction of school dropout rate through good academic performance. However, the theory Y workers are naturally hardworking teachers who are enthusiastic to ensure that the school goals are achieved and so, often venture into student counseling. But, easily misinterpreted statements such as ambiguous words, incomplete statements and gender sensitive expressions during counseling communication with low performing students often threatens their moral integrity. Thus; something timely needed to be done in order to put them in the right part and prevent them from unnecessary headache due to ignorance which is not an acceptable excuse in the court of laws.

**Suggestions for policy maker implementation**

1. Science Teachers who deal with student results and other academic records should avoid counseling students with academic problems but refer them to professional counselors.
2. Science Teachers should avoid easily misinterpreted statements such as ambiguous words, incomplete statements and gender sensitive expressions during counseling.
3. There is a need for School managers to organize orientation program on careful student-teacher relationship for science teachers to protect their integrity and that of the school.
4. Hardworking teachers should be corrected politely whenever mistake occurs while discharging their duties so as not to discourage them and other observing staffs.
5. Counseling intervention should be given to low performing students by the teacher of the same gender and carefully worded statements.
6. Science Education Schools from Primary to tertiary institutions should endeavor to have counseling unit/directorate to help take care of low performing students academically.
7. Every low performing student who needs a counseling service should have a file open at the counseling units where the data and level of improvement could be easily monitored.
8. Any student, who needs counseling service from science teachers, should seek approval from the counseling unit and allow the directorate to engage the teacher on their behalf. It is believed that if these suggestions are put into use, Science Education schools will be more professional in responding to students counseling needs. Science teachers’ integrity will be more protected and the public outlook of the Schools will be improved. The menace of poor academic achievement, students’ drop-out rate and sexual harassment may reduce drastically.

REFERENCE


