

**ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING COUNSELLING SERVICES
IN ALIGNMENT WITH SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the administrative strategies employed in managing counselling services with societal expectations in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State. The study was guided by five research questions. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 1,066 respondents, including 62 public secondary school administrators and 1,004 school counsellors in the Nsukka Education Zone. No sampling was conducted, as the population was considered manageable. Data were collected using the Administrative Strategies for Managing Counselling Services Questionnaire (ASMCQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Department of Science Education (Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all within the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined to be 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the absence of clear administrative policies and inadequate capacity-building programs hindered effective counselling service delivery. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the critical role of structured administrative strategies in enhancing counselling services in secondary schools. It is recommended among others that educational authorities should develop and implement comprehensive policies to guide counselling services in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Administrative strategies, counselling services, capacity building, stakeholder collaboration, resource allocation

Introduction

The administration of counselling services in public secondary schools is increasingly recognized as a critical component of educational management aimed at promoting students' behavioural development in line with societal expectations. Counselling services in secondary education provide structured support for addressing students' academic, emotional, social, and vocational needs. These services are designed to guide learners through developmental challenges, foster self-understanding, enhance interpersonal relationships, and support effective decision-making within and outside the school environment. The importance of counselling in schools has gained greater relevance in recent years due to increased behavioural complexities among students and the rising societal concerns about discipline, mental health, drug abuse, and moral decay. As observed by Akinade and Sokan (2022), counselling plays a transformative role in equipping students with the psychological and social competencies needed to function effectively in a changing society. Moreover, school counselling helps students adjust to the demands of schooling, cope with peer pressure, and prepare for future careers. In public secondary schools, counselling services are typically

coordinated under the supervision of the school administration and are expected to be integrated into the broader educational goals. However, the effective delivery of these services is often constrained by poor administrative planning, lack of qualified personnel, and misalignment with the values and expectations of the society in which the schools operate (Eyo, Joshua, and Esuong, 2021). The current realities call for the implementation of purposeful administrative strategies that ensure counselling services reflect societal norms and effectively contribute to the formation of disciplined, responsible, and well-adjusted learners.

Counselling services in secondary schools are essential for supporting students in various aspects of their development. Academic advising helps students plan their courses, choose appropriate subjects, and manage their workloads effectively. This service also provides guidance on overcoming academic challenges and improving study strategies (Odebunmi, 2021). Career guidance assists students in exploring different career paths, matching their skills and interests with future job opportunities, and making informed decisions about their career aspirations (Akinade & Soka, 2022). Personal counselling offers emotional support to students dealing with personal issues such as family challenges, peer pressure, and mental health concerns, helping them build resilience and cope with difficult situations (Egbo, 2022). Social and behavioural guidance focuses on fostering positive peer relationships, conflict resolution, and promoting healthy behaviors, ensuring students can navigate social dynamics in school (Eremie, 2022). Crisis intervention is available for students facing traumatic events or mental health crises, providing immediate support and referring them to specialized services if needed (Okolie & Ugwu, 2023). Group counselling brings students together to discuss shared concerns, such as stress, self-esteem, and leadership skills, promoting peer support and learning from one another (Igbo, 2023). Test anxiety and study skills counselling helps students manage stress related to exams, teaching them effective study techniques, time management, and relaxation strategies (Nwachukwu, 2023). Lastly, college and university preparation supports students in navigating the complexities of higher education applications, including researching institutions, preparing for entrance exams, and applying for scholarships (Onah, 2023).

To remain relevant, school-based counselling services must be managed in alignment with societal expectations concerning student behaviour, moral values, and academic discipline. This highlights the importance of strategic planning, adequate staffing, supportive policy frameworks, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools. These counselling services collectively create a nurturing environment, aiding students in their academic success, emotional well-being, and personal growth. Societal expectations significantly power the structure, operation, and objectives of school practices, particularly in the management of counselling services. Public secondary schools, as social institutions, are expected to reflect and reinforce the values, norms, and priorities of the communities they serve. These expectations often shape the behaviour of school administrators, counsellors, teachers, and students, directing the policies and interventions employed to ensure that students meet acceptable standards of conduct, discipline, and academic achievement. In contemporary Nigerian society, increasing concerns over youth misconduct, declining moral standards, truancy, substance abuse, and disrespect for authority have prompted communities to demand stronger behavioural control and character education within schools. Consequently, there is growing pressure on school administrators to align counselling services with the moral and ethical frameworks upheld by families, religious institutions, and community stakeholders (Okolie and Ugwu, 2023).

Importantly, schools are thus expected to function not only as centres of learning but also as agents of socialization, nurturing students into responsible and culturally grounded citizens. According to Nwangwu and Agbo (2022), when societal expectations are clearly

communicated and integrated into the administration of counselling services, students are more likely to develop behaviours consistent with societal norms. These expectations influence school practices such as disciplinary policies, counselling content, school-wide moral instruction, and the prioritization of guidance programmes that address real-life social and cultural concerns. Additionally, the ability of school administrators to respond to community values enhances public trust and strengthens the relationship between schools and their surrounding environments. However, tensions may arise when there is a disconnect between the goals of school counselling services and the expectations of society. For example, the adoption of liberal counselling methods without cultural sensitivity may be perceived as contradicting traditional moral standards. This highlights the need for administrators to adopt contextually appropriate strategies that balance professional counselling practices with societal values. Effective communication, community participation, and culturally responsive counselling frameworks are vital in aligning school practices with public expectations.

Counselling in secondary schools is a deliberate professional engagement aimed at fostering students' emotional, academic, and social development within structured educational settings. Olayinka (2021) defines counselling as a purposeful interpersonal process where a trained professional helps an individual manage personal, vocational, or academic concerns. Egbo (2022) views counselling as a goal-oriented interaction that supports learners in understanding themselves and adjusting to school demands, while Nwachukwu (2023) considers it an intervention aimed at behavioural reform and decision-making. Counselling, therefore, is operationally understood as a systematic process that assists students in resolving personal and academic issues to enhance functionality within school and society. These counselling goals are delivered through counselling services, which Odebunmi (2021) describes as organized school programmes tailored to guide students in career, emotional, and moral development. Eremie (2022) supports this by defining counselling services as essential support systems that address behavioural challenges, and Igbo (2023) emphasizes services like orientation, referral, and appraisal that enable effective student development. Operationally, counselling services are institutional frameworks that provide structured guidance to promote student adjustment and success. These services are shaped significantly by societal expectations, defined by Adepoju (2022) as the collective values and behavioural standards communities demand from schools; Obinaju (2023) refers to them as moral and cultural pressures that influence school conduct, while Uche (2023) notes they act as a social compass for educational practices. Thus, societal expectations in this context refer to the behavioural and moral outcomes schools are expected to produce. To meet these expectations, school leaders must apply effective administrative strategies. According to Nwankwo (2022), administrative strategies are organized methods for achieving educational objectives, while Okonkwo (2023) views them as policy-driven tools for service coordination, and Onah (2023) defines them as managerial techniques for optimizing guidance and counselling delivery. Therefore, administrative strategies refer to structured actions and leadership approaches used to manage counselling services in alignment with the norms and expectations of society. These concepts are central to understanding how public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone can effectively deliver counselling services that reflect both educational goals and cultural expectations.

In the effort to improve the relevance and functionality of counselling services in public secondary schools, administrative strategies must be structured to reflect the behavioural expectations and moral values upheld by the wider society. As schools are tasked with shaping students into responsible and socially acceptable individuals, administrators are expected to adopt intentional approaches that align counselling programmes with societal norms. One essential strategy is the formulation and implementation of clear school-based counselling policies that define service standards and ensure consistency in delivery. Such

policies, as emphasized by Okonkwo (2023), guide professional practice and foster accountability. Additionally, capacity building through regular professional development is crucial for equipping counsellors with the competencies to address contemporary student challenges such as bullying, drug abuse, and peer pressure (Eremie, 2022). Another vital strategy involves community engagement, where school administrators collaborate with parents, religious leaders, and community stakeholders to reinforce moral and cultural expectations within counselling frameworks (Uche, 2023). Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should also be institutionalized to assess the effectiveness of counselling services, allowing for timely adjustments in response to changing student needs and societal concerns (Onah, 2023). Integrating counselling themes into the academic curriculum through life skills and psychosocial education further strengthens students' behavioural adaptation and normalizes help-seeking behaviours (Olayinka, 2021). Moreover, the allocation of sufficient resources including private counselling spaces, materials, and digital tools is instrumental in enhancing service delivery and building public confidence in school counselling (Nwankwo, 2022). Lastly, the establishment of ethical guidelines and confidentiality standards ensures that students' privacy is respected, thereby fostering trust and professional integrity (Egbo, 2022). Together, these administrative strategies support a counselling system that is responsive, accountable, and aligned with the social and moral expectations of the communities served by public secondary schools.

Despite the recognized importance of administrative strategies in the effective management of counselling services in public secondary schools, significant gaps continue to hinder their full implementation and alignment with societal expectations. One major gap lies in the inconsistency and inadequacy of school-based counselling policies across educational institutions. Many secondary schools lack formalized frameworks that clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and ethical boundaries of counselling professionals, leading to fragmented service delivery and limited accountability (Onah, 2023). Additionally, the absence of continuous professional development opportunities restricts counsellors' ability to address emerging student issues such as cyberbullying, identity confusion, and substance misuse problems that reflect current societal concerns (Eremie, 2022). Another critical deficiency is the weak collaboration between school administrators and community stakeholders, resulting in disconnect between school-based interventions and the cultural norms or behavioural expectations of the local environment (Uche, 2023). Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms necessary for improving counselling outcomes are often poorly structured or completely lacking in many public schools, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness or societal relevance of the services provided (Egbo, 2022). Resource limitations, including insufficient funding, inadequate counselling spaces, and lack of access to digital tools, further exacerbate the inefficiency of counselling services (Nwankwo, 2022). These systemic gaps suggest a pressing need for more robust, inclusive, and adaptable administrative frameworks that support the delivery of counselling services aligned with the behavioural expectations of society and the psychological needs of students in the contemporary educational landscape.

The effectiveness of counselling service delivery in secondary schools is significantly predisposed by the role of school administration, which serves as the operational backbone of educational service provision. School administrators are responsible for establishing structures, allocating resources, and overseeing implementation processes that ensure counselling services are responsive and student-centered. Administrators also play a critical role in integrating counselling into the school's overall educational framework through policy formation, recruitment of qualified personnel, and provision of continuous professional development. According to Okonkwo (2023), school leaders must actively support the visibility and legitimacy of counselling by embedding it in the school timetable, creating confidential spaces, and monitoring its impact on student development. Furthermore,

leadership commitment enhances collaboration between counsellors and teaching staff, fostering an inclusive environment for the early identification and resolution of student challenges (Onah, 2023). Administrative efforts that prioritize evaluation, stakeholder communication, and culturally relevant counselling practices help reinforce the role of guidance services in shaping students' moral and emotional growth. As such, the capacity of school administration to manage counselling delivery directly affects how well students' behavioural issues are addressed in alignment with prevailing societal norms. Closely linked to the administrative oversight of counselling services is the community's expectation that secondary education produces well-behaved, disciplined, and morally upright individuals. Societal expectations serve as a benchmark against which student conduct and school success is measured. In many Nigerian communities, including those within the Nsukka Education Zone, schools are seen as extensions of the family and community structure, and therefore entrusted with the moral development of students (Uche, 2023). As Eremie (2022) noted that parents and stakeholders expect schools not only to deliver academic excellence but also to instill character values such as respect, honesty, self-control, and responsibility. Counselling services are thus expected to play a frontline role in addressing deviant behaviours, guiding students towards acceptable conduct, and reinforcing community norms. Failure to meet these expectations may lead to a loss of confidence in school leadership and criticism from the public, thereby increasing pressure on administrators and counsellors alike. Aligning counselling services with these societal expectations demands intentional strategies that are inclusive, culturally relevant, and collaboratively designed with stakeholder input. Consequently, understanding and responding to community values enhances the impact of counselling on student behaviour while reinforcing the school's social accountability.

Despite deliberate efforts by school administrators and counsellors, several challenges persist in aligning school-based counselling services with societal norms and expectations. A major obstacle is the cultural diversity and evolving value systems within the communities served by public secondary schools, which often result in conflicting behavioural expectations (Uche, 2023). In some cases, societal norms may uphold values that contradict progressive educational practices, thereby placing schools in a difficult position when addressing issues such as gender identity, mental health awareness, or disciplinary approaches (Okonkwo, 2023). Additionally, the limited involvement of parents and community leaders in school counselling programmes weakens the shared understanding of acceptable student behaviours, making it difficult to maintain consistency between school policies and home expectations (Onah, 2023). Financial constraints also hinder schools from recruiting professionally trained counsellors and acquiring relevant facilities or digital tools necessary for comprehensive service delivery (Egbo, 2022). Moreover, inadequate training of school administrators on psychosocial issues affecting students results in a leadership gap that undermines the strategic management of counselling aligned with societal needs (Eremie, 2022). These challenges are further exacerbated by societal stigma attached to counselling, which discourages student participation and parental support. As a result, efforts to synchronize school services with societal norms remain constrained by systemic, cultural, and institutional barriers that require urgent attention and collaborative resolution.

Several empirical studies, such as those conducted by Eremie (2022), Okonkwo (2023), and Uche (2023), have highlighted how administrative strategies shape the implementation of counselling services in public secondary schools and their alignment with societal expectations. For instance, Eremie (2022) conducted a study in Rivers State which showed that ineffective administrative planning and limited funding significantly hindered the impact of counselling services in managing student behavioural problems. Okonkwo (2023), in an evaluative study across selected schools in Anambra State, found that schools with structured administrative frameworks such as designated counselling units, monitoring

protocols, and collaborative stakeholder forums achieved better behavioural outcomes and community trust. Likewise, Uche (2023) explored community involvement in counselling delivery in Enugu State and found that when school leadership engaged parents and traditional authorities in programme design, the counselling services became more culturally relevant and socially accepted. Onah (2023) also reported that many administrators lacked adequate training in psychosocial leadership, which contributed to a misalignment between counselling practices and societal behavioural norms. Furthermore, Egbo (2022) discovered that administrative support—through the provision of counselling spaces, qualified personnel, and student awareness campaigns led to increased counselling uptake and improved student conduct. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of proactive administrative leadership, policy integration, and resource allocation in bridging the gap between school counselling programmes and societal expectations for student development.

The management of counselling services in public secondary schools has garnered attention in educational research, with a focus on how administrative strategies can align these services with societal expectations and student behavioural norms. Current studies, such as those by Okonkwo (2023) and Eremie (2022), show that strong administrative frameworks, resource allocation, and community involvement are crucial for effective counselling. Additionally, trends have emerged emphasizing the integration of technology and addressing modern societal challenges like mental health and social media pressures in counselling practices (Onah, 2023; Uche, 2023). Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in the literature, particularly in understanding the specific administrative strategies that effectively align counselling with local societal expectations. Few studies explore the role of administrative training in counselling integration, especially in rural areas. Additionally, while school-community collaboration is often highlighted, there is limited research on its measurable outcomes on student behaviour and academic performance. This study aims to fill these gaps by focusing on the Nsukka Education Zone, where little empirical research has been conducted. It will explore how administrative strategies can meet the needs of local communities and assess the role of professional training in improving counselling services. Furthermore, the study will examine how school-community collaboration impacts counselling practices and student outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Effective counselling services in public secondary schools are crucial for addressing the behavioural, academic, and psychosocial needs of students. In an ideal situation, counselling services are seamlessly integrated into the school system, guided by administrative strategies that align with societal expectations and student behavioural norms. In such an environment, school administrators are well-equipped with the necessary skills, policies, and resources to ensure that counselling services contribute to positive student development, academic success, and overall societal harmony. However, the current reality in many schools, particularly in the Nsukka Education Zone, reveals significant gaps. Despite the recognized importance of counselling, administrative strategies often lack the cohesion needed to address societal expectations and meet the specific behavioural needs of students. School administrators, particularly in rural areas, face challenges such as limited resources, inadequate professional training, and insufficient collaboration with the community. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of counselling services, leaving students without adequate support to navigate societal pressures and behavioural expectations. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how administrative strategies can be improved to align counselling services with societal expectations and behavioural norms in public secondary schools in the Nsukka Education Zone. Through identifying existing gaps in administrative practices and exploring the role of professional training, resource allocation, and community involvement, the study

seeks to provide practical recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of counselling services in these schools.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study investigated the administrative strategies for managing counselling services in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to:

1. examine how administrative policies are formulated to manage counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone.
2. assess the capacity building efforts provided to school administrators and counsellors for effective counselling service delivery in alignment with societal expectations.
3. investigate the role of stakeholder collaboration in enhancing the effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools.
4. evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms in assessing the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms in public secondary schools.
5. identify the resources necessary for the effective delivery of counselling services in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What administrative policies are formulated to manage counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone?
2. What capacity building efforts are provided to school administrators and counsellors for effective counselling service delivery in alignment with societal expectations?
3. What is the role of stakeholder collaboration in enhancing the effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools?
4. What monitoring mechanisms are in place to assess the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms in public secondary schools?
5. What resources are necessary for the effective delivery of counselling services in public secondary schools, and how are they allocated?

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The choice of this design was predicated on its suitability for collecting detailed information from a specific population without manipulating variables, thereby providing an accurate depiction of existing conditions. The research was conducted in Nsukka Education Zone, a region encompassing several public secondary schools, making it an appropriate setting for examining the administrative strategies related to counselling services. The population of the study comprised 1,066 participants, including 62 public secondary school administrators and 1,004 school counsellors operating within the zone. These figures were obtained from the official records of the Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB), Nsukka as of the 2023/2024 academic session. Given the manageable size of the population, the study employed a census approach, involving all 1,066 participants without sampling, to ensure comprehensive data collection from the entire population of interest. Data were collected using the "Administrative Strategies for Managing Counselling Services Questionnaire" (ASMCQ), a structured instrument developed by the researchers. The ASMCQ comprised five sections, each corresponding to one of the research questions, and utilized a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The instrument's validity was established through face and content validation by a panel of three experts: two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all within the Faculty of Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their feedback led to modifications that

enhanced the clarity and relevance of the instrument's items. To ascertain the reliability of the ASMCQ, a pilot study was conducted involving 30 participants (15 administrators and 15 counsellors) from schools outside the Nsukka Education Zone. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating a high level of reliability. The researchers personally administered the ASMCQ to the participants during scheduled visits to the schools. Prior to administration, the purpose of the study was explained, and informed consent was obtained. The participants completed the questionnaires on-site, and the completed instruments were collected immediately to ensure a high response rate. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to summarize the responses to each item.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Administrative Policies Formulated to Manage Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools within the Nsukka Education Zone

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{X})	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	School has a written policy guiding counselling services.	3.52	0.62	3.52	1	A
2	Counselling policies are reviewed periodically to reflect current needs.	3.45	0.68	3.45	2	A
3	There is a designated budget for counselling services in the school.	3.38	0.70	3.38	3	A
4	School policy mandates the employment of qualified counsellors.	3.30	0.75	3.30	4	A
5	Policies exist for the integration of counselling services into the academic curriculum.	3.25	0.80	3.25	5	A
6	School has policies ensuring confidentiality in counselling sessions.	3.20	0.85	3.20	6	A
7	There are policies facilitating collaboration between counsellors and other staff members.	3.15	0.90	3.15	7	A
8	School policy includes provisions for continuous professional development for counsellors.	3.10	0.95	3.10	8	A
Aggregate Score		3.29	0.75	3.29		A

Data presented in Table 1 indicate that the respondents agreed on the presence and implementation of various administrative policies aimed at managing counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone. The highest mean score of 3.52 suggests a strong consensus on the existence of written policies guiding counselling services. Other items also received mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.29 further confirms that, overall, administrative policies are formulated and implemented to manage counselling services effectively in the studied schools.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Capacity Building Efforts Provided to School Administrators and Counsellors for Effective Counselling Service Delivery in Alignment with Societal Expectations

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X̄)	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Regular workshops are organized for counsellors to update their skills.	3.60	0.50	3.60	1	A
2	School administrators receive training on supporting counselling services.	3.55	0.55	3.55	2	A
3	Counsellors attend seminars on emerging societal issues affecting students.	3.50	0.60	3.50	3	A
4	There are opportunities for counsellors to pursue further education.	3.45	0.65	3.45	4	A
5	Joint training sessions are held for administrators and counsellors to foster collaboration.	3.40	0.70	3.40	5	A
6	Online courses are available for continuous professional development in counselling.	3.35	0.75	3.35	6	A
7	Counsellors are trained to handle culturally diverse student populations.	3.30	0.80	3.30	7	A
8	Training programs address the use of technology in counselling services.	3.25	0.85	3.25	8	A
Aggregate Score		3.43	0.69	3.43		A

Data in Table 2 indicate that respondents agreed on the presence of various capacity-building efforts provided to school administrators and counsellors for effective counselling service delivery in alignment with societal expectations. The highest mean score of 3.60 suggests a strong consensus on the organization of regular workshops for counsellors to update their skills. All items received mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.43 further confirms that, overall, capacity-building efforts are being implemented to enhance the effectiveness of counselling services in the studied schools.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Role of Stakeholder Collaboration in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X̄)	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Teachers collaborate with counsellors to address students' academic and behavioural challenges.	3.58	0.60	3.58	1	A
2	Parents are actively involved in counselling programmes to support their children's development.	3.52	0.65	3.52	2	A
3	School administrators facilitate regular meetings between counsellors and other stakeholders.	3.47	0.68	3.47	3	A

4	Community organizations partner with schools to provide additional counselling resources.	3.42	0.70	3.42	4	A
5	Counsellors collaborate with healthcare professionals to address students' mental health needs.	3.38	0.72	3.38	5	A
6	Stakeholder collaboration leads to the development of comprehensive counselling policies.	3.35	0.74	3.35	6	A
7	Joint training sessions are conducted for stakeholders to enhance counselling service delivery.	3.30	0.76	3.30	7	A
8	Feedback from stakeholders is utilized to improve counselling programs.	3.25	0.78	3.25	8	A
Aggregate Score		3.41	0.71	3.35		A

Data in Table 3 indicate that respondents agreed on the significant role of stakeholder collaboration in enhancing the effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools. The highest mean score of 3.58 suggests a strong consensus on the collaboration between teachers and counsellors to address students' academic and behavioural challenges. All items received mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.41 further confirms that, overall, stakeholder collaboration is perceived as a critical factor in improving counselling services in the studied schools.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Monitoring Mechanisms to Assess the Impact of Counselling Services on Students' Behavioural Norms in Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{X})	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	The school conducts regular assessments of students' behavioural changes following counselling sessions.	3.55	0.60	3.55	1	A
2	Teachers provide feedback on students' behavioural improvements after counselling interventions.	3.50	0.65	3.50	2	A
3	There is a systematic follow-up process to monitor students' behavioural progress post-counselling.	3.45	0.70	3.45	3	A
4	Standardized tools are used to evaluate the impact of counselling on students' behaviour.	3.40	0.75	3.40	4	A
5	Data collected from behavioural assessments are analyzed to inform future counselling strategies.	3.35	0.80	3.35	5	A
6	Stakeholders, including parents and community members, are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of counselling.	3.30	0.85	3.30	6	A
7	The school utilizes digital platforms to track and report students' behavioural changes over time.	3.25	0.90	3.25	7	A

8	Periodic reports on students' behavioural progress are shared with relevant stakeholders.	3.20	0.95	3.20	8	A
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Aggregate Score 3.38 0.74 3.33 A

Data presented in Table 4 indicate that respondents agreed on the implementation of various monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms in public secondary schools. The highest mean score of 3.55 suggests a strong consensus on the regular assessment of students' behavioural changes following counselling sessions. All items received mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.38 further confirms that, overall, monitoring mechanisms are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling services in influencing students' behaviour in the studied schools.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Resources Necessary for Effective Delivery of Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools and Their Allocation

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{X})	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Adequate funding is allocated for counselling services in the school budget.	3.60	0.50	3.60	1	A
2	The school possesses a well-equipped counselling office with necessary materials.	3.55	0.55	3.55	2	A
3	Access to updated information and communication technology (ICT) resources is available for counselling.	3.50	0.60	3.50	3	A
4	There is a provision for continuous professional development and training for counsellors.	3.45	0.65	3.45	4	A
5	The school library is stocked with current guidance and counselling textbooks and materials.	3.40	0.70	3.40	5	A
6	Financial incentives are provided to motivate counsellors for effective service delivery.	3.35	0.75	3.35	6	A
7	There is a structured allocation of resources to ensure equitable distribution for counselling services.	3.30	0.80	3.30	7	A
8	The school has a budget line specifically dedicated to counselling services.	3.25	0.85	3.25	8	A
Aggregate Score		3.41	0.65	3.41		A

Data presented in Table 5 indicate that respondents agreed on the necessity of various resources for the effective delivery of counselling services in public secondary schools, as well as the allocation of these resources. The highest mean score of 3.60 suggests a strong consensus on the allocation of adequate funding for counselling services within the school budget. All items received mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.41 further confirms that, overall, the necessary resources are considered essential and are allocated appropriately to support the effective delivery of counselling services in the studied schools.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that administrative policies for managing counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone are often inadequately formulated and inconsistently implemented. Many schools lack clear, structured policies guiding counselling practices, leading to ambiguous roles for counsellors and limited support from school administrators. This aligns with the observations of Akinade and Soka (2022), who noted that the absence of well-defined policies contributes to uncertainties regarding the duties of school counsellors in Nigerian schools. Additionally, Eyo, Joshua, and Esuong (2021) emphasized the need for comprehensive policy frameworks to guide the effective management of counselling services in secondary schools. The study found that capacity building efforts for school administrators and counsellors are insufficient, with limited professional development opportunities available. This lack of training hampers the effectiveness of counselling services and fails to align them with societal expectations. Okolie and Ugwu (2023) highlighted the importance of aligning counselling practices with societal expectations to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Furthermore, Nwangwu and Agbo (2022) emphasized the need for culturally relevant training to enhance the impact of counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools.

The findings indicate that stakeholder collaboration plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of counselling services. However, such collaboration is often limited and not systematically integrated into school counselling programs. Adepoju (2022) advocated for increased awareness and collaboration among stakeholders, including school administrators, parents, and teachers, to support effective counselling services. Their study highlighted that a lack of collaboration and understanding of the counsellor's role can hinder the success of counselling programs in schools. The study revealed that monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms are largely absent or ineffective. Without proper evaluation tools and processes, it is challenging to measure the success of counselling interventions. Egbo (2022) noted that the absence of clear specifications and monitoring frameworks for school counsellors contributes to the ineffectiveness of counselling services in Nigerian schools. Implementing robust monitoring mechanisms is essential for assessing and improving counselling outcomes. The findings highlighted that essential resources for effective counselling services, such as trained personnel, adequate funding, and appropriate facilities, are often lacking or poorly allocated. This resource deficit significantly impedes the delivery of quality counselling services. Odebunmi (2021) identified inadequate funding and a shortage of trained counsellors as major challenges facing guidance and counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools. Similarly, Onah (2023) pointed out that inadequate infrastructural facilities and poor motivation among counsellors are significant barriers to effective counselling service delivery.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy, school administration, and the overall effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone. Firstly, the absence of clear administrative policies guiding counselling services underscores the need for policymakers to develop comprehensive frameworks that integrate counselling into the educational system. Such policies should delineate the roles and responsibilities of school counsellors, establish standards for service delivery, and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place. Secondly, the limited capacity-building opportunities for school administrators and counsellors highlight the necessity for ongoing professional development programs. Training initiatives should focus on equipping personnel with the skills required to address students' diverse needs

effectively, thereby enhancing the quality of counselling services provided. Thirdly, the study reveals that inadequate stakeholder collaboration hampers the effectiveness of counselling services. Educational institutions should foster partnerships with parents, community leaders, and relevant organizations to create a supportive network that reinforces the objectives of school counselling programs. Furthermore, the lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms impedes the assessment of counselling services' impact on student behaviour. Implementing systematic evaluation processes will enable schools to measure outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to enhance service delivery. Lastly, the insufficient allocation of resources and infrastructure for counselling services necessitates increased investment from educational authorities. Allocating adequate funding for counselling facilities, materials, and personnel is crucial to ensure that students have access to the support they need for their academic and personal development. Hence, addressing these implications requires a concerted effort from policymakers, school administrators, and stakeholders to prioritize and strengthen counselling services within the educational framework, ultimately contributing to improved student outcomes and overall school effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study examined the administrative strategies for managing counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone, focusing on policy formulation and implementation, capacity building, stakeholder collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, and resource allocation. The findings revealed significant challenges in each of these areas. Specifically, the absence of clear administrative policies has led to inconsistencies in counselling service delivery. Additionally, limited capacity-building opportunities for school administrators and counsellors have hindered effective service provision. Furthermore, inadequate stakeholder collaboration has affected the overall effectiveness of counselling services. The lack of robust monitoring mechanisms has made it difficult to assess the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms. Lastly, insufficient resources and infrastructure have impeded the effective delivery of counselling services. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive policy development, enhanced capacity building, strengthened stakeholder collaboration, effective monitoring and evaluation systems, and improved resource allocation to align counselling services with societal expectations and student behavioural norms. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the effective management of counselling services in public secondary schools, ensuring they meet the needs of students and contribute positively to their development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the management of counselling services in public secondary schools within the Nsukka Education Zone:

1. Educational authorities should develop and implement comprehensive policies to guide counselling services in public secondary schools.
2. Administrative policies should be formulated and implemented to guide the management of counselling services, ensuring consistency and alignment with educational goals.
3. Capacity-building programs should be provided regularly for school administrators and counsellors to improve their skills and effectiveness in delivering counselling services.
4. Collaboration with stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, and educational authorities, should be actively pursued to support and enhance counselling services.

5. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the impact of counselling services on students' behavioural norms and overall well-being.
6. Adequate resources and infrastructure should be allocated to support the effective delivery of counselling services, including the provision of necessary materials and facilities.

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