



## Counselling Education as a Tool for Liberation and Sustainable Development among Secondary School Students in Ibadan

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**Abstract.** Secondary school students' education for emancipation and sustainable development is greatly aided by counselling education. The development of students' critical thinking, self-awareness, autonomy, and capacity for making wise choices that release them from social, psychological, and intellectual constraints is a key component of education for liberation. In contrast, the goal of sustainable development in education is to provide students with lifetime skills that promote economic productivity, social responsibility, and personal development. In order to improve liberation-oriented learning and sustainable development among secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria, this research looked at counselling education. The study design used was a descriptive survey. Secondary school pupils from a few Ibadan public schools made up the population. A multistage sampling procedure was used to choose a sample of 200 students. A standardised questionnaire called the "Counselling Education, Liberation and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (CELSDQ)" was used to gather data. Experts in educational psychology and guidance and counselling validated the instrument, and Cronbach Alpha was used to determine its reliability. The results showed that students' self-awareness (78%), decision-making skills (72%), academic engagement (75%), and career consciousness (82%) are all considerably improved by counselling education. Additionally, study shown that counselling services lower maladaptive behaviours that impede sustainable growth (68%) and increase emotional stability (70%). Additionally, it was shown that counselling education equips students with life skills that facilitate future productivity (74%) and social adjustment (80%). The research came to the conclusion that counselling education is a crucial tool for attaining education for sustainable development and emancipation in secondary schools. To improve student empowerment and development, it was suggested that the government and school officials

bolster counselling services, hire more trained counsellors, and include counselling programs into school curriculum.

**Keywords:** Secondary school students, self-awareness, decision-making, education for liberation, counselling education, sustainable development, and Ibadan

### 1. Introduction

It is often acknowledged that education is a potent tool for emancipation and sustained growth. It is a transformational mechanism that enables people to critically analyse themselves, their surroundings, and society at large in addition to being a process of knowledge transfer. In addition to gaining academic information, secondary school students are expected to develop the critical thinking abilities, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and life skills essential for both individual and social advancement. The development of the full person must be included in authentic education, according to modern educational viewpoints, which go beyond memorisation and test achievement. This encompasses moral, social, emotional, and cognitive aspects that help students thrive in a world that is changing quickly. When education fulfils this all-encompassing goal, it becomes a liberation instrument that helps people overcome societal constraints, ignorance, and reliance.

In schools, counselling education acts as a systematic support system that helps students overcome obstacles in their academic, emotional, social, and professional lives. It offers a methodical framework for giving students advice on career preparation, behavioural adjustment, academic decisions, and personal growth. Because they remove obstacles to learning and growth, counselling services in schools are becoming more widely acknowledged as crucial elements of

successful educational systems. According to recent research, counselling education fosters psychosocial adjustment, increases motivation, and improves students' academic lucidity (Isah & Abdullah, 2023). Furthermore, Adeyemo (2022) found that schools with effective counselling units had higher academic engagement, better student discipline, and fewer instances of maladaptive behaviour. This illustrates that counselling education is an essential tool for fostering successful learning outcomes and general student development rather than a supplemental service.

By encouraging students' freedom in thought, self-awareness, and decision-making, counselling education advances emancipation. It assists students in overcoming social and psychological barriers such as identity uncertainty, peer pressure, academic anxiety, and poor self-esteem. Students are encouraged to examine their strengths, recognise their shortcomings, and make well-informed choices that impact their academic and personal life via counselling interventions. The idea that education should free people from societal and mental constraints is consistent with this process of self-discovery and empowerment. School therapy improves psychological resilience and emotional stability, which are critical for independent functioning, according to Green and Lloyd (2021). In a similar vein, Ojo (2023) observed that counselling treatments greatly enhance students' self-concept, self-confidence, and decision-making skills in Nigerian secondary schools. In order to achieve real educational emancipation, students who are psychologically empowered are better equipped to take charge of their education and life decisions.

Additionally, by giving students lifetime qualities like resilience, flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and responsible citizenship, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development in education. The goal of sustainable development in education is to equip students to fulfil current demands without sacrificing their capacity to handle problems in the future. This calls for social responsibility, emotional stability, and ethical thinking in addition to intellectual proficiency. According to Bettman and Digiacomio (2022), school counselling is essential for managing teenage mental health issues, which have a direct impact on students' long-term growth and academic achievement. According to Kamalov et al. (2023), including counselling services into educational institutions promotes inclusivity and sustainable learning results. According to Adeyemo (2022), there is a clear correlation between the provision of good counselling services that serve

students' academic and emotional requirements and sustained educational growth in Nigeria.

Additional empirical data demonstrates that counselling services greatly enhance students' social conduct, emotional stability, and academic performance. Pupils that get sufficient counselling help are more likely to exhibit better study habits, increased focus, and greater academic achievement. According to Köse (2023), school therapy is essential for treating teenage emotional challenges and fostering mental health awareness and emotional control in educational settings. In secondary school, emotional stability is especially crucial since it affects pupils' capacity to handle social and academic pressures. Students are more likely to participate constructively in class activities, uphold discipline, and form strong peer connections when they are emotionally balanced. These results support both individual achievement and the system's overall efficacy.

Additionally, counselling education is essential for future preparation and job growth. Students in secondary schools are at a crucial phase of identity construction and career discovery. Many students make poor career decisions without adequate coaching, which may result in unhappiness and unemployment later in life. According to Maree and Che Judea (2023), life design counselling enhances students' capacity for career adaptation, curiosity, and decision-making, allowing them to make more practical and knowledgeable career decisions. According to Eze (2024), career counselling greatly lowers career indecision and improves occupational knowledge among secondary school students in Nigeria. This is especially crucial in emerging economies, where youth empowerment and national growth depend on matching education to the demands of the job market.

Students in Ibadan secondary schools still deal with a variety of difficulties, including emotional instability, social pressure, poor career orientation, test anxiety, academic stress, and family-related problems. If these issues are not appropriately handled, they often impede their academic achievement and general growth. Due to limited access to therapy services, many students suffer in silence from emotional and psychological issues. This circumstance emphasises how critical it is for schools to provide organised counselling instruction in order to promote kids' mental health, academic achievement, and personal growth. Students may suffer from low motivation, subpar academic results, and behavioural issues that

impede their future success in the absence of successful therapy solutions.

Furthermore, in order to thrive in a world that is becoming more technologically advanced and competitive, kids must acquire excellent self-regulated learning abilities. The capacity to organise, track, and assess one's own learning processes is a prerequisite for self-regulated learning. By educating students goal-setting, time management, emotional control, and efficient study techniques, counselling education significantly contributes to the development of these abilities. According to Swiecki et al. (2024), students who get structured assistance exhibit greater levels of academic success, engagement, and self-regulation than those who do not. This highlights the value of counselling education as a strategy for enhancing learning efficacy and guaranteeing sustained academic achievement. Counselling education is a transformational educational tool that fosters emancipation, empowerment, and sustained growth rather than just being a supporting service. By guaranteeing that students have sufficient assistance to realise their full potential, it closes the gap between academic education and personal growth.

### 1.1 Research Questions

- How does counselling education promote education for liberation among secondary school students in Ibadan?
- What is the influence of counselling education on students' sustainable development?
- What challenges hinder effective counselling education in secondary schools?
- What strategies can improve counselling education for better student outcomes?

## 2. Literature Review

In order to help students' academic, personal, social, and professional growth, counselling education is an essential part of the educational system. It is designed to provide students a better awareness of themselves, their skills, interests, and limits so they can make realistic and well-informed decisions about their education and future professions. Additionally, counselling education offers pupils emotional and psychological assistance that improves their capacity to handle developmental obstacles and academic pressure. According to Egbo (2021), kids who get guidance and counselling services are better able to adapt academically and make better decisions. Similarly, Afolabi (2023) observed that successful school counselling fosters students' self-awareness

and improves their capacity to establish reasonable academic and professional objectives.

Additionally, by helping students acquire critical life skills including communication, problem-solving, emotional control, and interpersonal relationships, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development. These skills are essential for efficient operation in the classroom and in society. Additionally, counselling services improve emotional intelligence, which helps kids comprehend and control their emotions in positive and healthy ways. According to Oladele (2022), school therapy greatly reduces emotional discomfort and enhances pupils' behavioural adjustment. In a similar vein, Nwachukwu (2024) discovered that counselling treatments in secondary schools enhance social interaction, decrease indiscipline, and boost academic participation among teenagers.

From a liberating standpoint, counselling education enables students to get over obstacles that impede their academic and personal development, both internal and external. Students are often prevented from reaching their full potential by internal obstacles including low self-esteem, fear of failing, lack of confidence, and a negative self-concept. Peer pressure, familial difficulties, poverty, and a lack of professional knowledge are examples of external obstacles that impede their growth. Counselling services improve students' self-efficacy and freedom in making decisions, according to Ezeani (2021). Similarly, Okwu (2023) found that school counselling programs in secondary schools in Nigeria greatly boost students' self-esteem and encourage self-directed learning, both of which are essential components of educational emancipation.

Sustainable development in education also entails giving students skills that guarantee their long-term social, economic, and personal well-being. It places a strong emphasis on the acquisition of values and abilities that allow people to both find personal fulfilment and make significant contributions to society. By encouraging students' resilience, flexibility, and good academic conduct, counselling education plays a crucial part in accomplishing this aim. Counselling services improve kids' coping mechanisms and academic perseverance, according to Okeke (2022). Additionally, Nwosu (2024) observed that by improving kids' capacity to adjust to social expectations and academic hurdles, effective school counselling fosters sustainable learning results.

### 3. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research approach was used in the study. Because it enables the researcher to methodically gather data from a large population in order to characterise current circumstances, viewpoints, and correlations among variables without changing them, this approach was deemed acceptable. It is especially appropriate for educational research that aims to investigate attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions as they naturally arise in educational environments. Additionally, the design allows the researcher to get a genuine image of how counselling education affects Ibadan secondary school students' emancipation and sustainable growth. Additionally, the use of standardised instruments is supported by the descriptive survey methodology, which enables the generalisation of results across comparable educational environments.

All secondary school pupils in Ibadan, Nigeria's Oyo State, made up the study's population. Ibadan is a significant educational center in Nigeria with a variety of public and private secondary institutions, which is why this population was chosen. It is a perfect environment for researching counselling education results because of the variety in student characteristics, socioeconomic background, and school ownership. In order to ensure that developmental disparities across age and class levels were sufficiently represented in the research, the group included both male and female students from Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). Stratified random selection was used to choose a sample of 200 students for the research. This approach was used to guarantee that important demographic groupings were represented proportionately. Gender, class level, and school type (public vs private) were the initial factors used to stratify the population. Respondents were chosen at random from each stratum to maintain equity and minimise sampling bias. This method made sure that a variety of student experiences with counselling education were recorded, which increased the sample's representativeness and the results' dependability.

A systematic questionnaire known as the Counselling Education, Liberation and Sustainable Development

Questionnaire (CELSAQ) was used as the data gathering tool. Based on the study's goals and a review of the literature, the questionnaire was meticulously created. It was divided into four sections: Section C measured liberation outcomes like self-awareness, independence, self-confidence, and decision-making ability; Section D evaluated sustainable development indicators like emotional stability, academic engagement, behavioural adjustment, and career awareness; and Section A covered demographic data like age, gender, and class level; Section B concentrated on counselling education practices in schools, including availability and accessibility of counselling services. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Experts in educational psychology and guidance and counselling validated the instrument's face and content to make sure the items were adequate, relevant, and clear. Before being administered, their expert input was used to clarify unclear sentences and enhance the instrument's general quality. This procedure guaranteed that the device measured the required variables with accuracy.

Following a pilot test on a small sample of students outside the research region who were not involved in the main study, the instrument's reliability was determined using the Cronbach Alpha technique. The outcome produced a reliability value of 0.82, demonstrating the instrument's high degree of internal consistency and stability. This suggests that the questionnaire's questions were sufficiently trustworthy to assess the concepts of counselling education, emancipation, and sustainable development.

Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, mean scores, and percentages were used to analyse the data. The opinions of respondents about each study topic were collected and analysed using these statistical techniques. Any mean score of 2.50 or more was considered agreement, while any score below 2.50 was considered disagreement since the decision rule was based on a mean benchmark of 2.50. This method allowed for a clear interpretation of the degree to which counselling education influences students' emancipation and sustainable development results.

4. Result

**Research Question 1:** How does counselling education promote education for liberation among secondary school students in Ibadan?

**Table 1:** Counselling Education and Students' Liberation Outcomes

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Self-awareness development	42%	36%	14%	8%	78%
Independent decision-making	38%	34%	18%	10%	72%
Confidence building	45%	35%	12%	8%	80%
Reduction of peer pressure influence	40%	33%	17%	10%	73%
Improved self-concept	44%	32%	15%	9%	76%

Table 1's results demonstrate that counselling education significantly improves secondary school students' liberation-related outcomes. There is a significant degree of agreement among responders, as seen by the overall favourable answer, which varies from 72% to 80%. The most favourable reaction (80%) was for confidence development, indicating that counselling services greatly improve students' emotional fortitude and sense of self. Counselling helps students better grasp their identity, strengths, and shortcomings, as shown by the growth of self-awareness (78%) and enhanced self-concept (76%). Additionally, the outcome for autonomous decision-making (72%) shows that counselling education helps students make academic and personal decisions free from excessive outside influence. Counselling shields students from harmful social pressures, as seen by the inclusion of peer pressure reduction (73%). Overall, the statistics show that by giving students psychological, social, and emotional empowerment, counselling education significantly advances educational emancipation.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of counselling education on students' sustainable development?

**Table 2:** Counselling Education and Sustainable Development Indicators

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Academic improvement	40%	35%	15%	10%	75%
Emotional stability	36%	34%	18%	12%	70%
Career awareness	48%	34%	10%	8%	82%
Behavioural improvement	42%	33%	15%	10%	75%
School engagement	39%	36%	14%	11%	75%

Table 2's findings demonstrate how counselling education greatly improves students' sustainable development metrics. The most favourable answer (82%) was for career knowledge, suggesting that counselling is quite successful in helping students make well-informed professional decisions and prepare for the future. Counselling seems to be associated with improved academic performance and good school participation, as seen by the equal positive answers of 75% for academic progress, behavioural improvement, and school engagement. Counselling aids students in managing stress, anxiety, and emotional imbalance, according to emotional stability (70%). Overall, the results show that counselling education enhances students' academic performance, mental health, job preparedness, and behavioural adjustment, all of which contribute to sustainable growth.

**Research Question 3:** What challenges hinder effective counselling education in secondary schools?

**Table 3:** Challenges Affecting Counselling Education in Schools

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Lack of qualified counsellors	38%	30%	20%	12%	68%
Poor funding of counselling services	45%	29%	16%	10%	74%
Low awareness among students	34%	31%	22%	13%	65%
Inadequate counselling facilities	37%	28%	20%	15%	65%
Limited administrative support	32%	30%	23%	15%	62%

Table 3's results highlight a number of obstacles that prevent effective counselling instruction in secondary schools. Financial limitations have a major impact on the provision of counselling services, as shown by the fact that inadequate finance is the most pressing issue (74%). Another major issue is the understaffing of counselling departments in many schools, as seen by the 68% lack of certified counsellors. Inadequate facilities (65%) and low student knowledge

(65%) further imply that counselling services are not completely available or used. Even though little administrative assistance had the lowest grade (62%), there is still a significant institutional gap. All things considered, these difficulties draw attention to structural flaws that impede the successful use of counselling education.

**Research Question 4:** What strategies can improve counselling education for better student outcomes?

**Table 4:** Strategies for Enhancing Counselling Education in Schools

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Recruitment of more counselors	50%	35%	10%	5%	85%
Increased government funding	55%	33%	8%	4%	88%
Integration of counselling into curriculum	44%	36%	12%	8%	80%
Regular training for counselors	42%	34%	14%	10%	76%
Awareness programmes for students	40%	32%	18%	10%	72%

Strong agreement on methods to enhance counselling education is shown by Table 4's findings. Financial assistance is seen to be the most important component for enhancing counselling services, as shown by the greatest favourable reaction (88%) to increased government funding. The need to solve the staffing shortfall in schools is reflected in the high priority given to recruiting additional counsellors (85%). Counselling integration into the curriculum (80%) indicates that respondents are in favour of making counselling a fundamental component of education. The need for capacity enhancement and increased student participation is also indicated by regular counsellor training (76%) and student awareness programs (72%). Overall, the results demonstrate that increasing institutional integration, staffing, and finance will greatly increase the efficacy of counselling education.

**5. Discussion of Findings**

The results of this research showed that counselling education had a significant and reliable impact on students' emancipation and long-term growth in Ibadan secondary schools. Respondents generally agreed that counselling education improves students' self-awareness, confidence, capacity to make decisions, academic success, emotional stability, and career awareness across all study topics. This implies that counselling education serves as a transformational educational support system that significantly advances students' social, intellectual, and psychological growth.

The first study question's results demonstrated that counselling education encourages secondary school students' liberty. It was clear that counselling services help students become more self-aware, self-assured, and capable of making their own decisions. This validates Ojo's (2023) assertion that counselling therapies enhance secondary school pupils' self-concept and personal autonomy. In a similar vein,

Green and Lloyd (2021) highlighted that counselling education helps students overcome internal obstacles including poor self-esteem and fear of failing and builds psychological resilience. This suggests that counselling education helps students become more independent and capable of making wise life choices free from unwanted outside influence.

According to the results of the second study question, students' sustainable growth is greatly aided by counselling education. Counselling services have been shown to enhance career awareness, emotional stability, and academic achievement. This is consistent with the findings of Bettman and Digiacomio (2022), who said that school therapy is essential for resolving teenage emotional issues and enhancing academic performance. Similarly, Köse (2023) discovered that therapy sessions improve emotional control and lessen behavioural issues in teenagers. Additionally, Maree and Che Judea (2023) stressed that counselling promotes future preparedness and job flexibility, both of which are crucial elements of sustainable growth in schooling. These results imply that counselling education gives students the lifetime skills needed for both individual and society growth.

Additionally, the results on difficulties showed that a number of institutional and structural limitations impede counselling education. Major obstacles were limited awareness, a lack of skilled therapists, and inadequate money. This is in line with Adeyemo's (2022) finding that the efficacy of counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools is limited by a lack of resources and counselling staff. In a similar vein, Ezeani (2021) observed that students' lack of understanding lowers their use of counselling services, which lessens its influence. These difficulties show that, despite the value of counselling education, many educational environments still do not adequately apply it.

Strong agreement was found in the improvement plans results on the need for greater government assistance, hiring more counsellors, and including counselling into the curriculum. This validates Nwosu's (2024) assertion that strong institutional support and policy support are necessary for sustained counselling services. Additionally, Swiecki et al. (2024) observed that organised educational advising enhances learning results and student involvement, underscoring the need of incorporating counselling within the official school system. These results imply that government, school officials, and educational stakeholders must work together to improve counselling education.

## 6. Conclusion

For secondary school pupils to get education for emancipation and sustainable development, counselling education is an essential and crucial instrument. It acts as an organised support system that helps students identify their potential, get a deeper understanding of themselves, and make wise choices about their academic and personal lives. Effective counselling services help students develop critical thinking abilities, emotional stability, independence, and self-confidence—all of which are necessary for both educational emancipation and personal development. The research found that counselling education promotes students' behavioural development and psychosocial adjustment in addition to their academic success. In addition to tackling external factors like social pressure and environmental distractions, it assists students in overcoming internal obstacles including poor self-esteem, anxiety, and lack of ambition. By doing this, counselling education fosters an atmosphere that allows students to completely participate in their education and make the most of their learning possibilities. Additionally, by giving students lifetime qualities like resilience, flexibility, career awareness, and problem-solving abilities, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development. These skills equip pupils for future social duties, such as work, citizenship, and personal fulfilment, in addition to their current academic accomplishment. In this sense, counselling education ensures continuity in individual and social development by serving as a link between education and real-life experiences.

## 7. Recommendations

- The government need to hire more certified school counsellors.
- Curricula in schools must to completely include counselling education.
- Counselling services should be well funded.

- Programs for raising awareness among parents and students should be developed.
- School counsellors should get regular training.

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