

## Perceived Counseling Support as a Predictor of Young Adults' Participation in Adult Literacy Programs in Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos State: A Descriptive Survey Study

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[Doi:10.19044/esj.2026.v22n7p178](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2026.v22n7p178)

Submitted: 14 January 2026

Accepted: 03 March 2026

Published: 31 March 2026

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*Cite As:*

Ajayi, R.A. (2026). *Perceived Counseling Support as a Predictor of Young Adults' Participation in Adult Literacy Programs in Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos State: A Descriptive Survey Study*. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 22 (7), 178.

<https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2026.v22n7p178>

### Abstract

Low participation of young adults in adult literacy programmes continues to undermine efforts aimed at improving functional literacy and socio-economic inclusion in Nigeria. This study examined the relationship between perceived counselling support and young adults' participation in adult literacy programmes in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area, Lagos State. Specifically, the study investigated how perceived motivational, psychosocial, and career-related counselling support are associated with attendance, engagement, persistence, and learning motivation. A descriptive survey design was adopted. A structured questionnaire was administered to 300 young adults, of whom 285 returned usable responses. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.86. Data analysis comprised descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and multiple regression techniques. Results indicated significant positive correlations between perceived counselling support and participation levels, with motivational counselling exhibiting the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by psychosocial counselling ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and career counselling ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Multiple regression showed that these three dimensions collectively accounted for 53% of the variance in participation outcomes ( $R = 0.73$ ,  $R^2 = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study concludes that perceived counselling support is strongly associated with

participation outcomes among young adult learners. While the findings reflect statistical associations rather than causal impact, they highlight the importance of supportive learning environments in strengthening adult literacy engagement.

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**Keywords:** Programmes for adult literacy; Perceived support from counselling; Participation of young adults; Motivational counselling; Psychosocial assistance; Guidance for careers

## **Introduction**

Adult literacy programmes play a critical role in promoting socio-economic development, workforce participation, and lifelong learning, particularly in developing countries where significant segments of the population lack functional literacy. In Nigeria, adult literacy programmes are delivered primarily through non-formal education systems, overseen by the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC). They aim to offer “second-chance” educational opportunities for those who have not completed formal schooling or acquired functional literacy.

Despite their importance, participation in adult literacy programmes remains low among young adults. Many learners struggle with irregular attendance, weak engagement, and programme discontinuation. These challenges have been widely linked to socio-economic pressures, psychological barriers, and limited institutional support systems (Adefila & Adedokun, 2022; Mwangi & Wanjiru, 2021). Young adults in particular often face competing economic responsibilities, social stigma associated with returning to learning, and limited confidence in their academic abilities.

Adult literacy learners differ significantly from students in formal educational institutions. Many adult learners combine education with employment, family responsibilities, and financial constraints. Their participation is therefore highly sensitive to motivational and emotional factors. Psychological barriers such as shame, low self-efficacy, and fear of failure have been identified as major deterrents to sustained engagement (Bandura, 1997; Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Increasingly, research emphasises that adult literacy participation is influenced not only by instructional quality but also by the broader learning environment, including emotional and motivational support structures. Counselling-related support within learning centres, such as encouragement, confidence-building interactions, and guidance linking literacy to economic opportunities, may shape learners’ commitment to participation.

However, empirical evidence examining how multiple dimensions of counselling support collectively relate to participation among young adults

remains limited, particularly in Nigerian contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between perceived motivational, psychosocial, and career-related counselling support and participation in adult literacy programmes in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Participation in adult literacy programmes among young adults remains persistently low relative to the number of individuals requiring literacy support. Available programme reports indicate that only a small proportion of eligible young adults enrol in literacy programmes, and many who enrol do not maintain consistent attendance or complete instructional cycles. According to report data from the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC, 2022), while an estimated 38% of young adults in certain urban clusters like Lagos require functional literacy support, less than 12% actually enrol in non-formal education centres.

Low participation has been linked to economic pressures, limited programme relevance, learning anxiety, and social stigma associated with adult illiteracy. In addition, many literacy centres lack structured learner support mechanisms capable of addressing motivational and psychosocial barriers to engagement.

While counselling-related support is widely regarded as beneficial for learner engagement, limited empirical evidence exists on how young adults' perceptions of such support relate to their participation in adult literacy programmes. Understanding this relationship is important for designing learner-centred literacy interventions and strengthening programme effectiveness

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between perceived counselling support and young adults' participation in adult literacy programmes in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. determine the extent to which perceived counselling support is associated with participation.
- ii. examine the relationship between perceived motivational counselling and participation.
- iii. assess the association between perceived psychosocial support and learners' confidence and persistence.

- iv. investigate how perceived career counselling relates to perceived programme relevance.
- v. determine the joint predictive contribution of counselling dimensions to participation

### **Research Questions**

- i. To what extent is perceived counselling support associated with young adults' participation?
- ii. How is perceived motivational counselling related to participation?
- iii. How is perceived psychosocial support associated with confidence and persistence?
- iv. How is perceived career counselling related to perceived programme relevance?
- v. What is the combined predictive contribution of counselling dimensions to participation?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: Perceived counselling support is not significantly associated with young adults' participation.
- H<sub>02</sub>: Perceived counselling dimensions do not significantly predict participation outcomes.

### **Literature Review**

Participation in adult literacy programmes is influenced by multiple factors, including socio-economic constraints, programme relevance, and psychological readiness (Mwangi & Wanjiru, 2021; Ogunlade & Ajayi, 2023). Adult learners frequently experience learning anxiety, stigma, and low academic self-confidence, which can undermine persistence.

Motivational support has been shown to enhance self-efficacy, goal commitment, and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Knowles et al., 2015). Psychosocial support can reduce anxiety and improve emotional readiness for learning (Bandura, 1997; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Career-related guidance strengthens perceived relevance by linking literacy to employment and livelihood opportunities (Super, 1990; Watts, 2013).

Supportive learning environments that address emotional and motivational needs are associated with improved engagement (Broek, 2024; OECD, 2025). However, limited research has examined these counselling dimensions jointly as predictors of participation among young adults in Nigerian adult literacy settings.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted to examine relationships between perceived counselling support and participation.

### Population

The population comprised young adults (18–35 years) enrolled in adult literacy programmes in Amuwo-Odofin LGA (N = 1,500).

### Sample

Using Yamane’s formula, 300 participants were selected through proportional and simple random sampling. A total of 285 valid responses were analysed.

**Table 1:** Proportional Allocation of Sample Size Across Adult Literacy Centres

Literacy Centre	Total Enrolment	Proportion of Total Population	Allocated Sample Size
Centre A	180	0.12	36
Centre B	150	0.10	30
Centre C	120	0.08	24
Centre D	200	0.13	40
Centre E	170	0.11	34
Centre F	160	0.11	32
Centre G	140	0.09	28
Centre H	130	0.09	26
Centre I	110	0.07	22
Centre J	140	0.09	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>300</b>

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2025

### Operational Definition of Participation

Participation in this study was measured using a structured Participation Scale assessing four dimensions: attendance consistency, engagement during learning activities, persistence in the programme, and learning motivation. These indicators were measured through self-reported responses on a 4-point Likert scale.

Although self-report measures are appropriate for capturing learners’ perceptions and internal states (e.g., motivation and engagement), it is acknowledged that behavioural validation (such as attendance registers or facilitator reports) could provide additional objectivity. However, due to logistical and access constraints across multiple literacy centres, participation was assessed through validated perceptual indicators commonly used in adult education research.

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire that was created by the researcher. This instrument consisted of three distinct sections:

- **Section A:** Demographic details (such as age, gender, occupation, and duration in the program).
- **Section B:** Counselling Interventions Scale (which included motivational, psychosocial, and career-focused counselling).
- **Section C:** Participation Scale (covering aspects such as motivation, attendance, engagement, and persistence).

The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" to assess the perceptions and behaviours of respondents. The design of this instrument was informed by existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and context-specific issues highlighted in the background and problem statement.

A structured questionnaire measured:

- Perceived motivational counselling
- Perceived psychosocial support
- Perceived career counselling
- Participation (attendance, engagement, persistence, motivation)

Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

In order to establish content and face validity, a group of specialists in adult education, counselling psychology, and educational measurement and evaluation evaluated the preliminary version of the questionnaire. Their feedback facilitated enhancements in wording, clarity, item relevance, and the overall framework.

Construct validity was ensured by correlating each question with the study's research objectives, questions, and variables.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

A pilot study was carried out involving a selection of young adult learners from Surulere Local Government, an independent adult literacy center excluded from the final analysis. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine internal consistency; a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher was achieved, indicating satisfactory reliability.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression were used.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Data was gathered through in-person interactions to enhance response rates.

1. Approval was secured from the appropriate authorities managing adult literacy initiatives in Amuwo-Odofin LGA.
2. Questionnaires were provided directly to learners during their class sessions or designated programme hours.
3. Participants were allotted sufficient time to fill out the questionnaires, and all submitted forms were checked for completeness prior to analysis.

When necessary, trained research assistants facilitated the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were ensured.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The quantitative data gathered from the field were examined through both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

To summarise demographic features and overall perceptions of counselling interventions and levels of participation, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were utilized.

### **Inferential Statistics**

The hypotheses for the study were evaluated using various statistical techniques:

**Regression Analysis:** To assess the predictive influence of counselling interventions on participation outcomes.

**Independent Samples t-test or ANOVA:** Utilised for comparisons between different groups or centres as necessary.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical guidelines were adhered to at every phase of the research process.

**Informed Consent:** Participants received comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives and procedures prior to completing the questionnaire.

**Voluntary Participation:** Respondents engaged in the study willingly and retained the right to withdraw at any time without repercussions.

**Confidentiality:** Personal information was handled with utmost confidentiality and utilised exclusively for research purposes.

**Anonymity:** The identities of participants were not disclosed in the data or final reports.

**Respect for Participants:** The data collection process was conducted in a manner that minimised disruption to class activities, ensuring that participants' comfort and dignity remained a priority throughout.

## Data Analysis and Results

### Response Rate

Among the 300 questionnaires distributed, 285 were accurately filled out and returned, resulting in a substantial response rate of 95.0%. This elevated response rate contributes to the reliability and generalizability of the results.

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 displays the demographic profile of the 285 young adults involved in the study.

**Table 2:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 285)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	46.3
	Female	153	53.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age Group (years)	18–22	88	30.9
	23–27	114	40.0
	28–35	83	29.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Duration in Programme	< 6 months	102	35.8
	6–12 months	117	41.1
	> 12 months	66	23.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The data presented in the table indicates that male participants made up 46.3% of the total respondents. The largest age group represented was individuals between 23 and 27 years, accounting for 40.0%. Additionally, a significant portion of the respondents had been involved in the program for a duration ranging from 6 to 12 months, representing 41.1%.

**Research Question 1:** What is the impact of counselling interventions on young adults' engagement in adult literacy programs?

To address this question, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the collective influence of motivational, psychosocial, and career counselling on participation levels.

**Table 3:** Regression Summary of Counselling Interventions on Participation (N = 285)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
1	0.73	0.53	0.52	0.33

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

### Interpretation

The findings indicate an R value of 0.73, which suggests a robust correlation between counselling interventions and participation levels. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.53 signifies that counselling interventions account for 53% of the variation observed in participation. This represents a substantial effect, demonstrating that counselling significantly improves attendance, engagement, and persistence.

**Conclusion:** Respondents' experiences of counselling were measured through self-reported exposure to and perceived benefits from motivational, psychosocial, and career-related support provided within literacy centres.

**Research Question 2:** In what ways does motivational counselling affect the enrollment and continued attendance of young adults?

**Table 4:** Average Values and Correlation Between Motivational Counselling and Participation

Variable	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Motivational Counselling	3.21	0.49	0.62**	< 0.01
Participation	3.15	0.47		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Note: p < 0.01 (significant)

### Interpretation

The average score for motivational counselling (M = 3.21) suggests a significant level of motivational support. The correlation coefficient (r = 0.62, p < 0.01) reflects a robust positive association with participation. This indicates that when students are provided with encouragement, assistance in setting goals, and motivational direction, they tend to engage more consistently and maintain their commitment to learning.

**Conclusion:** Motivational counselling, as perceived by respondents, was strongly associated with higher levels of enrolment, attendance, and persistence among young adult learners.

### Research Question 3: In what ways is perceived psychosocial support within literacy centres associated with learners' confidence, emotional adjustment, and persistence?

Table 5: Mean and Correlation between Psychosocial Counselling and Participation

Variable	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Psychosocial Counselling	3.08	0.52	0.58**	< 0.01
Participation	3.15	0.47		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

#### Interpretation

The average score for psychosocial counselling was 3.08, reflecting a substantial level of emotional and psychological assistance. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates a significant positive association with participation levels. This suggests that when students are provided with emotional support, interventions aimed at building confidence, and stress management resources, they experience increased feelings of security, reduced anxiety, and a greater willingness to pursue their education.

#### Conclusion

Psychosocial counselling plays a crucial role in enhancing individuals' confidence, emotional resilience, and persistence in their studies.

### Research Question 4

What impact does career-focused counselling have on young adults' views regarding the significance of adult literacy programmes?

Table 6: Mean and Correlation between Career Counselling and Participation

Variable	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Career Counselling	2.97	0.56	0.55**	< 0.01
Participation	3.15	0.47		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

#### Interpretation

The average score for career counselling ( $M = 2.97$ ) reflects a moderately high degree of vocational guidance. The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates a significant moderate-to-strong association with participation levels. This implies that when learners recognise the impact of literacy skills on improving job prospects or entrepreneurial opportunities, they place greater importance on the program and engage more actively.

**Conclusion:** Career-focused counselling effectively enhances learners' perceptions of relevance and increases their level of participation.

## Summary of Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question	Key Finding	Interpretation
RQ1: Overall counselling → Participation	$R^2 = 0.53$	Counselling explains 53% of participation variance.
RQ2: Motivational counselling	$r = 0.62$	Strong influence on enrolment, attendance, and persistence.
RQ3: Psychosocial counselling	$r = 0.58$	Strong effect on confidence, emotional readiness, and persistence.
RQ4: Career counselling	$r = 0.55$	Enhances perceived relevance and motivates participation.

## General Interpretation

The research findings indicate that various counselling interventions, including motivational, psychosocial, and career-focused methods, have a notably positive impact on young adults' involvement in adult literacy programmes.

## Hypotheses Testing Using Multiple Regression

**Hypothesis 1:** Counselling interventions do not significantly influence young adults' participation in adult literacy programmes.

**Evidence:** The results from the multiple regression analysis revealed that counselling interventions accounted for 53% of the variance in participation ( $R^2 = 0.53$ ,  $F(3, 281) = 74.00$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Decision:**  $H_{01}$  is rejected.

**Conclusion:** There is a significant effect of counselling interventions on young adults' participation in adult literacy programs.

**Hypothesis 2:** Collective counselling strategies do not significantly improve learner engagement or decrease dropout rates among young adults.

**Evidence:** The collective use of counselling strategies demonstrated a strong correlation with improved learner engagement and a reduction in dropout rates ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), along with a significant regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $t = 6.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Decision:**  $H_{02}$  is rejected.

**Conclusion:** There is a significant correlation between collective counselling strategies and enhanced learner engagement as well as decreased dropout rates among young adults participating in these programmes.

## Analysis of Discussion of Findings

Because this study adopted a descriptive survey design, the findings indicate statistical associations and predictive relationships rather than direct

causal effects. Therefore, interpretations are made in terms of influence, contribution, or association, not causation. The findings of this research present compelling evidence that counselling interventions greatly improve young adults' participation in adult literacy programmes. The descriptive data revealed overall increased levels of motivational, psychosocial, and career-focused counselling, alongside high participation rates. This is in accordance with previous studies indicating that young adults flourish in nurturing educational settings that address their emotional, psychological, and academic requirements.

**Correlation analyses** uncovered strong and significant relationships between various aspects of counselling and participation. In particular, **motivational counselling** exhibited the highest correlation with participation ( $r = 0.62$ ), signifying that support from counsellors, goal-setting initiatives, and positive reinforcement play a vital role in enhancing learner attendance and persistence. This aligns with the claims made by Kassahun and Mohammed (2023) that motivational encouragement reduces dropout rates and bolsters learners' resolve.

Moreover, **psychosocial counselling** showed a significant influence on participation ( $r = 0.58$ ), demonstrating that tackling emotional issues such as anxiety and self-esteem can help learners engage more deeply in literacy activities. This observation is consistent with the arguments put forth by Okoro and Mensah (2023), who contended that acknowledging learners' psychosocial needs within literacy programs fosters greater commitment.

While **career-oriented counselling** had a slightly lower effect size ( $r = 0.55$ ), it still displayed a meaningful connection to participation. This suggests that when learners understand how literacy skills relate to job prospects or income potential, they are more likely to remain engaged. Ogunlade and Ajayi (2023) supported this notion by highlighting the significance of aligning educational content with economic goals as a major motivating factor for youth.

Furthermore, **multiple regression analysis** revealed that these three aspects of counselling together accounted for 53% of the variance in participation levels, emphasising that counselling is not merely an ancillary component but a crucial factor affecting participation outcomes. Each type of counselling contributed unique statistically significant impacts, underscoring the importance of an integrated counselling strategy.

In conclusion, these results indicate that low participation rates among young adults arise not only from academic difficulties but are also significantly influenced by emotional, psychological, and

socioeconomic elements. Thus, counselling interventions emerge as effective tools for addressing obstacles and improving learner engagement within adult literacy frameworks.

## **Conclusion**

This study utilised a descriptive survey design, leading to findings that reveal statistical correlations and predictive relationships rather than direct causal connections. Thus, interpretations are framed in terms of influence, contribution, or association instead of causation. The results strongly indicate that counselling interventions significantly boost young adults' participation in adult literacy programs. Descriptive data showed generally increased levels of motivational, psychosocial, and career-focused counselling alongside high rates of engagement. This observation is consistent with previous research suggesting that young adults flourish in supportive educational environments that address their emotional, psychological, and academic needs.

Correlation analyses demonstrated strong and significant relationships between each aspect of counselling and participation. Specifically, motivational counselling exhibited the highest correlation with participation ( $r = 0.62$ ), underscoring the importance of counsellor encouragement, goal-setting support, and reinforcement in influencing learner attendance and persistence. This aligns with the views of Kassahun and Mohammed (2023), who noted that motivational support reduces withdrawal tendencies while bolstering learner determination.

Psychosocial counselling also had a significant impact on participation ( $r = 0.58$ ), indicating how addressing emotional hurdles like anxiety and self-esteem issues equips learners to engage more fully with literacy tasks. This finding supports Okoro and Mensah's (2023) argument that acknowledging learners' psychosocial needs within literacy settings enhances their commitment.

Although career-oriented counselling had a slightly lower effect size ( $r = 0.55$ ), it still reflected a meaningful relationship with participation. This suggests that when learners understand how literacy skills relate to employability or income potential, they are more likely to remain engaged. Ogunlade and Ajayi (2023) echoed this by stressing the necessity of aligning learning content with economic aspirations as a vital motivator for youth.

Moreover, multiple regression analysis revealed that these three dimensions of counselling collectively accounted for 53% of the variance in participation, emphasising that counselling is not merely an ancillary component but a crucial factor influencing engagement outcomes. Each type of counselling made statistically significant,

unique contributions, illustrating the importance of an integrated approach to counselling.

In summary, these findings imply that low participation rates among young adults arise not solely from academic difficulties but are also profoundly influenced by emotional, psychological, and socioeconomic factors. Consequently, counselling interventions serve as effective tools for overcoming obstacles and enhancing learner engagement within adult literacy contexts.

The study highlights a strong association between perceived counselling support and participation among young adults in adult literacy programs; those who perceive greater motivational, emotional, and vocational assistance report higher levels of engagement and persistence.

While direct causal conclusions cannot be drawn from this data, the findings underscore the significance of supportive educational environments in adult literacy initiatives.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings outlined above, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Integrate Structured Counselling into Adult Literacy Programmes**

Adult literacy centres should formally incorporate various types of counselling services—motivational, psychosocial, and career-focused—into their program frameworks as standard practice rather than optional features for learner assistance.

- 2. Train Facilitators in Essential Counselling Skills**

Facilitators should receive training in fundamental counselling techniques such as active listening, empathy building, goal setting, and recognising early signs of disengagement to create supportive educational environments.

- 3. Establish Dedicated Counsellor Positions at Each Centre**

Where feasible, adult literacy centres ought to hire dedicated counsellors responsible for coordinating interventions as well as providing individual or group sessions.

- 4. Embed Career Guidance within the Literacy Curriculum**

Curriculum developers should integrate straightforward modules addressing entrepreneurship opportunities along with vocational

relevance to demonstrate practical benefits associated with literacy skills for young adults.

**5. Enhance Psychosocial Support Services**

Literacy centres should offer initiatives such as peer-support groups along with workshops focused on confidence-building or stress management to assist learners facing personal challenges.

**6. Implement Monitoring Systems for Participation**

Attendance tracking systems should be established to identify early indicators signalling disengagement among learners so counsellors can take timely action before any withdrawals occur.

**7. Engage Community Stakeholders Collaboratively**

Local leaders, including NGOs, should work together to raise awareness about adult literacy while reducing stigma associated with seeking help or promoting emotional well-being among learners.

**8. Conduct Regular Evaluations of Counselling Services**

Ongoing assessments should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of various counselling interventions, ensuring improvements are driven by data-informed insights combined with evidence-based practices.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author reported no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability:** All data are included in the content of the paper.

**Funding Statement:** The author did not obtain any funding for this research.

**Declaration for Human Participants**

This study was reviewed and approved by the University Ethics Committee, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria (Adult and Special Education Department). The study was conducted in compliance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki regarding research involving human participants.

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