

## ROLE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES IN ENHANCING EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

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### ABSTRACT

*Exercising transparency and accountability also ensures that information reaches those who need it, which helps in making and evaluating decisions. Thus, transparency and accountability is associated with: Disclosure, clarity, and participation. Largely absent in discussions of accountability and transparency are the voices of stakeholders who work, learn, and teach in schools and other educational institutions. This paper highlights the critical importance of accountability and transparency in education. This process involves enabling diverse education stakeholders to make use of organized opportunities to articulate their views, especially in discussions of accountability and transparency in education, in ways that their concerns are heard and valued. However, when the issue of Nigeria educational system today is raised, the first sets of thoughts that comes to mind on the accountability and transparency in education are: decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass promotion syndrome and the like before any other thing else. This paper considers the role of counselling services in enhancing education, accountability and transparency. Counsellors collaborate with students both individually and in groups to address challenges like academic struggles, career exploration, stress management, bullying, substance abuse, and family issues. Their roles extend to providing academic guidance, offering personal and emotional support, and conducting workshops and intervention programs to promote mental health awareness and address behavioral issues.*

**Keywords:** *Counselling, counselling services, Education, Accountability, Transparency*

### INTRODUCTION

Transparency and accountability is considered one of the modern educational concepts for which accountability towards its application became a differentiator that successful educationist pride themselves in. Transparency is a differentiator that influences educational policy according to specific mechanisms that the service recipient looks into, and it sets out the responsibilities among the various levels of management, which in turn contribute to strengthening accountability (Mikhlafi, 2023). Exercising transparency and accountability also ensures that information reaches those who need it, which helps in making and evaluating decisions. Thus transparency and accountability is associated with: Disclosure, clarity, and participation (Daibes, 2004).

Toukhi (2022) considers that transparency in education means “commitment by public administration organizations to disclosure, openness and clarity in operations through enforcing them and subjecting them to accountability.” In this area, Balkin (2018) shows that transparency is not merely provision of information only, but includes participation and responsibility. Moreover, Vaughn (Vaughn, 2020) confirms that transparency includes providing information on facts of public concern, including citizens' ability to participate in decision-making, and accountability towards it. Pioneers of education thinking have called for the importance of expending much effort to resolve educational issues and identifying obstacles that face administrative development such as educational corruption, routine, and ambiguity in work methods and procedures. Exercising transparency in education operations comes as one of the important issues which must be observed in administrative practices among the various management apparatus.

## COUNSELLING AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

Counselling, within the educational context, embodies a spectrum of supportive interventions tailored to address students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs. Delivered by qualified professionals like school counselors or psychologists, counselling services encompass structured programs aimed at fostering students' well-being and success. These services span various domains such as academic achievement, career planning, personal development, mental health, and social relationships. Counsellors collaborate with students both individually and in groups to address challenges like academic struggles, career exploration, stress management, bullying, substance abuse, and family issues. Their roles extend to providing academic guidance, offering personal and emotional support, and conducting workshops and intervention programs to promote mental health awareness and address behavioral issues. Counsellors work closely with teachers, administrators, parents, and community resources to ensure holistic student support. Upholding confidentiality and ethical standards, they employ preventive measures like classroom guidance lessons and social-emotional learning programs, along with intervention strategies such as individual or group counselling and crisis intervention. Continuous professional development ensures counsellors remain equipped to effectively support students, contributing to a nurturing and inclusive learning environment conducive to student success and well-being.

The concept of counselling services in educational institutions encompasses a breadth of support mechanisms aimed at addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs. Delivered by qualified professionals like school counsellors or psychologists, these services include structured programs designed to promote students' well-being and success. Counselling services cover a wide range of areas including academic achievement, career planning, personal development, mental health, and social relationships. Counsellors collaborate with students individually or in groups to address challenges such as academic struggles, career exploration, stress management, bullying, substance abuse, and family problems. Their roles involve providing academic guidance, offering personal and emotional support, and facilitating workshops and intervention programs to promote mental health awareness and address behavioural issues. Collaborating closely with teachers, administrators, parents, and community resources, counsellors ensure holistic student support. They uphold strict confidentiality and ethical guidelines, employing preventive measures like classroom guidance lessons and social-emotional learning programs, as well as intervention strategies like individual or group counselling and crisis intervention. Continuous professional development ensures counsellors are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to effectively support students, contributing to a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive.

Counselling services in secondary schools, as elucidated by Adekunle (2017) and Okonkwo (2019), play a pivotal role in supporting the academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs of students. These services encompass a wide range of functions aimed at fostering students' holistic well-being and success. Academic guidance and support, as discussed by Okafor (2016) and Eze (2020), involve assisting students in setting academic goals, selecting appropriate courses, and developing effective study skills to enhance their academic performance. Furthermore, counsellors provide personal and emotional support, as highlighted by Nwosu (2018) and Ugwu (2021), helping students cope with stress, build resilience, and develop self-awareness to navigate challenges effectively. Career counselling and planning, advocated by Chukwu (2017) and Obi (2022), are essential components, guiding students in exploring career options, understanding educational pathways, and developing job readiness skills. Additionally, counsellors facilitate the development of social and interpersonal skills, as emphasized by Onyeka (2019) and Nnamdi (2020), by promoting healthy peer relationships, preventing bullying, and fostering diversity and inclusion. Crisis intervention and mental health support, as discussed by Adekunle (2017) and Okonkwo (2019), are crucial for providing immediate assistance, referral services, and mental health awareness to students in

need. Moreover, counsellors offer parent and family support, as outlined by Okafor (2016) and Eze (2020), through parent education, family counselling, and collaboration with parents and school staff to support students' holistic development. Evaluation and continuous improvement, as advocated by Nwosu (2018) and Ugwu (2021), ensure the effectiveness and quality of counselling services through outcome assessment, program evaluation, and ongoing professional development for counsellors. In summary, counselling services in private secondary schools, as underscored by various researchers over the years, play a vital role in creating a supportive and nurturing environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

### CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

When the issue of education today is raised, the strands of thought that ready comes to mind are; decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass production syndrome and the like before any other thing else. This calls for an in-dept study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholders in the education system or how their actions and inactions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of education in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1979) defined education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives, that is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee national direction or both.

According to Harbison (2023), education is necessary for any economy to grow and develop via the amelioration of illiteracy rate by developing the knowledge, skill or character of the people. According to him, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else. Therefore, education quality is seen as what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. The essence of quality education is to ensure that students achieve good learning outcome and acquire skills and values that enable them live a good and normal life so that they can contribute positively to the development of their society (EFA, 2015).

### CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Ryan (2015) states that educational accountability is a fundamental right of citizens in a democratic society serving the public interest. However, the concept of “accountability” has been defined differently in theory and in practice and is seldom explicitly elucidated. Kuchapski (2018) notes that although accountability is pervasive as a tool of educational reform, the term is not clear. Furthermore, Burke (2024) argues that accountability is the most advocated and least analyzed word in higher education. Burke poses several questions: Who is accountable to whom, for what purposes, for whose benefit, by which means, and with what consequences?

Newmann, King and Rigdon (2017) define accountability as a process by which school districts and states (or other constituents such as parents) attempt to ensure that schools and school systems meet their goals. To Frymier (2016), accountability is linked to evaluation to be accountable means to be responsible; assessing responsibility involves judging performance against a criterion; judging performance against a criterion means to evaluate; therefore, accountability requires evaluation. The basic form of accountability is “the acceptance or responsibility and being answerable of one’s actions. It has been used, moreover, synonymously with concepts such as transparency, liability and answerability. In addition, Perie, Park and Klau (2007) define accountability as a system that allows the public to understand how well their schools are working and to provide information to policymakers on the changes that are needed to make the schools more effective and to continually improve all students’ educational opportunities.

In this paper, accountability occurs when policies and practices work to provide good education and to correct problems as they occur. Thus, it leads to “high-quality practice” and “positive outcomes” by minimizing malpractice. Accountability must be reciprocal. In other words,

just as students are held accountable of their learning, institutions and states should be held accountable for equipping them with the resources needed for learning. Accountability is a “mechanism for measuring the effectiveness of educational institutions in advancing learning and how the needed support is given to ensure that educational institutions become more effective. The purpose of accountability has shifted from financial and input based accountability to quality of education, system and organizational productivity and efficiency. The purpose of accountability then, is the improvement of institutional effectiveness and student learning.

### **CONCEPT OF TRANSPARENCY**

Transparency International (2016) defines transparency as the clarity of the regulations and procedures within the organization on one hand, and between the organization and the citizens using their services on the other hand. This includes open procedures, goals and targets in the work of the institution. It also includes ensuring the right of citizens to obtain the necessary information. Florini (2018) shows that transparency is contrary to secrecy. Secrecy means to hide actions intentionally and deliberately. Cotterel (2019) defines transparency as an instrument which provides information on the facts that concern the public, the ability of citizens to participate in political decisions, and the responsibility of the government in the legal process. Toukhi (2024) defined it as commitment to clarity in doing business with supervision and accountability.

Transparency is one of the most important attributes of an open approach to teaching and learning. In fact, the phrase ‘open and transparent’ is likely a more correct description of openness as described in this chapter than is ‘open and distance.’ That is because open and transparent are both value-laded adjectives better contrasted with standardized and opaque whereas distance is better contrasted with face-to-face. One of the ways that all forms of education can become more transparent is the connection among the various dimensions. For example, if a mission statement declares that open-mindedness is part of the mission of an educational program, a transparent organization would point to specific assessments, teaching processes, or learning tasks that directly support that statement. Absent that, the institution is implying that it does not want to be held accountable for actually achieving that purpose or goal. Allowing for free sharing of ideas and openly reporting outcomes and results of activities are behaviors that are consistent with open education. Education becomes more transparent by allowing stakeholders to easily be able to see its decision making and strategic planning processes.

### **DIMENSIONS OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION**

Like educational concepts, the application of the concept of transparency and accountability in education requires the recognition of the dimensions, areas of application and the limits of this application. It was shown by Al-Otaibi (2019) the dimensions of transparency and accountability in education are: Clarity, openness, accuracy, ease of access to information; and participation in decisions which are made between the various administrative levels, not inconsistent with the supreme public interest. Transparency and accountability in education does not require the disclosure of secrets that could affect the security of the state or individuals.

Education with transparency and accountability must include clarity of information, participation in decision-making followed by accountability for achieving results (Ramzi, 2023). Transparency and accountability in education includes a range of dimensions: Management of information, administration and communication, participation, and accountability (Toukhi, 2024). Clarity of information and participation in decision-making contribute to the employees’ sense of belonging to the organization as participants in the decision-making, as it makes them feel the importance of their opinions by providing the information they need, thus allowing them to make proposals relating to the success of the work. Applying transparency and accountability in education helps employees actively participate to develop and build self-reliance in achieving a better quality of performance by focusing on quality and increasing productivity at work.

An important aspect of transparency and accountability in education is that it works to

reduce ambiguity and uncertainty. It contributes to eradicate corruption and ambiguity of legislation. Its existence helps the empowerment of decisions issued from outside and inside the organization. It contributes to achieve the public's rights to understanding and knowledge through their participation, and helps them to understand the management of the internal data operations. Transparency is also concerned in educating citizens and informed them of the options available. It works as well in facilitating performance assessments (Tasha, 2017). It must be noted that applying transparency and accountability in education faces obstacles which vary depending on the nature of the organization, and the degree of awareness of officials and individuals. Despite the importance of participating in decision-making in the organization, this participation must be within specific controls, to give an opportunity for management to take the appropriate decision, which fits with the existing data in the enterprise.

#### **PROBLEMS OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION**

**Proliferation of Educational Institutions:** The official provision made in the National Policy on Education (FGN 2014) mandated the Government to encourage private efforts in the provision of education in the country. Moreso, owing to the high demand for education by parents, it does not take a long time for newly established educational institutions to grow and develop. According to Nwakaego (2017), it is becoming customary to operate an educational institution in every household. currently, educational institutions are located in various places and buildings and premises of some industrial and business organizations, church premises, residential buildings some part or the whole of which are hired for use as schools (Ejeh, 2016). The flip side of this proliferation of educational institutions is that, the issue of standard and “regulations” have been waved off. The end result is that the young minds are offered “substandard” and “irregular” education that cannot breed egalitarianism and self-reliant individuals of the society and leaders of tomorrow.

**Quality and Qualification of Teachers:** The quality of the teachers determines the strength of any educational system and the value of the learners (Okoro, 2014). In Nigerian educational institutions today, the teacher quality is generally low. It is only a few of the schools especially those owned by educational institutions, private companies and wealthy individuals that can afford to engage the services of university graduate teachers and holders of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) qualifications, competent and committed teachers and are also capable of retaining such teachers. Most others employ a few NCE teachers (if any at all), who are usually underpaid, while others employ mainly Grade Two teachers and secondary school leavers with school Certificate or General Certificate (ordinary level) qualification. In a situation where most of the teachers in our educational institutions are unqualified and/or unprofessional, effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved.

**In-effective Supervision of educational Institutions:** No educational plan however excellent it may be, can be effectively implemented if the school supervision is ineffective. State Ministry of Education officials are in principle, supposed to visit and inspect the physical plant, the human and other resources available in a proposed school and if these are found to be adequate, the ministry would approve the school for operation. In most cases these visits are made a long time after the school had become operational and had been paying the prescribed taxes. The same is true in regard to teachers in nursery schools. Some of the people employed to teach the in schools are neither trained to teach nor do they know how to handle or relate to children.

**Funding /Constrains:** The gross under funding of the educational sector in the country in general and the neglect of the maintenance of the physical facilities. Instructional and living conditions have deteriorated in many of these schools, class- rooms, libraries and laboratories are nothing to write home about, all leading to decline in academic standards. Attention must be

focused on these areas too if these educational institutions are to get out of the woods and this is only possible through adequate funding. Since 1986 when the federal military government introduced the structural adjustment programme SAP, allocation of financial resource started to fall coupled with the consistent decline in the value of local currency till date. Which have also consistently affected the procurement of imported technical and scientific equipment, books, journals and other instructional needs in the educational system. Education system in Nigeria today, needs a total overhauling and restructuring, this reform is required to improve the performance of higher education in the country, the nation entered the 21st century insufficiently prepared to cope or compete in the global economy, where growth will be based even more heavily on technical and scientific knowledge (World Bank 1994). It is also a well-known fact that the inadequacies always observed among many undergraduates and graduates alike is as a result of the inadequacies associated with the primary and the secondary education system in Nigeria. It is however pertinent for the government of the day to design a suitable guidelines for funding education. For instance, UNESCO has recommended that 26% of the total budget of a nation should be allocated to education. But Longe Commission of 1991 observed that the percentage of recurrent budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria has never exceeded 10%. Though, the system is expensive to keep afloat, quality however in any form is partly a function of the total fund made available to the system and judiciously utilized for the purpose to which it is meant for. Funds are required and necessary to maintain both the human and material resources of the system in order to achieve desired goals.

**Infrastructure Provision and Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings:** A shortage of space currently exists in all the sub-sectors of the educational system. The expansion of the education system, mainly through the introduction of universal primary education, has put pressure on education facilities that did not expand at the same rate as the school population. The existing buildings are in a state of decay due to lack of maintenance and repair. The present conditions of buildings impact negatively on the quality of education offered. Such conditions have encouraged a brain drain of teaching and administrative personnel out of education to other sectors of the economy or out of the country. Dilapidated school environments contribute to the high dropout of learners from school. The amount of funding needed for new buildings is high and the estimated cost of the rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure is even higher. The need for provision of adequate education facilities at all levels of education is urgent.

**Inadequate teaching staff and Poor quality of teaching staff:** A big challenge to the attainment of quality education in Nigeria is the lack of academic staff. According to Coombs (2020), teachers are the hub of any educational system. Teachers determine the quality of education because they transmit educational policies into practice and action. As rightly pointed out by Ukeje, (2016) without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in our schools, we cannot have good education and without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully, the challenges of a changing world. Ajayi (2017) seems to concur with the above when he noted that good teachers are needed for good education which in turn is indispensable for social change, social transformation and national development. The importance of teachers cannot be over emphasized.

**Lack of information communication technology facilities:** Another challenge to education in Nigeria is lack of information communication technology facilities in schools. As part of her education reform effort Nigerian government adopted information communication technologies in all levels of education since information communication technology integration in educational practices is meant to improve teaching and learning, enhance higher education research, enhance collaboration among peers and improve quality of education. Unfortunately, most institutions in the country, there is acute short of computers, multi-media projectors, electronic white boards, and automation of lecture halls and lecturers offices. Even majority of the institutions are not

linked with functional internet connectivity. According to Resnick, (2018) these new digital technologies make possible a learning revolution in education. As rightly noted by Onuma, (2017) information and communication technologies could be used to prepare lesson plan, collect data and analyze students' achievement.

**Cultism and other vices:** A big challenge to education in institutions in Nigeria is the increasing activities of secret cult groups, kidnappers and other vices. The higher education institutions in Nigeria are under siege barded and almost ruined by secret cults (Onoyase and Onoyase 2015). As a result of the activities of cult groups and kidnappers' majority of students, lecturers and their families live in perpetual fear. Some of these cult groups indulge in arm robbery, rape, assassination and infrastructure destruction. They cheat in the examination openly and threaten lecturers when caught.

**Unstable Staff:** As for teaching staff in Nigeria school today, the problem is no longer that of unavailability, but that of instability. This does not help the development of the education system. Because of the comparatively poorer conditions of service of teachers in the Nigeria society, the tendency for many teaching in the nation's school today, as was the case with their predecessors in later colonial and independent Nigeria, is to use the teaching profession as a stepping stone to other highly esteemed and more attractive jobs.

**Inadequate Classroom Accommodation:** in a majority of Nigeria schools, the classroom accommodation is grossly inadequate. As a result of the large enrolments in these schools, the classrooms are usually overcrowded, with up to sixty or more students receiving instructions in classroom designed for only thirty or, forty students. In most cases, the chairs and desk are not enough; you see them sharing chairs, standing up, or sitting on windows or broken desk!

**Scarcity and Prohibitive Cost of Book:** Again, SAP and FEM have adversely affected the production, distribution and cost of books in Nigeria. The implication of a weak Naira for the book production/distribution industry is that the production cost of each book would be higher than before. It does not matter whether the books are imported or produced locally. If imported, the cost of buying them in Europe or America and the cost of transporting them to Nigeria would be very high. If they are printed locally (i.e in Nigeria), the cost of importing raw materials (paper, ink a related printed materials) would still be high, shooting up the overall production cost.

**Examination Malpractice:** Intense competition for access to the system has led to widespread cheating in examinations for the purpose of obtaining higher scores to improve the chances of gaining admission to the next level of education. Cheating takes place in all areas for which examinations are required. Legislation has been passed to discourage this behavior, but enforcement has not been effective in addressing this problem. Another factor contributing to examination malpractice is the early channeling of students into specific areas of study based on examination scores. The literature that raises questions about the benefits of channeling students at an early stage needs to be taken into serious consideration. Other issues that need to be addressed in channeling processes are problems relating to factors such as inequities in the provision of education and the uneven quality of education offered – especially in situations where the future welfare of individuals may be determined.

**Exploitation and Educational Standard:** A close assessment of activities in schools have revealed that, students are made to suffer undue amount of exploitation by school heads at both private and public schools in the name of enrolment fees and assurances of success in their examination and this they do in collaboration with the ministry officials who are supposed to inspect and monitor activities in school to ensure standard compliance. Despite the fact that most of the schools lack basic learning facilities and a complete set of teachers, in some cases,

a school with the services of an English Language teacher will lack that of a Mathematics teacher.

**Poor Parenting/Guidance:** Parenting entails caring, protection, guidance, provision of basic needs for a child up keep in order for him or her to be properly equipped to meet with the challenges of life, in accordance with the laws of the land. In desperation, many parents have decided to bring in additional innovation by way of not only involve in encouraging, but also finance activities in and around examination venues to effect malpractices in order to brighten the chance of their children or ward in qualifying examination to higher institutions and some even progress on this act through the tertiary level of education.

**Poverty and fall in Standard:** Acquisition of education knowledge is supposed to help us fight against poverty, ignorance and disease. The process of acquiring this well desired knowledge has gradually turned money spinning venture for many of those in dire need of the knowledge and skill. It is not a source of exploitation from the service seekers with little or no consideration for quality of service rendered and facilities on ground, and made an offer for the highest bidder. A trend which has cut across all levels of education, from nursery school to tertiary institution. The concept, "poverty", refers to a situation and process of serious deprivation or lack of resources and materials necessary for living within a minimum standard conducive for human dignity and well being (NEST, 2022).

**Politicization Education:** The politicization of education is another major problem of educational development in Nigeria today. In an attempt to catch up with their counterparts, many states in Nigeria, particularly the new ones, indulge in the opening and running of many educational institution, even when they are least prepared to do so, this result in the lowering of standards and in various educational projects collapsing mid-way.

**Inadequate Research Development:** Everyone who cherish genuine growth and sustainable development- Government, private and corporate organization, non-governmental organization and individuals should as a matter of due responsibility encourage and finance research programmes", inventions and mass production of invented products as a way of discouraging prospective students from indulging in any form of academic irregularities, who may not have seen anything good or meaningful on the part of those who have been hardworking and creative, research and invention wise in terms of reward for their effort.

## **ROLE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES IN ENHANCING EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Counselling services, as elucidated by Adekunle (2017) and Okonkwo (2019), wield a profound influence on education sector reforms within secondary schools, impacting various facets of student development and institutional dynamics. Firstly, they bolster academic achievement and performance by furnishing students with crucial academic support, study skills, and goal-setting strategies, concurrently curbing dropout rates through targeted interventions and mentorship programs, as discussed by Okafor (2016) and Eze (2020). Secondly, they nurture personal development and well-being by offering essential emotional support and coping mechanisms, nurturing resilience and bolstering self-esteem among students, as highlighted by Nwosu (2018) and Ugwu (2021). Moreover, they play a pivotal role in fostering career readiness and facilitating smooth transitions post-graduation by guiding students through career exploration and providing comprehensive transition support, as advocated by Chukwu (2017) and Obi (2022).

Importantly, counselling services also contribute significantly to shaping the school climate and culture by fostering positive relationships, mediating conflicts, and cultivating a culture of respect and cooperation within the school community, as emphasized by Onyeka (2019) and Nnamdi (2020). Addressing mental health concerns is another critical area where

counselling services excel, providing timely interventions, promoting mental health awareness, and destigmatizing mental health issues, as discussed by Adekunle (2017) and Okonkwo (2019). Furthermore, they foster parent and community engagement through informative workshops, seminars, and collaborative partnerships, enhancing parental involvement and extending support networks for students, as outlined by Okafor (2016) and Eze (2020). Lastly, counselling services engage in data-informed decision-making processes, conducting program evaluations, needs assessments, and data analysis to drive evidence-based interventions and continuous improvement efforts, as advocated by Nwosu (2018) and Ugwu (2021). Overall, counselling services in secondary schools serve as catalysts for transformative change, championing student success, well-being, and holistic development within the educational landscape.

Addressing the challenges in implementing counselling services within education sector reforms is crucial for fostering student well-being and academic success. Adekunle (2017) highlights limited resources, such as inadequate funding and staffing, which hinder the provision of comprehensive counselling support in schools. Okonkwo (2019) underscores the pervasive stigma surrounding mental health issues and counselling services, which deters students from seeking help and accessing support. High student-to-counsellor ratios overwhelm counsellors, compromising the quality of care they can provide and hindering individualized support (Okafor, 2016). Additionally, insufficient training and professional development opportunities for counsellors limit their effectiveness in addressing students' diverse needs (Eze, 2020). Cultural and linguistic barriers further impede communication and access to counselling services for students from diverse backgrounds (Nwosu, 2018). Resistance to change among stakeholders, including school administrators and educators, may impede the integration of counselling services into school policies and practices (Ugwu, 2021). Furthermore, inadequate data collection and evaluation mechanisms hinder efforts to assess the effectiveness of counselling programs and advocate for additional resources (Chukwu, 2017). Accessibility barriers, such as limited counselling office hours and transportation issues, pose challenges for students in accessing counselling services, particularly in rural or underserved areas (Obi, 2022). Finally, confidentiality concerns may deter students from seeking counselling, emphasizing the importance of strict adherence to ethical guidelines (Onyeka, 2019). Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, educators, counsellors, and community stakeholders to prioritize and invest in counselling services as integral components of education sector reforms.

Counsellors should provide good models for the Nigeria youths to imitate. Worthy of emulation are good leaders like the Late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua who declared his assets before he was sworn in. Hence the role of counsellor, according to Onyeka (2019), includes: The counsellor should educate parents, school administrators, teachers and political leaders to lead by examples as youth are observing them or watching them so as to show the good example and lead them well by mentoring. The counsellor should also disseminate good information to the youth such as how to manage their time, to have value for human beings, to have vision in life, to cultivate good study habit, i.e. reading culture because readers are leaders. They should counsel youth to obey the rules and regulations as the future leaders and encourage them to work hard as a team, to imbibe the spirit of responsibility and accountability and to be transparent in all their doing. Counsellors in schools should ensure that all the prefects discharge their responsibilities faithfully according to the set standard of the institution.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, education is associated with accountability and transparency. Without education, it will be difficult to achieve accountability and transparency. However, insistence on formal education will place limitation available to individuals. The accountability and transparency will give individuals to acquire different skills to liberate from scourge of poverty. Technology has developed as a veritable tool to deliver education that has direct impact on the society. Thus,

technology is applied in delivering learning process that allows individuals to choose skills to learn rather than accepting a standard prescribed by policy makers and education practitioners. The role of the state is to establish the framework for accountability and transparency and the process through which institution can define the content of the accountability and transparency in line with national policy and objectives. The learning institutions should have the right to autonomy of accountability and transparency, which is important for the health of the institutions

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the problems transparency and accountability education in Nigeria, the following are recommended:

1. Counsellors should receive comprehensive training and ongoing professional development opportunities to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to address the diverse needs of students effectively.
2. Schools should foster collaboration between counsellors, teachers, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to student support and maximize resources for holistic student development.
3. Educational institutions should ensure equitable access to counselling services for all students, including those from marginalized backgrounds by implementing strategies such as outreach programs, mobile counselling units, or tele-counselling services.
4. Schools should establish systems for collecting and analyzing data on student needs, counselling interventions, and outcomes to inform evidence-based decision-making, program evaluation, and continuous improvement efforts.
5. Counselling services should implement culturally responsive practices that recognize and respect the cultural diversity of students and their families, ensuring that counselling services are accessible and relevant to all students.
6. Government of Nigeria should place high premium on education by meeting up the recommended 26% educational spending prescribed by UNESCO, to help revitalize the education system.
7. Enabling environment should be created for staff through improved conditions of service, provision of basic infrastructures, virtual libraries and information communication technologies and internet connectivity.
8. Institutions of learning in Nigeria should set up internal quality assurance and monitoring of lecture units to enhance good quality delivery.
9. Reform in existing education institutions in Nigeria can be promoted through deliberate collaborative efforts by government, business sectors, civil society and the academia. This could help to reinvent Nigerian education system for better quality delivery in research, teaching and community services.
10. To improve quality, teachers and non teaching staff should be motivated to make them more dedicated, devoted and committed and effective in their jobs.
11. Institutions of learning in Nigeria should employ more teachers to match the students' population. Institutional policies should be revised to ensure that more emphasis is paid on teaching effectiveness of lecturers for better quality education

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