

**COUNSELLOR'S COUNTER INSURGENCY AND THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT IN  
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E-mail: bolajioladejo2015@gmail.com****Abstract**

*Many decades ago, professional counsellors are deployed in schools across the country especially at secondary schools and higher level in order to provide guidance and counselling related roles such as social-personal, vocational, educational etc. For the past two decades, the country is erupted with the deadly activities of Boko Haram groups that believed strongly in the ideology that western education is evil. As such frequent attacks on the educational institutions, killing of students and their teachers, total destructions of facilities necessitated that professional counsellors are needed in schools in order to provide security counselling to students, teachers as a counter insurgency strategies to reduce the tempo of attacks and vulnerability of innocent victims. This was achievable though harnessing the professional skills and techniques of counsellors such as probing, interrogation of issues, analysis and coming out with decisive predictions to safe guide lives and school properties in the Northeast Nigeria as a model for low risk schools in the country. This paper examined the limitation of counsellors on the fields, interrogated the new roles of security counselling as counter insurgency strategies for 21 century schools. The paper made recommendations that could better education counsellors.*

**Keywords: Counsellors, Counter insurgency, School environment, Northeast Nigeria**

**Introduction**

Education is a global instrument for transforming one generation to another to better informed and well socialized citizens. Counselling is an integral part of education that supports the educational goal for actualization in schools. Counselling job is based on the assumptions that everybody in the society has had problems that he or she could not resolve by themselves. Accordingly, as expressed by Makinde (1979), guidance and counselling is based on the assumption that every individual in any society has had, is having and will have a problem that he alone could not solve which calls for help from a professional giver. The counsellor is a person that takes time to understand the feelings, worries, aspirations and expectancy of others in order to offer gainful assistance that are clients oriented to solve the identified problems or gaps. This is possible based on the educational qualification attained by counsellors. According to the American Counselling Association (1997), counselling is the art and science of interpersonal and theory based used in helping profession. The primary focus of counselling is to help in solving developmental and situational difficulties of an individual. For the past two decades of national life and development, Nigeria is confronted with the deadly attacks of insurgents in the Northeast and gradually spreading to other part of the country in difficult dimension such as banditry, kidnapping, communal clashes etc. All these activities or insecurity had direct and indirect impact on the school system and the students. The frequent attack on schools has distorted the normal flow of academic calendar of some states like Borno, Yobe, Adamawa etc.

According to Oladejo (2019) the school going children has suffered different degrees of injuries as a result of attack on them, deformation of physical body either to landmines, bullet attacks and crossfire. According to Ugwumba and Odom (2014), education is under attack because of high incident of violence against students, teachers and educational facilities in Nigeria. More so, the report of the United Nation children fund UNICEF (2015) was that more than 2000 schools are closed across Nigeria. Also, Uzoechina (2015) expressed that Basic schools in Borno state had experienced several attacks from the insurgent group. According to Vanguard May 9, 2019 report, the devastating effects of nine year of insurgency attacks on Northeast school buildings, teachers, and students have brought education in that zone backward.

The realization of universal basic educational goals and objectives will remain a dream if all relevant stakeholders in the business of education do not revisit and examine their functions and responsibilities in the face of insurgency to develop new proactive strategies to curb the impacts of insurgency on the educational system. It is in the light of this initiative, that the roles and responsibilities of school counsellors in the Northeast need to be expanded to provide security counselling to students, teachers and the community in order to collectively nip the issue of insecurity to the bud. The aim of this paper is to examine the roles of schools counsellors and schools environment in the face of insurgency with a view of producing solutions to reduce the impact of attacks on students, staff and educational environments through security counselling as conceptualized and developed by the author of this paper.

### **The School Counsellor**

A school counsellor is a person that has been trained in the art and science of assisting individual with different degree of developmental and situational issues especially the school age students as subject of discussion. School counsellors have different certification depending on educational attainment; the least certification is National Certificate in education (NCE) and up to Ph.D. Due to immense contributions and recognition of strategic roles of professional counsellors in the development of national characters and manpower for the nation. In 1977, National Policy on Education which was revised in 1981 stated the government endorsed its total commitment for the true cause of counselling development in Nigeria as a welcome development. Thus, the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post primary institutions (NPE, 1981). The school counsellor is a person that understands other people feeling and appreciates their level of aspiration and challenges that uses he/her professional skills to put the clients through a process, identifying the issues, develop insight and best possible ways of resolving the concerns.

### **Understanding Counter-Insurgency**

Counter-Insurgency (COIN) is defined by the United State Department of state as comprehensive civilian and military effort taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. Counter insurgency frequently referred to by the acronym COIN is the combination of measures undertaken by a government to defeat an insurgency. Effective counter insurgency integrates and synchronized political, security, legal, development and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents while bolstering the government legitimate in the eyes the population (Guild to the Analysis of Insurgency, 2012). The definition by Guild to the Analysis of Insurgency 2012 do not considered education as a key element in its effort on counter insurgency, the author of this paper identify education as a key element in counter insurgency efforts, for it to be productive.

### **Understanding Security Counselling**

According to Albert (2003), security is when the individual or a group may pursue its goals without disruption or harm and without fear of disorder or injury. Also, Zabadi (2005) opined that security has low probability damage to acquired values. British Association for Counselling (1986) expressed that counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth and the optimal development of personal resources. Makinde (1985) asserted that counselling is an enlightened process whereby people help by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self-understanding.

Security counselling is defined by the author of this paper as deem applicable to subject of discussion as the systemic approach to help individual or group of people to have better understanding of oneself, themselves and their environment to take practical steps to prevent or navigate threats to life or properties. School Counselling has very difficult tasks to handle in schools. Counsellor considering the different

socio-cultural background of students they have to attend to, student issues or needs concern ranges from personal, social, vocational, empowerment, educational concerns etc. Brammer and Egan (1993) expressed that counselling involves both choice and change, evolving through distinct stages such as exploration, goals setting and action. In Nigeria, school counsellors help student in the following thematic areas: Personal Counselling, Social Counselling, Vocational Counselling, Empowerment Counselling and Educational Counselling

**i. Personal Counselling:** This interaction assists school counsellor to help student to have better understanding of their developmental related challenges, and developed internal capacity to overcome issues especially in the face of insurgency that had impacted negatively on the personal relationship with their environment and growing nature. According to Pinsky (1949), boys and girls whose war experience, including family loss and separation, were compounded by other traumas and deprivations, including the witnessing of murder, homelessness, hunger, persecution and direct involvement in violent activities the assertion is a clear evident of day to day experience of millions of internally displaced children in Northeast.

**ii. Social Counselling:** The insurgency in the Northeast has caused mental, emotional, psychological and physical illness to many students is imperative that school counsellor interaction will help them in a new constructs of mind-set and behaviours toward others. Straker (1987), in a study conducted on war and children noted that under these conditions, the post-traumatic stress disorder has ceased to hold meaning for the black South African child victims of political violence, who should rather be seen as suffering from a continuous stress syndrome.

**iii. Vocational Counselling:** It is the dream of students to finish their study and attain a profession that will add values to their lives and their communities, the avert of insurgency in the region has distorted these process, it is important for school counsellor to ensure that students remain focus and resettled on their dreams of choice of vocations.

**iv. Empowerment of Student through Counselling:** Students in the Northeast have suffered a lot of psychological effects as a result of insurgency, confidence building, sustainability of self-esteems and courage should be the intention of school counsellor.

**v. Educational Counselling:** Schools and students in the Northeast have witnessed different attacks by the insurgents, which made school no go area for many students and parents. The campaign against Western education as captured “Boko Haram” meaning western education is evil give close understanding why schools or educational institutions have been the soft target, schools are seem as representing state authority.

### **Harnessing Counselling Skills and Techniques**

It is important to state that professional counsellor possess the right skills and techniques that could be leverage on to expand their capabilities and carryout need identified roles in counter insurgency in the Northeast Nigeria, and preventive measures in other parts of the country, the following are skills and techniques of a professional counsellor: Active Listening Skills, Ability to understand verbal and non-verbal communication of human being, Building Rapport unconditionally, Focusing on issues and reflective Questioning and Probing Skills and Summarising Skills.

1. Active Listening Skills and techniques in probing of students needs or concerns will assist counsellor to have better insight into the feeling of anxiety expressed over their parents, sibling, classmates that have accepted undesirable behaviours or friends that has become concerns to the students. An appropriate step could be taken by the counsellor and the school authority to challenge undesirable behaviour either on the part of the students or the school as well, for example a student that notices that another student is in the possession of weapon could call the attention of school counsellor through body gesture.

2. Ability to understand verbal and non-verbal communication expressed by the students towards the teacher or school authority, it takes special training to decode such details, the students might not be in position to speak out non-verbal communication could save the entire school in the face of danger or intend attacks. According to Aristotle (384.B.C), expressed that communication as the use of available resources to find a way to encourage other express their ideas and opinions.

3. School counsellor as part of counter insurgency strategies must build rapport unconditionally with the students; he/she must know the students and those that could be a potential threats to the school.
4. Counter-Insurgency strategies is a lot more, school counsellor must be on his/her toes always focusing on student rational and irrational issues presented, identities to understand the reflective and environmental changes that might be impacted on the behaviours, with a view of making good decision that will best for the interest of the entire school system.
5. In Counter-Insurgency measures, school counsellor could use questioning skills and provide techniques to understand challenges that might occurred over a period of time in the lives of students establishing induce with the present to drawn inference on it. Studies have shown that armed conflict in Afghanistan, Gaza, and Sierra-Leone points to conflicted related, posted traumatic stress disorder for many school age students.
6. The presentation of behaviours, strange face or notice of unfamiliar development or objects within or outside the school environment, need further interrogation by the school counsellor to make definite summary that could be useful for generating good intelligence for actionable agencies for possible assistance to present attacks in the school. Impact of insurgency on school students in the Northeast Nigeria includes the following;
  - (1) Destruction of smooth flow of academic calendar.
  - (2) Disabuse the mind-set of students towards educational environment as a killing range.
  - (3) Disvalue the interest of students on schooling.
  - (4) Teachers didn't see school as a safe environment to contribute to learning.
  - (5) Degrading the manpower needed for future engagement especially in the northeast region.

### **Interrogating the Current School Environment via the Insurgency Activities**

The general state of most schools in the country makes it vulnerable to attack and thereby increasing insecurity of educational facilities. Most school are without parameter fence, no security post, when it exists no manpower to provide physical security in the school, when the world trade centre was attacked, the American reviewed their security plans of their schools to ensure safety and security of their words. According to the U. S Department of Defence (2002), prescribes that the design of specific related measures, site design for security involves the integration of general planning tasks, such as building placement and parking and site infrastructure planning with security need. The development called for rethinking of security. Over the past two decades, schools have been target of multiple attacks; best practice could be leverage on as provided by the America security review on their school system.

Professional Counsellors have been performing their traditional responsibilities over the decades, which centred mostly on primarily in providing social, educational, vocational counselling etc. The recent development in Nigeria which is outbreak of insurgency over the past two decades in Nigeria has calls for strategic expansion of the roles of professional school counsellors to redeploy their unique counselling skills and techniques to enhance the services delivery of school counselling as counter-insurgency strategies.

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SITE DESIGN FOR SECURITY

Figure 2-20:  
Protective barrier located on the property line to provide required standoff and onsite parking within the protected area  
SOURCE: FEMA 430

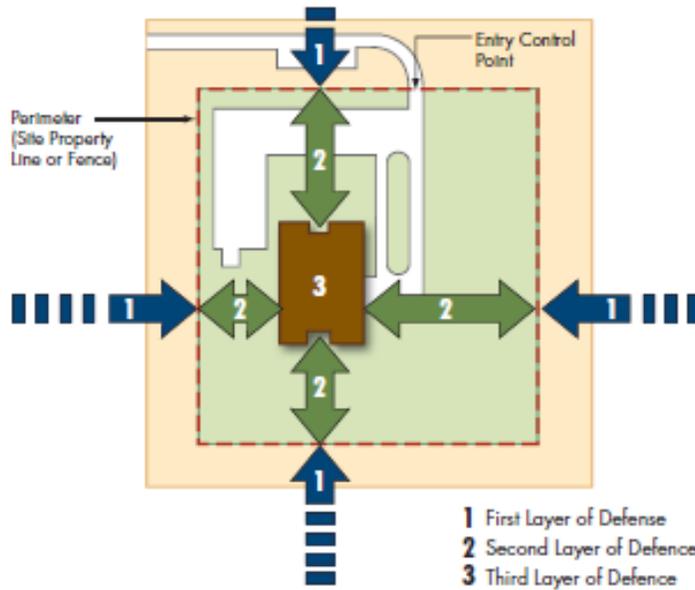
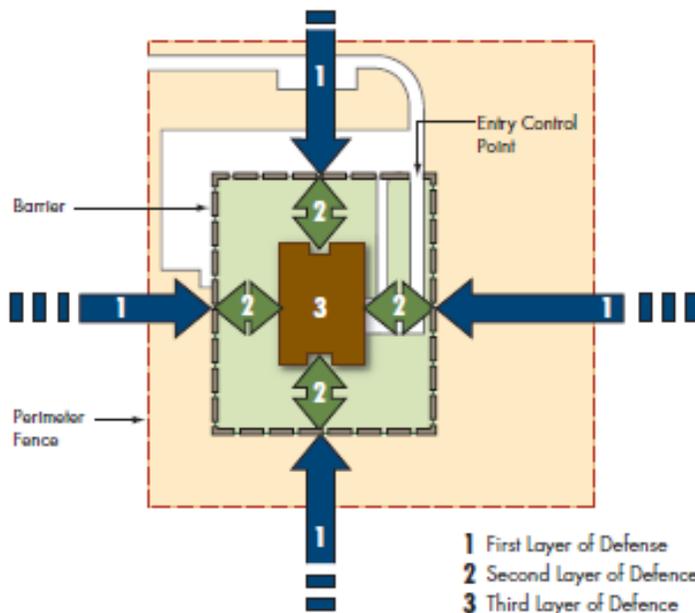


Figure 2-21:  
Protective barrier located within the site providing minimum standoff  
SOURCE: FEMA 430



The above diagram re emphasised security indicators that could further protect schools and it is environment against threats or reduce the impact on students, teachers and neighbouring community.

**The Need for Security Counselling in Schools**

The need for safe school through security counselling in the face of protracted insecurity engulfed the Northeast part of Nigeria cannot be over emphasised. The unending circle of insecurity across the nation ,necessitates the inclusion of security counselling in the functions or other areas of counselling branches

to further expand the scope of counselling services offers in schools, family and development studies. The experience of September 11, 2001, four schools and three high schools located within blocks of the World Trade Centre were just beginning classes when the first plane hit the North Tower, thousands of children were exposed to the dust, clouds from the collapsing and many experience a great deal of anxiety (Karen & Howard, 2002).

### **When School Comes Under Attacks**

The school counsellor has the responsibility to provide handful security information to students, staff and the entire school community on counter insurgency strategies as follows:

- a. Identify a safe and protective object in the school environment that could reduce impact of attack on students.
- b. Train students to go flat on ground and observe directions of attack, to avoid running into directions of attackers.
- c. Train students to judge accurately time to leave unsafe environment to already identify safe alternative.
- d. Train students on voice identification to avoid attack.
- e. Train students on agreed coded words which meaning is collectively understood for example stone could jointly understood as MOVE ON MY FRIEND.
- f. Develop mutual relationship with security agencies.
- g. Active communication channels.
- h. Sustainability of periodic security counselling for students on assembly ground, classroom session, and interpersonal.

The Counter-Insurgency effort of school counsellor will add value to millions of efforts out there by different government agencies to ensure all have a safe society. Osakwe and Umoh (2013) expressed that theoretically counter insurgency is a term used to explain the various techniques and theories that relate to the prevention and suppression of armed insurgencies. School counsellors can use cognitive construct theory to disabuse the mind-set of students against irrational thought for support, sympathy and joining the insurgents. Application of frustration-aggression theory by Dollard (1939) expressed that “aggression is always a consequence of frustration” school age going students in the Northeast Nigeria are already frustrated and over whelmed by attack, loss of love one, families members, teachers and total destructions of the school. It is imperative that school counsellors support the students with psychological support through coping strategies to navigate these difficult times.

### **Overview the Roles Responsibilities of School Counselling in the Face of Insurgency**

As the saying goes, that “Necessity is the mother of invention” According to an English Language proverb. Similarly, According to the Yoruba proverbs which says “ **Ti orin bati yi pada, ijo na a yi pada**” “meaning when the music change, the dance step equally change” this wisdom of our fathers underscore that, the functions and responsibilities of professional school counsellors need to undergo reinventions to strategically remain relevant and the back born of students confidence, trusted confidants in the current face of danger of unprecedented attacks by the insurgency, schools counsellors need to fully exploit all learnt skills and use it to makes it possible to interfere, analysis clients level of unconsciousness ,dream analysis, intra/inter conflict to curb to the entire school management possible victim of insecurity. According to security expert Nwolise (2016), Terrorism is essentially a battle of ideas, these ideas are passed from generation to generation, to kill ideas is not an easy matter, and definitely ideas are not killed by bullets alone. This assertion places the functions of school counsellor to provide counter insurgency.

### **Conclusion**

Counselling services have over the years yielded positive results in the educational system, solving a lot of students day - to - day counselling needs. The protracted insurgency war on educational institutions across the Northeast has called for expansion of counselling services provided in schools, the author of

this paper is of the submission that the introduction of security counselling in schools will assist significantly to create security education, develop capacity to better inform on insecurity and how to prevent, navigate threats especially those directed towards educational facilities.

### Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Institutions that offers counselling education should include security counselling into the curriculum in order to meet current society challenges
2. Felid counsellors should embrace the additional services of security counselling in all schools to prevent the impact of insurgency on students, staff and educational facilities.
3. School counsellor should deploy strategic counselling skills to help students not to lost faith in education which is a driver for future engagement.

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