

Contextual Determinants Of Effective Counselling Among Secondary School Students In Ido Local Government Area Of Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the contextual determinants of effective counselling among secondary school students in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, with particular emphasis on counsellor competence, religious belief, and parental support. The study investigated how selected determinants jointly and independently influence the effectiveness of counselling services within the local school context. The study adopted a descriptive, correlational research design. The population comprised secondary school students within public schools in the Ido Local Government Area. A representative sample of 250 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure counsellor competence, religious belief, parental support, and effective counselling. The instrument was validated, and reliability was established using standard statistical procedures. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis to address the research questions. Findings revealed that counsellor competence, religious belief, and parental support were significantly related to effective counselling among secondary school students. Counsellor competence emerged as the strongest predictor of effective counselling, followed by religious belief and, finally, parental support. The joint contribution of counsellor competence, religious belief, and parental support significantly predicted effective counselling, while each variable also made meaningful relative contributions. The study concluded that effective counselling among secondary school students in Ido Local Government Area is not solely dependent on the presence of counselling services but is strongly influenced by contextual determinants surrounding the student, the counsellor, and the family environment. The study therefore recommends continuous professional development for school counsellors, culturally and religiously sensitive counselling practices and increased parental involvement and awareness to enhance the effectiveness of counselling services in secondary schools.

Keywords: Contextual determinants, Effective counselling, Counsellor competence, Religious belief

Background to the Study

The growing complexity of social, emotional, academic, and psychological challenges faced by secondary school students has underscored the critical need for effective counselling services within educational settings. In Nigeria, particularly

in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, the adolescent phase is increasingly marked by identity crises, peer pressure, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, substance abuse, and career uncertainties, all of which necessitate structured guidance and counselling interventions. As education aims not only at

intellectual development but also at the holistic growth of students, counselling has emerged as a vital support system to foster students' well-being, personal growth, and academic success (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2018; Arowolo, 2019).

Effective counselling is a structured, professional intervention that helps individuals make informed decisions, resolve emotional difficulties, and develop coping strategies. According to Oladele (2020), effective counselling within school settings involves creating a supportive environment where students can freely express themselves, gain insights into their personal problems, and make positive changes in their academic and social lives. In Nigerian secondary schools, counselling is expected to help students navigate adolescence, improve learning outcomes, and plan for their future careers. However, the effectiveness of counselling is contingent on multiple factors, including counsellor competence, religious beliefs, parental support, availability of qualified counsellors, student-counsellor ratios, administrative support, availability of facilities, and cultural attitudes towards mental health and guidance services.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Policy on Education, has emphasized the integration of guidance and counselling into the national education system (FRN, 2014). Despite this, evidence from recent studies suggests that the implementation of effective counselling remains suboptimal in many Nigerian secondary schools, including those in Ido LGA (Omoegun & Adewumi, 2021). Factors such as inadequate funding, poor training of school counsellors, lack of awareness among students and parents, and the relegation of guidance services to classroom teachers hinder the provision of meaningful counselling experiences (Akanbi

& Olanrewaju, 2020; Uwakwe & Iroegbu, 2022).

The socio-cultural context of the Ido Local Government Area—a semi-urban environment with a mix of agrarian (agricultural) and educational populations—presents both opportunities and challenges for counselling interventions. On one hand, the relatively close-knit community structure provides counsellors with a potentially supportive network for influencing student behaviour. On the other hand, traditional beliefs and stigma associated with mental health may limit the effectiveness of counselling, as some parents and students may not see the value of seeking professional help for personal or psychological issues (Olatunde & Aladejana, 2023).

In recent years, the rise in behavioural problems, academic underachievement, substance use, and school dropouts among adolescents in Oyo State has been linked to the lack of timely and effective counselling services (Bello & Adeyemo, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the emotional and psychological distress of many students, highlighting the urgent need for psychological support services in schools (Eze & Anyanwu, 2022). The post-pandemic reality has compelled educational stakeholders to rethink the role of school counselling in managing mental health, promoting resilience, and facilitating post-crisis recovery.

Globally, school counselling has been recognized as a cornerstone of quality education. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, also underscores the need for supportive learning environments where students can thrive emotionally and socially (UNESCO, 2020). In line with this, effective counselling is recognized as an essential contributor to students' psychosocial development,

emotional regulation, and conflict-resolution skills (Ajayi et al., 2021). In the Nigerian context, studies by Ogundele (2017) and Adebayo & Ogunlade (2023) confirm that students with access to professional counselling services exhibit greater academic engagement, reduced risk behaviours, and improved interpersonal relationships.

However, challenges persist in the full realization of effective counselling across Nigerian schools. These challenges include a lack of dependable policy implementation, the absence of career-specific counselling frameworks, and the marginalization of school counsellors in decision-making processes (Nwokolo & Okezie, 2019). Additionally, the absence of empirical monitoring and evaluation mechanisms makes it difficult to assess the impact of counselling programs, especially in rural or semi-urban areas like Ido LGA. Without evidence-based interventions and ongoing professional development for counsellors, the effectiveness of school counselling remains significantly compromised (Ibrahim & Salawu, 2024).

To address these gaps, there is a need for a localized examination of how counselling is practiced, perceived and institutionalised among secondary school students in Ido LGA. An understanding of the cultural, administrative, and resource-based realities can provide insights into how counselling services can be made more responsive and effective. As suggested by recent research (Adetunji & Fajobi, 2023), incorporating culturally relevant counselling techniques, using peer counselling models and integrating digital counselling platforms are potential strategies for enhancing effectiveness.

Within the Ido Local Government Area, as in other parts of Nigeria, prioritizing the development and implementation of effective school counselling programs is

essential for achieving educational goals, promoting mental health, and equipping students to meet the demands of contemporary society. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the current state of counselling practices in secondary schools within Ido LGA, focusing on three determinants: counsellor competence, religious belief and parental support.

Counsellor competence refers to a counsellor's ability to apply theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and ethical considerations to support and guide clients effectively. According to the American Counselling Association (ACA, 2016), a competent counsellor must demonstrate cultural awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, and continuous professional development. In the Nigerian context, Oyeleye and Agokei (2019) affirm that competence among school counsellors includes professional qualification, ongoing training, communication proficiency, empathy, and the ability to handle student diversity.

Recent literature emphasizes that counsellor competence directly correlates with students' positive behavioural change and psychological growth. For instance, Olaniyan, Omotosho, and Afolayan (2022) note that students are more likely to trust and engage with counsellors who demonstrate warmth, confidentiality, and a clear understanding of student needs. Moreover, competent counsellors are effective at identifying at-risk students and deploying appropriate interventions, which can significantly reduce dropout rates and improve academic outcomes.

Effective counselling refers to the degree to which counselling services achieve their intended goals, including enhancing students' academic performance, emotional

stability, career clarity, and social skills. Effective counselling hinges on counsellor-client rapport, structured guidance programs, goal-oriented sessions, and follow-up mechanisms (Eze & Okonkwo, 2020). In Nigeria, school counselling is formally integrated into the educational system; however, its success varies widely depending on institutional support, counsellor capacity, and student receptivity.

According to Oboh and Adebayo (2021), effective counselling in Nigerian schools is often constrained by factors such as inadequate counsellor training, poor remuneration, low student awareness, and the stigmatization of counselling services. Nonetheless, where counsellors are well-trained and properly equipped, counselling interventions have been shown to reduce exam anxiety, boost motivation, and promote better peer relationships among students (Aremu & Taiwo, 2017). This underscores the urgent need to assess and enhance the competence of school counsellors, especially in under-resourced areas like Ido LGA.

Effective counselling in secondary schools is crucial for promoting students' academic success, emotional well-being, and social adjustment. However, in many Nigerian communities, including Ido LGA, religious beliefs can either facilitate or hinder students' engagement with counselling services. For instance, some students may perceive counselling as conflicting with their faith or prefer to seek guidance from religious leaders rather than professional counsellors. This preference is often rooted in the belief that spiritual leaders are better equipped to address personal and moral issues. A study by Sulaiman (2020) highlights that many counsellors in Nigeria have integrated religious elements into their practice, acknowledging the significant role

of religion in clients' lives and its potential to enhance counselling outcomes.

Furthermore, religious value orientation has been found to influence students' self-efficacy, which is closely linked to their willingness to seek counselling. A study conducted among secondary school students in Cross River State revealed that religious values significantly impacted students' self-efficacy, affecting their social and academic adjustment (Bekomson & Ntamu, 2019). This finding underscores the importance of considering religious beliefs when designing and implementing counselling programs in schools.

In addition to individual beliefs, broader societal perceptions shaped by religion also play a role. For example, mental health issues are often stigmatized and attributed to supernatural causes, leading families to seek spiritual interventions instead of professional counselling. According to a report by Human Rights Watch (2019), many Nigerians associate mental illness with evil spirits or supernatural forces, prompting them to seek treatment from religious leaders or traditional healers. Such beliefs can deter students from utilizing counselling services, thereby limiting the effectiveness of these programs.

In Nigeria, effective counselling in secondary schools is increasingly recognized as a crucial element in addressing the myriad challenges adolescents face. However, the effectiveness of counselling services in secondary schools is significantly influenced by parental support, which is a critical determinant (Ajibola & Oluwatayo, 2019). Parental support—defined as the emotional, psychological, financial, and educational assistance provided by parents or guardians—plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' receptiveness to counselling interventions and their overall well-being.

Parental support encompasses various dimensions, including parental involvement

in school activities, communication with teachers and counsellors, reinforcement of school guidance at home, and the provision of a conducive home environment for emotional expression and mental health (Olawale & Olanrewaju, 2020). In the context of school counselling, parental support can significantly influence a student's willingness to seek help, engage meaningfully in sessions, and implement coping strategies suggested by counsellors. Globally, research has established the significance of parental support in student mental health and counselling outcomes. For example, Ghilay (2017) found that students who perceive higher parental involvement and support are more likely to benefit from school counselling services. In Nigeria, however, parental engagement in counselling remains relatively low due to cultural stigmas, misconceptions about counselling, and a lack of awareness (Aremu & Akinbode, 2015). In many Nigerian communities, including the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, counselling is often viewed as a corrective service for "problem children," rather than a proactive support mechanism, which affects parents' willingness to participate in the process.

Statement of the problem

Counselling in secondary schools plays a crucial role in the holistic development of students by addressing their academic, emotional, social, and career-related challenges. It is a vital service that enables students to navigate the complexities of adolescence, make informed decisions, and build resilience against various stressors. In recent years, there has been growing concern over the increasing rate of behavioural problems, poor academic performance, truancy, substance abuse, and psychological distress among secondary school students within the Ido Local Government Area. These challenges highlight the urgent need

for functional and accessible counselling services.

Previous studies have been done on counselling effectiveness by many researchers, particularly in response to the rising incidence of youth-related challenges such as substance abuse, bullying, cultism, truancy, poor academic performance, depression, and social maladjustment (Nwachukwu, 2018). In rural and semi-urban areas such as the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, these problems are further compounded by limited access to quality educational resources, socio-economic disparities, and inadequate psychosocial support.

Consequently, the quality of counselling delivered by school counsellors becomes even more critical. A competent counsellor is expected not only to provide academic and career guidance but also to address students' personal and social issues through therapeutic and preventive strategies. Therefore, this study intends to establish the validity of parental support, religious belief and counsellor competence.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between the independent variables (parental support, religious belief and counsellor competence) and counselling effectiveness. Secondly, to determine the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, and finally, to determine the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship among counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support on effective counselling among

- secondary school students in the Ido local government area of Oyo State?
2. What is the joint contribution of counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support on effective counselling among secondary school students in the Ido local government area of Oyo State?
 3. What is the relative contribution of counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support on effective counselling among secondary school students in the Ido local government area of Oyo State?

Methodology

In this study, a descriptive, correlational research design was employed to establish the contextual determinants of effective counselling among secondary school students in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The choice of the descriptive research design was motivated by its suitability for collecting data from a large sample population within a short period, making it a cost-effective research approach. The target population for this study consisted of students in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Ido's local government area is largely rural, with agriculture as a primary economic activity for its population. Five schools were used in this LGA, with 250 students altogether; 50 students from each school were included in the study. A simple random sampling technique was used. Four major instruments were used to collect data, and their validity and reliability were established. The validity of the research instruments was determined by the extent to which they measured what they were supposed to measure, using a well-prepared questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives. The four instruments were broken down into five subsections:

Section A: demographic details of the respondents were sought, comprising 6 items capturing age, gender, ethnic affiliation, academic level, and parents' occupation.

Section B: Counsellor Competence Scale

Counsellor Competencies Scale—Revised (CCS-R) was developed by Lambie, Mullen, Swank, & Blount (2015). It assesses counsellors' and trainees' skills development and professional competencies. Additionally, the CCS-R provides counsellors and trainees with direct feedback on their demonstrated ability to apply counselling skills and facilitate therapeutic conditions, as well as their counselling dispositions (dominant qualities) and behaviours, offering practical areas for improvement to support their development as effective and ethical professional counsellors.

Section C: Religion Belief Scale

The dimensions of religiosity scale by Stephen Joseph & Deborah Diduca (1997) is a 20-item self-report measure of religious preoccupation, guidance, conviction, and emotional involvement. Each item is answered on a 5-point Likert scoring system, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), with the scoring reversed for negatively worded items. The Reliability of each of the four scales was satisfactory, with Cronbach's alphas (Cronbach, 1951) of 0.93 for Emotional Involvement, 0.94 for Conviction, 0.94 for Religious Preoccupation, and 0.87 for Guidance. Despite their separate conceptualization, the subscales were highly intercorrelated (lowest $r = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$), and the total scale was also highly internally consistent, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95 (Cronbach, 1951).

Section D: Parental Support Scale

Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (P-PASS) by Mageau, Ranger, Joussemet, Koestner, Moreau & Forest (2015). The 22-item P-PASS was developed in French, although an English version was obtained through the back-translation procedure (Vallerand, 1989). The P-PASS consists of 24 items. All items are rated for agreement on a 7-point scale. Cronbach's alphas confirm the internal consistency of the P-PASS scales ($\alpha > .89$), and correlation patterns with the Psychological Control Scale (Barber, 1996) and other parenting components (i.e., acceptance and monitoring) support convergent and divergent validity.

Section E: Counselling Effectiveness Scale

The Counselling Effectiveness (CES) Scale, developed by Fehintola (2020), was adapted to assess the effectiveness of counselling services provided to students in the Ido Local Government Area. The instrument consists of 15 items. The first section covers the demographic variables, and the remaining 15 items address counselling effectiveness. The instrument, with 15 items, has a 4-point Likert-type response format

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship among contextual determinants of effective counselling among secondary school students in Oyo State?

Table 1: Summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Effective counselling	12.33	2.05	1			
Religion belief	33.94	8.63	.005	1		
Parental support	74.86	14.95	.638	-.028	1	
Counsellor competence	45.32	3.05	.450**	.321**	.261**	1

Table 1 presents the correlational analysis among counsellor competence, religious belief and parental support in relation to counselling effectiveness. The results show a very weak positive relationship between

ranging from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. Fehintola (2019) reported an overall reliability coefficient of 0.859 for the scale.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher visited the school in question and requested permission from the school authority to conduct the study. The researcher provided an adequate explanation to the respondents to ensure appropriate responses when completing the questionnaires. The researcher further assures respondents of the confidentiality of the information provided. The questionnaires were distributed and collected immediately after respondents completed them.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis to test the relationships, combined influence and relative influence among the independent variables and the dependent variable at a 0.05 level of significance.

effective counselling and religious belief ($r = .005$), indicating that religious belief is only weakly associated with counselling effectiveness. Additionally, effective counselling is strongly and significantly

related to parental support ($r = .638$), suggesting that parental support significantly influences counselling effectiveness in this sample. Moreover, counsellor competence has a strong positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.450$) with counselling

effectiveness, indicating that higher counsellor competence is associated with higher counselling effectiveness. Overall, the findings indicate that the three independent variables are contextual determinants of counselling effectiveness.

RQ2: What is the joint contribution of counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support on effective counselling among secondary school students in Oyo State?

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis of contextual determinants of effective counselling

R	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.630	.3969	2.05425

SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	894.00	2	447.00	105.72	.900
Residual	1042.34	247	4.22		
Total	1936.34	249			

Table 2 shows the joint contribution of counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support in effective counselling. The regression results indicate a significant correlation coefficient ($R = .63$) and a positive adjusted R^2 (.3969), meaning that the independent variables explain 39.69% variance in effective counselling. The ANOVA results further reveal that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 105.72$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support jointly predict effective

counselling among secondary school students in Ido LGA. Consequently, the findings suggest that the remaining 60.31% lie beyond the variables examined in this study and may be attributable to other critical variables in determining counselling effectiveness.

RQ3: What is the relative contribution of counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support on effective counselling among secondary school students in Oyo State?

Table 3: Relative contribution of contextual determinants of effective counselling

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	12.932	1.540		8.400	.000
Religion belief	.025	.022	.121	2.231	0.045
Parental support	.036	.013	.212	3.454	0.040
Counsellor Competence	.043	.002	.231	4.230	0.035

Table 3 presents the relative contributions of religious beliefs, parental support and counsellor competence on effective counselling. The results show that religious belief has a positive and significant contribution ($\beta = .121$, $t = 2.31$, $p < 0.05$), parental support also shows a positive and significant contribution ($\beta = .212$, $t = 3.454$, $p < 0.05$) and counsellor competence shows a positive and significant contribution ($\beta = .231$, $t = 4.230$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that religious beliefs, parental support and counsellor competence independently predict effective counselling among the respondents. The implication is that counselling effectiveness may depend more on school-based factors such as counsellor competence, religious beliefs and parental support.

Discussion

The findings presented in this study provide important empirical insights into the contextual determinants of effective counselling among secondary school students in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings examined the relationships, joint influence, and relative contributions of religious belief, parental support, and counsellor competence to effective counselling. The discussion of these findings is anchored in the contemporary literature from 2015 to 2025 to situate the results within the existing scholarly discourse.

Religious affiliation among respondents indicated that most students identified as Christians or Muslims, confirming Nigeria's highly religious social environment. Several studies have highlighted that religion often serves as a coping mechanism for adolescents facing emotional or academic stress (Koenig, 2018; Edosomwan, 2025). However, while religious belief can provide emotional comfort, it may also discourage formal counselling if problems are perceived

as spiritual rather than psychological (Bella-Awusah et al., 2025). This cultural-religious context is important for interpreting the findings on religious beliefs and counselling effectiveness.

Similarly, parental support showed no significant relationship with effective counselling. Although parental involvement is widely recognized as a key factor in student development, several Nigerian studies report that parents often play a passive role in school counselling programs (Akanbi & Olanrewaju, 2020; Uwakwe & Iroegbu, 2022). Parents may view counselling as solely the responsibility of schools, thereby limiting their contribution to its effectiveness. This supports the finding that parental support did not significantly predict counselling outcomes in the present study.

The strong positive correlation between religious beliefs and parental support is a notable finding. This suggests that higher levels of religious belief may coincide with enhanced parental engagement and school counselling effectiveness. Bella-Awusah et al. (2025) reported a contrary pattern, noting that parents with strong religious orientations often prefer faith-based interventions over professional counselling services. This preference may inadvertently reduce collaboration between parents and school counsellors.

The multiple regression analysis showed that religious belief, counsellor competence, and parental support jointly significantly predicted effective counselling. This finding did not align with contemporary literature emphasizing that counselling effectiveness is largely driven by institutional and professional factors such as counsellor competence, availability of facilities, and administrative support (Ibrahim & Salawu, 2024; Suleiman et al., 2025). When these structural factors are weak, contextual

variables like religion and parental support may have limited impact.

The relative contribution analysis further confirmed that the three variables, religious belief, parental support and counsellor competence, independently predicted effective counselling. This reinforces the argument that systemic challenges do not constrain counselling effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools, but rather that it is determined by individual- or family-level factors alone (Nwokolo & Okezie, 2019). From a theoretical perspective, the findings do not align with ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that individual development is shaped by multiple interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). While religion and family are important microsystems, their influence may be weakened if the school system lacks functional counselling structures. This suggests the need for a holistic approach that strengthens institutional capacity alongside family and community engagement.

The findings also highlight the marginalization of school counselling services within the Nigerian educational system. Studies between 2015 and 2025 consistently report inadequate funding, limited counsellor training, and low student awareness as major barriers to counselling effectiveness (Adebayo & Ogunlade, 2023; Ibrahim & Salawu, 2024). These systemic issues may overshadow the potential benefits of parental support and religious belief.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that religious beliefs, counsellor competence and parental support significantly influenced the effectiveness of counselling among secondary school students in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. The researcher hereby concludes that religious beliefs, counsellor

competence and parental support could predict counselling effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i) School administrators should prioritize the establishment and strengthening of functional counselling units by providing adequate facilities, materials, and private counselling spaces.
- ii) Government and educational authorities should ensure that trained and certified guidance counsellors are employed in secondary schools to enhance the quality and effectiveness of counselling services.
- iii) Schools should organize regular workshops, seminars, and parent–teacher meetings to educate parents on the importance of counselling services and encourage their active participation in supporting students' emotional and academic development.
- iv) Counsellors should adopt culturally and religiously sensitive approaches that respect students' beliefs while maintaining professional counselling standards, thereby increasing students' trust and utilization of counselling services.
- v) Schools should intensify efforts to sensitize students on the roles and benefits of counselling through orientation programs, assemblies, and peer counselling initiatives.

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