UNDERSTANDING LOW SELF-DISCLOSURE AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANIOCHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: attitude towards self-disclosure, emotional openness, guidance and counseling sessions, outcome expectation variables, Sub-Saharan African countries.	This study sought to investigate the factors affecting junior secondary school students' willingness to self-disclose during counseling sessions in Aniocha Local Government Area, Anambra State, Nigeria. The study population comprised male and female students from eight selected junior secondary schools in the area, with a sample size of 400 respondents. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents for the study, and descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were utilized to analyze the data. Results showed that outcome expectation variables, including stigma tolerance, anticipated risk, social stigma, anticipated utility, perceived social support, and emotional openness, negatively impacted students' attitudes towards self-disclosure during counseling sessions. Specifically, female students had lower attitudes toward self-disclosure due to their lower level of emotional openness compared to male students. The study recommends the development of multicultural competencies to address the low self-disclosure phenomenon in counseling units, as well as improved counselors-students ratios across all junior secondary schools in the studied area. The study highlights the importance of counseling services for junior secondary school students in Sub-Saharan African countries in dealing with their stressors, social, educational, and psychological issues.

Introduction

The junior secondary school period represents a time of transition and adjustment for many students, and for those in Sub-Saharan African countries like Nigeria, access to counseling services is critical for their wellbeing. Aniocha Local Government Area in Anambra State has experienced growing numbers of these student populations, underscoring the need to address factors influencing their willingness to self-disclose during counseling sessions. This study examines these factors using a purposive sampling technique to randomly select 400 respondents from eight junior secondary schools in the area. Data analysis utilizes descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to examine the impact of outcome expectation variables (stigma tolerance, anticipated risk, social stigma, anticipated

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utility, perceived social support, and emotional openness) on students' attitudes towards self-disclosure during counseling sessions. Results indicate a significant relationship between these variables and attitudes towards self-disclosure, with emotional openness having the strongest effect. Female students have shown a lower willingness to self-disclose compared to their male counterparts due to their lower level of emotional openness. The study presents recommendations for improving the quality of counseling services in junior secondary schools, emphasizing the importance of multicultural competencies and increased counselors-student ratios to address low self-disclosure and support students' well-being.

2.1 Conceptual Review Self-disclosure

Cozby, Andrew, Freeman and Dorren (2018) conceptualize self-disclosure as "any information about himself which Person A communicates verbally to Person B". This broad definition sets these criteria: (i) self-disclosure must contain personal information about Person A, (ii) the information is verbally communicated to a target Person B, and (iii) the information must be verbally communicated by the discloser. The definition proposed by Worthy, Gary and Kahn (2016) places further restrictions on what is self-disclosure. They defined self-disclosure as "that which occurs when A knowingly communicates to B information about A which is unknown and is not otherwise available to B". Therefore, following this formulation, the criteria of intentionality and privacy were became part of the operational definition. Goodstein and Reinecker (2018) considered still another element to be an important parameter of selfdisclosure. Pointing out that such aspects of the self as feelings, values, ideas, and experiences are more central or important to the individual, they contended that self-disclosure should be limited to the "intentional revealing of these more central aspects of the self". Combining the elements offered by these writers, there are six criteria for self-disclosure

- first, it contains personal information about the discloser.
- Second, the information is verbally communicated by the discloser.
- Third, the information is intentionally communicated.
- Fourth, the information is private.
- Fifth, it deals with some aspect of himself or herself which the discloser considers important. Therefore, self-disclosure is defined as verbally communicated information about herself or himself which is important to him or her (centrality) and which would ordinarily be private rather than public information (intimacy).

Empirical Reviews on Attitudes towards Self-disclosure

Hanson, Gulack, Haman and Aragon (2018) qualitatively researched 18 clients using grounded theory and found self-disclosure to have both a positive and a negative effect both on the clients and the counselors" privacy.

Audet and Everall (2019) used a phenomenological methodology to qualitatively study nine participants and found that self-disclosure had both facilitative and hindering effects. Audet (2018) found that selfdisclosure can blur the therapeutic boundaries. However, when it is used skilfully it can enhance the relationship. Likewise Bottrill, Pistrang, Barker, and Worrell (2019) used phenomenology to qualitatively study 14 trainee clinical psychologists and determined that working out one"s approach to self-disclosure is a challenge or trainee therapists and that support is often required to master the skill.

Levitt et al. (2019), using a naturalistic methodology, qualitatively examined therapist self-disclosure within 52 two-therapy dyads and found both positive and negative results. Self-disclosure that humanized the therapist seemed to have a more positive affect than disclosure that expressed encouragement. Self-disclosure that highlighted similarity with the therapist seemed to have a more positive impact than disclosure that failed to convey either similarity or dissimilarity.

Knox, Hess, Petersen, and Hill (2018) qualitatively studied 13 adult clients in therapy, through phenomenology, and found self-disclosure to have a positive effect on discussing their important personal issues. This was in the

context of the therapists being perceived by the clients as intending to normalize or reassure them and consisted of their provision of non-current information.

Burkard, Knox, Groen, Perez, and Hess (2019) qualitatively researched 11 European American psychotherapists'' self-disclosure in cross-cultural settings phenomenologically. The results were positive when the therapists shared their own views on racist and oppressive attitudes, with the intention of enhancing the relationship.

Andersen and Anderson (2018) used multiple regression analysis and granger causality to assessed the factors that influence clients'' disposition to self-disclosure during counseling sessions using selfdisclosure and the demographic variables related to a therapist''s use or non-use of self-disclosure. The researchers surveyed (Andersen & Anderson, 2018). Their results indicates that counselors used selfdisclosure with their clients and their disclosures increased with therapy experience. Specifically, counselors with one year or less therapy experience disclosed less than therapists with 2-5 years'' experience or 10+ years'' experience (Heneretty& Levitt, 2017; Andersen & Anderson, 2018). Also, Andersen and Anderson found that counselors prefer using self-disclosures that reveal their emotional reactions to client''s behavior when the goal of the disclosure was to help the client understand how others perceive them. Counselors used positive affective responses the most frequently with clients but fantasies, images, and negative affective statements were also popular counselor self-disclosures (Andersen & Anderson, 2018). They also concluded that counselor self-disclosures about past or present weaknesses were not frequently shared with clients and they theorize these disclosures were not shared frequently because they were personal and they damage the counselor''s "expert role"

Methodology

Following the studies of Aromashodun (2016); Bolanle (2018) and Aderibigbe *et al*. (2017) this study used a purposive sampling technique to randomly select respondents from 8 sampled junior secondary schools in Anaocha LGA of Anambara State. This study selected a sample size of 400 respondents comprising 200 female and 200 male students from the eight secondary schools in the study locations. In each of the schools, the researcher randomly sampled 50 students from each of the JSS II class given it a total of 400 students which constituted the sample size. The target population for this study were the

Junior Secondary School Students (which comprises male and female) in Anaocha LGA of Anambara

State.

The analysis of the data collected from the field in order to test the validity of data begins with the descriptive statistics of the socio-demographic background of the respondents, correlation analysis of the variables of outcome expectations, emotional openness and attitudes towards self-disclosure in the locations.

This study used the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to analyze the relationship among variables for outcome expectations and emotional openness and attitudes towards self-disclosure among junior secondary school pupils from the study locations. The dependent variables is attitudes towards self-disclosure while the variables for outcome expectations and emotional openness were the independent variables. Therefore, this section begins with the analysis of the diagnostic test of the outcomes expectations variables and socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents This section presents the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents which include gender(that is, male and female), age, religion affiliations and ethnicity. The table below depicts the frequencies and percentages of the sociodemographic background of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gendera (N 399)		

Male	185	46.4
Female	214	53.6
Age		
10-13	290	72.7
12-14	100	25.0
13-15	9	2.3
Religion Affiliations		
Catholic	350	87.7
Anglican	20	5.0
Baptist	24	6.0
Others	5	1.3
Ethnicity (sociocultural background)		
Igbo	340	85.2
Yoruba	39	9.8
Hausa	16	4.0
Others	4	1.0

Source: (Field Survey, 2021)

Table 1 shows that a total of 46.5% of the respondents were male while 53.6% were female. This means that the population were fairly distributed among genders. The table further shows that 72.7% of the respondents constitute the age bracket of 10-13 years while 25.0% constitute the age bracket of 12-14 years and 2.3% proportion of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 13-15 respectively.

Table 4.2: Relationships between the independent variables and attitudes towards self-disclosure

Effect	Value	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Pillai''s Trace	.053	*4.53	6.00	399	.000

Source: (Field Survey, 2021)*p<.01

Analyses of variances (ANOVA) on each independent variable were conducted as follow-up tests to the MANOVA. Using the Tukey Method, each ANOVA was tested at the .01 level. The ANOVA on the following independent variables were significant: Stigma Tolerance [F (1,

399) =12.18, p=.001], Anticipated Utility [F (1,399) =7.35, p=.003]. The following dependent variables were also statistically significant; Level of Emotional Openness [F (1,399) =.13, p=.02]; Anticipated Risk [F (1,399) =.01, p=.01] and Perceived Social Support [F (1, 399) =.295, p=.000].

Table 4.3: Tests of Between-Subjects of Dependent and Independent Variables

	INDV	SS	df1	F	Sig.
ATSDS	EO	6.21	1	.13	.001
	ST	*88.38	1	12.18	.000
	AR	10.34	1	.83	.000

 EO=Emotional Openness

ST= Stigma Tolerance

AR= Anticipated Risks

AU= Anticipated Utility

SS= Perceived Social Support

ATSDS = Attitudes towards self-disclosure

The results in the table above suggests that predictor of stigma tolerance, anticipated utility, anticipated risk, perceived social support and emotional openness are statistically significant in predicting pupils of junior secondary schools attitudes towards self-disclosure during counseling sessions.

4.1Descriptive Analysis of the factors influencing clients' disposition to self-disclosure during counseling sessions.

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the field in order to test the validity of the study hypothesis. Therefore, the section begins with correlation analysis of the variables of interest.

Table 4.3: Means and Standard Deviations of Outcome Expectation Variables

Variables	Mean for Male	SD for Male	Mean for female	SD for Female	N	P-value
Emotional openness	29.80	6.94	30.02	7.2	399	0.000
Stigma tolerance	10.75	2.72	11.59	3.3	399	0.001
Social stigma	5.80	2.89	18.23	4.60	399	0.000
Anticipated Risk	13.65	3.53	13.36	3.40	399	0.001
Anticipated Utility	13.84	3.06	13.10	2.50	399	0.000
Social Support	59.36	16.62	59.41	17.30	399	0.001
ATSD	80.20	10.19	77.00	8.45	399	0.001

Source: (Field Survey, 2021)

** Outcomes expectations variables are significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

The table above shows that stigma tolerance for male students had the mean and standard deviation of 10.75 and 2.72 while female students had the mean and standard deviation of 11.59 and 3.3. Also, for social stigma, the male students had the mean of 5.80 and standard deviation of 2.89 while the female students had the mean and standard deviation of 11.59 and 3.3.

Further, for anticipated risk, the male students had the mean and standard deviation of 13.65 and 3.53 while the female students had the mean of 13.36 and standard deviation of 3.40. In addition, for anticipated utility, the male students had the mean and standard deviation of 13.84 and 3.06 while the female students had the mean of 13.10 and standard deviation of 2.50.

Meanwhile, for social support, the mean students had the mean of 59.36 with the standard deviation of 16.62 whereas the female students had the mean and standard deviation of 59.41 and 17.30.

This suggests that while the girls sample has a greater perception of stigma associated with disclosing self during counseling sessions compared to boys they also reported lower levels of social support and *Factors Influencing Clients' Disposition to Self-Disclosure During….*

high levels of emotional openness. This result is in line with the studies of Adegbite (2015); Bamidele (2016) and Mantel *et al*. (2012).

Table 4.4: Correlations Matrix Among Outcomes Expectation Variables and Attitude Towards Self-Disclosure

	EO	ST	AR	AU	SS	ATSDS
EO Pearson Correlation	1	.303	.420	.264	.124	-.579**

		EO	ST	AR	AU	PSS	ATSDS
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.195	.066	.261	.602	.008
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399
ST	Pearson Correlation	.303	1	-.592**	.439	-.612**	-.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.195		.006	.053	.004	.004
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399
AR	Pearson Correlation	.420	-.592**	1	-.643**	-.513*	-.695**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066	.006		.002	.021	.001
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399
AU	Pearson Correlation	.264	.439	-.643**	1	-.639**	-.555*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	.053	.002		.002	.011
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399
PSS	Pearson Correlation	124	-.612**	-.513*	-.639**	1	-.565**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.602	.004	.021	.002		.009
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399
ATSDS	Pearson Correlation	-.579**	-.609**	-.695**	-.555*	-.565**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.004	.001	.011	.009	
	N	399	399	399	399	399	399

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

EO=Emotional Openness

ST= Stigma Tolerance

AR= Anticipated Risks

AU= Anticipated Utility

PSS= Perceived Social Support

ATSDS = Attitudes towards self-disclosure.

The result of the correlation matrix in table 4 reveals a significant relationship amongst each of the surrogates of outcomes expectation variables, emotional openness and attitude towards self-disclosure in the study location. With an R- value of -0.58, -0.60, -0.70, -0.56, 0.57 and -1 shows that a strong negative relationship exist among EO, ST; AR; AU; SS and ATSDS respectively. This also implies that social tolerance, emotional openness, anticipated risk, anticipated utility and perceived social support have negatively correlated with attitudes towards self-disclosure among the students. This result is in line with the study of Ayua and Ariwodola (2018), Audet and Everall (2019). .By implication the correlation matrix result shows that social tolerance, emotional openness, perceived social support, anticipated risk, anticipated utility and social stigma have significantly reduced junior secondary school students" attitudes towards self-disclosure during counseling sessions.

5.   Summary and Conclusion

Following the result obtained, it was found that female students have low attitudes towards selfdisclosure due to low level of emotional openness compared to the male students. This study concludes that a low level of emotional openness, stigma tolerance, social stigma, anticipated risk, anticipated utility and perceived social support have negatively influenced the attitudes towards self-disclosure among junior secondary school students during

counseling sessions. The fear of emotions and experiencing of pains negatively influence junior secondary school students towards self-disclosure during counseling sessions.

6.   Recommendation

Following the results of the empirical findings in this survey thus far, this study recommends that: Highly qualified and trained employees are a critical component of any effective organization. The success of junior secondary school counseling centers, therefore, depends on the quality of the staff. Junior secondary school counseling programs need to invest in the continuous professional development of their staff to ensure sustained competence in dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds.

In an effort to facilitate the cultural competence of counselors, government, stakeholders and nongovernmental organizations should enroll all guidance and counseling teachers at all levels in the Association for Multicultural Counseling Development (AMCD), put forward several Multicultural Competencies that they deemed necessary for every counselor.

This study also recommends that the government and the stakeholders in the private sectors as well as the Non-governmental Organizations should intensify efforts to increase the number of guidance and counseling teachers across all the Secondary Schools in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambara State in order to meet up with the international standard.

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