CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Student wellbeing encompasses emotional, psychological, social, and academic wellness, influencing how students think, feel, relate with others, and perform in school activities. Wellbeing is essential to the overall development of an individual because it supports healthy living, positive relationships, productivity, and effective decision-making. Poor wellbeing may result in stress, emotional imbalance, poor academic performance, behavioural problems, low self-esteem, and reduced life satisfaction. Therefore, promoting students' wellbeing through education, guidance, awareness, and support services is important in helping learners achieve productive and meaningful lives.

Education plays a major role in shaping the wellbeing of adolescents because students spend a significant part of their developmental years within the school environment. Schools provide opportunities for learning, social interaction, character development, and emotional growth. According to Dunn (2016), adolescents spend a large proportion of their active years in school, making the school environment a critical setting for supporting their overall wellbeing. Teachers therefore play an important role in addressing students' emotional, social, behavioural, and academic needs. However, inadequate training and limited counselling support sometimes reduce the ability of schools to effectively respond to students' wellbeing concerns. Challenges affecting students' wellbeing may contribute to poor academic achievement, chronic absenteeism, low concentration, indiscipline, and difficulties in social relationships.

The wellbeing of senior secondary school students may be influenced by several factors, including physical and cognitive health, emotional stability, family background, peer relationships, school environment, and stressful life experiences. These factors can affect

students' behaviour, learning outcomes, classroom participation, and social adjustment. Consequently, there is a need for schools to provide effective counselling programmes and supportive services aimed at identifying and addressing students' wellbeing needs. Such programmes should not only recognize students' challenges but also provide appropriate guidance, emotional support, and intervention strategies that will promote academic progress and positive development within the school environment.

Diverse factors may affect the wellbeing of secondary school students such as their environment, high academic pressure, bullying and so on. The school environment is crucial for the growth of students, but it's also where wellbeing issues frequently surface. Anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), behavioural disorders, trauma-related symptoms, and discomfort from bullying are common wellbeing issues among school-aged children which frequently arise from the school environment. Among the most common are anxiety and depression; estimates from around the world indicate that 6–10% of teenagers have clinically significant anxiety disorders and 4–8% have depressive disorders (Lu, Lin & Su, 2024). Approximately 5% of children globally suffer from ADHD, while 2–5% of school-age individuals have conduct issues Cavioni, Grazzani, & Ornaghi (2020).

Exposure to trauma, especially in areas affected by conflict, increases psychological susceptibility, and bullying victimization has been associated with increased risks of depression and anxiety. These difficulties are sometimes worsened by family influences, social pressures, and academic demands. wellbeing problems have a significant impact on behaviours, learning, attendance, and psychosocial development. Reduced focus, poorer academic performance, and disengagement from class activities are common symptoms of anxiety or depression in students Kamphaus & Kim (2022). Disruptive behaviours, strained relationships between teachers and students, and disciplinary issues are signs of ADHD and conduct disorders. Additionally affected is school attendance, with absence sometimes acting

as a precursor to underlying psychological discomfort. Beyond the classroom, wellbeing issues hinder psychosocial development by affecting identity formation, social skills, and emotional control during crucial developmental years. The significance of early detection cannot be overemphasized because identifying wellbeing challenges at an early stage helps to prevent the problems from becoming more severe and difficult to manage. Early detection allows teachers, parents, counsellors, and other professionals to recognize warning signs such as withdrawal, poor academic performance, anxiety, aggression, or emotional instability before they negatively affect the student's overall development. When these issues are noticed promptly, appropriate counselling and intervention strategies can be provided to support the student emotionally, socially, and academically. This also helps to improve school attendance, classroom participation, interpersonal relationships, and self-esteem. In addition, early intervention reduces the risk of long-term psychological disorders and promotes healthy psychosocial development during crucial developmental years. It has been demonstrated that proactive and effective counselling services can detect at-risk students before issues worsen Kamphaus & Kim (2022). Early detection promotes better developmental trajectories, lessens long-term impairment, and allows for prompt interventions. Counseling could help students navigate emotional challenges, develop coping strategies, and improve wellbeing outcomes. Effective counselling programs could also reduce stigma, and ensure a positive school environment.

Counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, others, school environment and attain abilities to adjust accordingly. As individuals develop through stages of life and educational attainment, they encounter problems, challenges and conflict situations. These individuals also need to develop value systems, make decisions, set goals and work towards them. All these cannot be achieved without self-understanding and decision-making skills, which are not

innate, but need to be developed. The need to address these challenges and to promote educational success and healthy life, therefore, call for exposure to guidance and counselling programmes by individuals/students.

Counselling is therefore designed to help individuals/students in their different problems and concerns, so that they grow up to become well-adjusted individuals capable not only of living productive lives, but are also prepared to contribute their quota to the development of their society. Gibson (2018) states that Guidance and counselling services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. There are different aspects of guidance and counselling such as family guidance and counselling, marriage guidance and counselling, pastoral guidance and counselling among others.

Counselling means the help rendered to a person to take a rational decision on occupational choice, taking into consideration his individual characteristics, demands of the labour market and opportunities for vocational educational Aronson (2018). Counsellors use both standardised (tests) and non-standardised (interviews, observations) approaches to obtain information Brown (2019). The results of these tests allow for strengths, needs and career potentials to be evaluated. It could also help determine whether an individual is a good candidate for vocational training and has any interest in vocational benefits. The counsellor could also determine if there are any barriers to learning that would need to be addressed prior to the start of a programme.

Counselling services in schools aim to address wellbeing challenges such as depression, bipolar disorders, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma and stressor related disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, psychotic disorders, personality disorders and substance related/addictive disorders, by promoting emotional resilience, self-esteem and confidence, positive behavioural change, and social skills development. Emotional resilience helps students

cope with stress and anxiety, enabling them to focus better on their academic tasks. Counselling also boosts self-esteem and confidence, which are essential for active participation in learning activities and the pursuit of academic goals Ogunlade & Akeredolu (2019). Furthermore, counselling can help students recognize and change negative behaviours that may disrupt their learning process. Developing social skills through counselling enhances students' interactions with peers, teachers, and family members, creating a supportive environment for effective learning UNESCO (2021).

School counsellors provide counselling programmes in three critical areas academic, personal/social and career. Their services and programmes help students resolve emotional, social or behavioural problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. School counsellors, like all educational Professionals, are increasingly being required to demonstrate evidence of effective practice in the educational sector and the society at large. School counsellors in collaborative efforts could implement both systemic and programmatic changes in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out of school Cheek (2019).

Counselling has been recognized globally as an effective intervention strategy for addressing wellbeing issues among students. It provides a safe space for students to express their concerns, develop coping mechanisms, and build resilience. Among the various counselling strategies and facilitative conditions, unconditional positive regard contemporary psychology highlights its transformative potential in fostering human connection and emotional healing. As wellbeing professionals continue to emphasize empathy and client-centered care, this principle remains a cornerstone of effective therapy. Beyond the clinical setting, its applications in education, parenting, and organizational leadership demonstrate its far-reaching impact on human well-being Geller & Greenberg (2020). By demonstrating

unconditional positive regard, individuals and societies can create more compassionate and supportive environments where people feel valued for who they are, not just for what they do.

Another critical counselling strategy is the use of genuineness. Genuineness is a powerful counselling strategy that enhances learning by fostering trust, self-acceptance, and motivation among students. Genuineness amplifies the effectiveness of other counselling strategies, creating an environment where students could develop resilience and a proactive attitude toward learning. Research has consistently shown that students who experience genuine counselling relationships demonstrate improved academic performance and emotional well-being. Therefore, prioritizing genuineness in school counselling programmes could significantly enhance students' learning experiences and overall academic success (Colizzi, Lasalvia & Ruggeri; Heyne, Kearney & Finning, March, Stapley, Hayes, Town, & Deighton (2022).

Empathy, a core component of effective counselling, involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others. In counselling sessions, empathy creates a supportive and non-judgmental environment where students feel valued and understood. Research has shown that empathetic counselling could significantly reduce feelings of isolation and stress, which are common among adolescents. For senior secondary school students in Edo State, empathy could help build trust between students and counsellors, encouraging students to seek help and engage in the counselling process.

Active listening is another essential counselling strategy that entails focusing entirely on the client and responding to the student’s concerns. Active listening helps counsellors to gain a deeper understanding of the student’s issues and provides a foundation for effective intervention Parveen & Akhtar (2023). In the context of senior secondary schools, active listening could help students feel heard and validated, which is crucial for addressing emotional challenges and fostering a positive learning environment. By incorporating active

listening into counselling sessions, counsellors can better support students in overcoming academic and personal obstacles.

Despite the benefits of counselling, many schools in Nigeria face challenges in providing adequate wellbeing support services. These challenges include a lack of trained counsellors, limited awareness of the importance of wellbeing, and inadequate counselling facilities Eyo, Essien & Oko (2020). Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring that students have access to the wellbeing support they need to thrive academically and personally. This study, therefore, focuses on the effectiveness of counselling strategy for improving wellbeing for effective learning among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District.

Statement of the Problem

Having observed increase in general wellbeing challenges among senior secondary school students and their detrimental effects on academic performance, the researcher is compelled to investigate how counselling could serve as an effective intervention. Unlike previous generations, today's students are confronted with increasingly complex challenges such as disorders, family instability due to divorce or single parenthood, and exposure to violence. Among these challenges, academic struggles remain one of the most pressing issues. Many students experience difficulties in understanding classroom content, leading to disparities in performance between high achievers, low achievers, gifted students, and those with low motivation. Without adequate wellbeing support, these students are at a higher risk of disengagement, poor performance, and even dropping out of school. Recognizing the strong correlation between mental well-being and academic success, the researcher finds it necessary to examine the role of counselling as a strategy for improving students' wellbeing and, by extension, their academic progress. While counselling strategies interventions such as unconditional positive regards, genuineness, empathy, and active listening have been widely recommended for supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being, their perceived

effectiveness in the specific context of senior secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District remains uncertain. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question of what is the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving the wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary schools at Edo South Senatorial District. Specifically, the study seeks to examine:

1. the perceived effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
2. the perceived effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
3. the perceived effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
4. the perceived effectiveness of active listening as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the perceived effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?
2. What is the perceived effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?
3. What is the perceived effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

4. What is the perceived effectiveness of active listening as counselling sstrategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.
2. The responses on the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.
3. The responses on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.
4. The responses on the effectiveness of active listening as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of immense benefit to teachers, school counsellors, governments, and society at large. Specifically, the study will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving the wellbeing of senior secondary school students, which is crucial for their academic progress.

For teachers, the findings of this study will highlight the importance of integrating wellbeing support into the educational process. By understanding the role of counselling techniques such as unconditional positive regards, genuineness, empathy, and active listening, teachers can create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment. This will enable

teachers to provide quality instruction tailored to the emotional and psychological needs of students, ultimately helping them to achieve higher academic standards.

The study will underscore the critical role counsellors play in addressing wellbeing challenges among students. The findings will provide evidence-based strategies for counsellors to enhance their practice, particularly in areas such as identifying and preventing wellbeing issues, fostering emotional well-being, and supporting students' academic progress. By adopting effective counselling techniques, counsellors can better assist students in overcoming personal and academic challenges, thereby contributing to their overall development and success.

For governments and policymakers, the study will provide empirical evidence on the importance of investing in wellbeing services within the educational system. The findings would inform the development of policies and programs aimed at improving access to counselling services in schools, particularly in underserved areas like Edo South Senatorial District. By prioritizing wellbeing, governments can create a more conducive learning environment that supports both the academic and emotional needs of students.

For the society, the study will raise awareness about the critical role of wellbeing in academic success and overall well-being. It will encourage parents, guardians, and community members to support initiatives that promote wellbeing in schools. Additionally, the study will highlight the importance of collaboration between schools and families in addressing students' wellbeing challenges, fostering positive attitudes, and creating a supportive ecosystem for learning and growth.

Finally, the outcome of this study will serve as a valuable resource for researchers and scholars interested in exploring the role of counselling in improving wellbeing and academic outcomes among senior secondary school students. It will contribute to the existing body of

literature and provide a foundation for further research on effective counselling strategies and their impact on students' wellbeing and academic progress.

Scope and Limitation

This study will focus on examining the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students to in Edo South Senatorial District. The study will specifically investigate the role of key counselling strategies unconditional positive regards, genuineness, empathy, and active listening in addressing wellbeing challenges and promoting academic success among students. Geographically, the study is limited to senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District.

Definition of Terms

Counselling: Is the provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing encompasses an individual’s emotional, psychological, and social, physical and academic wellness. It influences how we think, feel, behave, relate with others, cope with stress and make decisions.

Psychological problems: Psychological problems that these patients may have in the long run include anxiety, uneasiness, mourning, helplessness, fatigue, impairment of concentration, sleep disorders, mental and cognitive reservation, sexual dysfunction, infertility, psychological distress, and psychiatric disorders.

Academic Progress: The measurable improvement in a student's educational performance, including grades, test scores, and overall learning outcomes, as a result of effective teaching, counselling, and wellbeing support.

Unconditional Positive Regards: A non-judgmental, accepting, and supportive attitude offered by a therapist (or another individual) toward a person, regardless of their thoughts,

feelings, or behaviours. It involves valuing the individual as a whole without imposing conditions for acceptance.

Genuineness: the counsellor's ability to be authentic, honest, and transparent in their interactions with students. It involves expressing real emotions, showing sincerity, and maintaining consistency between words and actions, which helps build trust and open communication.

Empathy: The ability of a counsellor to understand and share the feelings of students, creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment that promotes trust and emotional well-being.

Active Listening: A counselling skill that involves fully concentrating on, understanding, and responding to a student's concerns, ensuring they feel heard and validated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of relevant and related literature was organized under the following sub-headings: conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical review and summary of literature review.

Conceptual Framework

This section explores relevant concepts related to the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial district. The study reviews key concepts, including counselling, wellbeing, the role of counselling in improving wellbeing, the functions of school counsellors, and the implications of the counselling process. Specifically, the study focuses on how counselling strategies such as unconditional positive regards, genuineness, empathy, and active listening contribute to improving wellbeing and academic outcomes among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District.

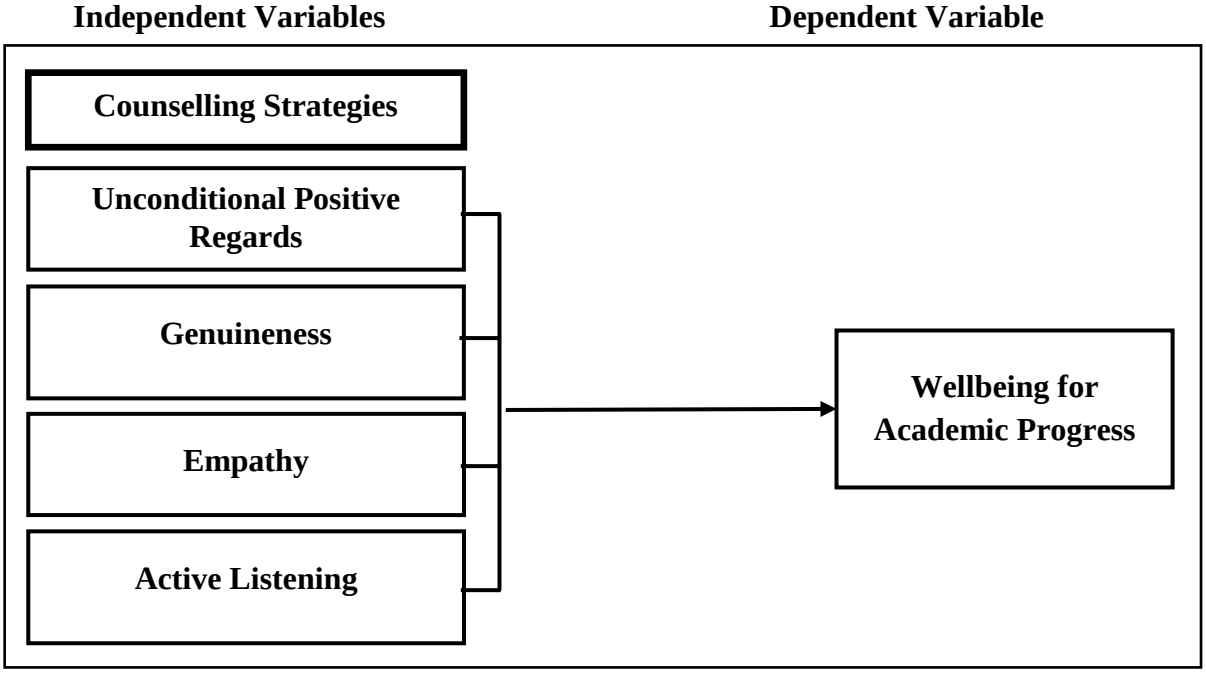


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Concept of Counselling

Counselling is a process of helping individuals or group of people to gain self-understanding so they can express their true selves. Burks and Steffler (2019) see counselling as a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a client. They also defined it to be a process whereby a person is helped in a face-to-face relationship while Makinde (2018) explained counselling as an enlightened process whereby people help others by encouraging their growth. Counselling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-growth, self-development and self-actualization.

Counselling is a beneficial profession for people of all ages: infancy, adolescence, maturity, and senescence. People of all races and walks of life have used counselling services and treatments for self-growth, self-restructuring, and self-development in families, marriages, government institutions, colleges, universities, companies, organizations, associations, and non-governmental entities. Counselling as a discipline encompasses a wide range of worldwide services to mankind. These include educational, vocational, psychological, and personal information that is preventive, curative, restructuring, and generative in character Killian (2019). Therefore, this paper will be guided by concepts discussion such as parenting, parenting styles and obstacles to positive parenting.

Counselling is a very important programme in schools, being the process by which students are given counsel on how to handle emotional conflicts and personal problems in their daily life. It serves as a means of offering students support when they face problems that impact their performance and in dealings with others. Counselling programme is therefore aimed at assisting students to harmonize their talents, interests, and values, thus enabling them

to develop their potential fully. Since secondary school students are adolescents, Robert and Elizabeth (2016) asserts that they are teenagers who are under constant anxiety, pressure, and helplessness and need counselling to assist them in their stages of development and adjustment to school life. Unlike yester years, students of today encounter problems that are more complicated like divorce, single parents, and violence at home.

Counselling involves the skilled and purposeful use of a supportive relationship that helps individuals develop self-knowledge, accept their emotions, and experience personal growth. It is more concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems such as making decisions, coping with crises, working through Feelings and inner conflicts or improving relationships with others. It is a process in which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem so as to facilitate that person's personal growth and positive change through self-understanding.

Counselling emerges as a powerful tool that holds the key to addressing the intricate tapestry of parenting and the cultivation of character in children Bishop (2023). The journey of character development, a slow and steady voyage spanning years, is intricately woven by a multitude of threads, including the domestic ambiance, social interactions, and community engagement Fiehn (2023). Amidst these, parents assume a role of paramount significance, sculpting the moral compass and character foundation of their offspring. Yet, the path they tread is often laden with the challenge of harmonizing their responsibilities O'Donnell (2022). Counselling is, a vocation that extends its helping hand across age groups, from children and adolescents to adults, ushering them through the labyrinth of personal evolution, relationship intricacies, and the trials of parenting Lenz and Lemberger- Truelove (2023). Its purpose is resolute, to provide a scaffold of support, a compass of guidance, and a treasure trove of strategies to nurture constructive parenting paradigms, efficacious communication, and the blossoming of character traits Juffer (2023). Parenting stands as a symphony of commitment,

one that orchestrates a child's emotional, physical, intellectual, and societal maturation Witte (2022). The art of effective parenting entails a methodical approach, one that plants the seeds of positive conduct and virtuous attributes from the earliest stages Ubaidillah and Sholih (2023). Diverse parenting styles, spanning from the authoritative to the permissive, cast their influence on a child's emotional intelligence, cognitive development, and social growth Nyangoya (2022).

Counselling is concerned with individuals' behavioral process. However, counselling and guidance can be looked at differently. Many authors have defined counselling differently though they all agreed on some basic facts. Kiriswa (2018), renowned counsellor defines counselling as an enabling process designed to help an individual come to terms with his or her life as it is, and ultimately reach a greater maturity through learning to take responsibility and to make informed decisions for sell. Guidance and Counselling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, others, school environment and attain abilities to adjust accordingly. As individuals develop through stages of life and educational attainment, they encounter problems, challenges and conflict situations. These individuals also need to develop value systems, make decisions, set goals and work towards them. All these cannot he achieved without self-understanding and decision-making skills, which are not innate, but need to be developed. The need to address these challenges and to promote educational success and healthy life therefore, call for exposure to guidance and counselling programs by individuals/students.

In fact, as Amadi (2018) points out, counselling is also defined as a learning process by which the client or counselee is helped by the counsellor to behave in a more rewarding or satisfying manner. Ipaye (2018) also regards counselling as concerned with creating opportunities and suitable environments for personal social, educational and vocational growth of the individual. Though guidance and counselling are not synonymous, they are similar in the

sense that they have as their basis a relationship that aims at assisting the individual in attaining self-direction. While guidance is a broad term usually applied to a total school programme of activities and services geared towards assisting student's .to make and carry out adequate plans and to achieve satisfactory adjustment in life, counselling is usually regarded as a part of guidance services. As Shetzer and Stone (2019) explain, both guidance and counselling usually deal with situational and environmental conditions. Both guidance and counselling stress rational planning problem solving and support in the face of situational problem.

Wellbeing for Academic Progress

Students' wellbeing is an essential factor in determining academic progress and overall educational success. Well-being refers to the state in which individuals are emotionally, psychologically, socially, and physically healthy, enabling them to function effectively and cope with daily life challenges (World Health Organization WHO (2022). In the school environment, students with positive well-being are more likely to demonstrate high levels of concentration, motivation, resilience, and academic engagement. Conversely, poor well-being can negatively affect students' cognitive functioning, emotional stability, interpersonal relationships, and academic performance.

According to Suldo, Thalji, and Ferron (2011), students who experience high levels of emotional and psychological well-being tend to achieve better academic outcomes because they possess stronger coping skills, positive attitudes toward learning, and greater self-confidence. Well-being enhances students' ability to manage stress, maintain healthy relationships with peers and teachers, and remain committed to academic goals. Similarly, Renshaw and Cohen (2014) observed that students with higher levels of school-related well-being exhibit improved classroom participation, stronger academic persistence, and better educational achievement.

Mental health remains a critical component of students' well-being and academic progress. Mental health refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social functioning, which influences how individuals think, feel and behave (American Psychological Association, 2021). Students experiencing challenges such as anxiety, depression, emotional stress, and low self-esteem often struggle with concentration, motivation, and effective learning. Duffy, Keown - Stoneman, Goodday, Horrock, Lowe, King (2020) found that students who reported symptoms of depression demonstrated significantly lower academic achievement and reduced participation in learning activities. Similarly, anxiety disorders have been associated with poor classroom engagement, fear of failure, test anxiety, and low academic confidence National Center for Checkups (2020).

The relationship between well-being and academic progress is multidimensional. Positive well-being contributes to improved emotional regulation, stronger social interactions, and increased academic resilience. Students who maintain healthy emotional and psychological states are more likely to overcome academic challenges and adapt effectively to school demands. According to Durlak Weissbery, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011), school-based social and emotional learning programmes significantly improve students' emotional well-being and academic performance. These programmes equip students with problem-solving abilities, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and stress-management strategies necessary for academic success.

Furthermore, the school environment plays a significant role in shaping students' well-being. Supportive relationships with teachers, counsellors, peers, and family members contribute positively to students' emotional and psychological adjustment. Posselt and Lipson (2016) noted that highly competitive school environments increase students' risk of stress, anxiety, and depression, thereby negatively affecting academic progress. In contrast, supportive school climates that promote counselling services, emotional support, and positive

teacher-student relationships encourage improved well-being and higher academic achievement.

Counselling services are therefore essential for promoting students' well-being and supporting academic progress. Through counselling, students develop coping strategies, emotional resilience, self-confidence, and effective communication skills that enhance their academic experiences. Counselling interventions such as unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening help students feel understood, valued, and emotionally supported. These strategies encourage students to discuss their academic and personal concerns openly, thereby reducing emotional distress and promoting positive adjustment to school life Corey (2021).

Empirical evidence has shown that counselling programmes significantly improve students' emotional well-being and educational outcomes. Research by Merry (2014) revealed that students who participated in person-centred counselling demonstrated reduced stress levels, improved self-esteem, and greater academic motivation. Similarly, Cooper, O'Hara, Schmid, and Wyatt (2013) found that students who received counselling support showed better emotional regulation, increased confidence, and improved academic engagement.

In addition, students' well-being is closely linked to their social relationships and sense of belonging within the school environment. Students who feel accepted, respected, and emotionally secure are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities and demonstrate positive learning behaviours. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), supportive relationships and positive social interactions contribute significantly to students' psychological well-being, motivation, and academic achievement.

The importance of promoting students' well-being for academic progress cannot be overemphasized. Educational institutions must prioritize counselling services and mental health support programmes to help students cope with academic stress, emotional difficulties,

and social pressures. Schools that invest in students' well-being create learning environments that foster academic excellence, emotional stability, and personal development. Consequently, improving students' well-being through effective counselling strategies remains essential for enhancing academic progress among senior secondary school students.

The intricate relationship between wellbeing and academic performance has been extensively documented in educational and psychological research. wellbeing encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing how individuals think, feel, and behave. In academic settings, students with stable wellbeing are more likely to be engaged, focused, and resilient in the face of academic challenges. Conversely, those experiencing wellbeing disorders such as anxiety, depression, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often struggle with concentration, motivation, and overall academic achievement Abikwi & Egbochukwu (2022). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that students grappling with wellbeing challenges experience diminished academic outcomes, with long-term consequences for career prospects and life satisfaction.

Wellbeing conditions impact students at various educational levels, from primary school to higher education. Anxiety disorders, for instance, are among the most prevalent wellbeing issues affecting students, often leading to avoidance behaviours, difficulties in concentrating, and impaired memory retention. The National Center for wellbeing Checkups at Columbia University (2020) highlights that students with heightened anxiety tend to exhibit poor attendance, decreased participation in classroom activities, and lower academic performance due to their inability to focus on coursework effectively. Anxiety is particularly pronounced during assessment periods, where excessive worry and fear of failure can lead to test anxiety, ultimately reducing students' ability to perform optimally.

Depression, another significant wellbeing condition, also poses a substantial threat to academic success. Students experiencing depression often struggle with fatigue, loss of interest

in previously enjoyed activities, and difficulty maintaining motivation for academic tasks. Depression can impede students' ability to complete assignments, attend classes regularly, and engage with peers and instructors, further exacerbating academic decline. DuffyKeown-Stoneman, Goodday, Horrocks, Lowe, King (2020) found that university students who reported symptoms of depression in their first semester had significantly lower grade point averages (GPAs) in subsequent semesters compared to their peers without depressive symptoms. This finding suggests that untreated wellbeing issues at the onset of higher education can have lasting consequences on academic performance and overall educational attainment.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) further complicates students' academic journeys, particularly in areas requiring sustained attention, task organization, and impulse control. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2021) report that students with ADHD are more likely to struggle with completing assignments on time, following classroom instructions, and maintaining focus during lectures. These challenges contribute to lower test scores and strained relationships with educators and peers. Importantly, teachers' understanding of ADHD and their classroom management strategies play a critical role in mitigating these difficulties. As Abikwi and Kadiri (2022) highlight, limited teacher knowledge of ADHD in public schools can exacerbate classroom challenges, underscoring the need for professional development and awareness to better support affected students. While ADHD is commonly associated with younger learners, its effects persist into higher education, where the demand for self-regulation and independent study increases, making it even more difficult for students with ADHD to succeed without proper support systems.

Beyond individual wellbeing conditions, overall well-being plays a crucial role in determining academic success. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Durlak and Louis (2011) revealed that school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs not only enhance students' social and emotional skills but also lead to significant improvements in academic

performance. These programs emphasize emotional regulation, effective communication, and stress management strategies, which are crucial for students navigating academic pressures. The findings suggest that educational institutions must integrate wellbeing support services into their curricula to foster both personal and academic development.

The broader educational environment itself also contributes to student wellbeing. Highly competitive academic settings have been associated with increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among students. Posselt and Lipson (2016) conducted a study demonstrating that students who perceived their classroom environments as overly competitive had a 37% higher chance of developing depression and a 69% higher chance of experiencing anxiety. This statistic underscores the importance of fostering a balanced academic atmosphere that encourages excellence without compromising students' mental well-being. Schools and universities must develop policies that mitigate the negative effects of excessive academic pressure by incorporating wellbeing awareness initiatives, providing counselling services, and promoting work-life balance among students.

Social support systems, including peer relationships and family are also critical in maintaining students' wellbeing and academic progress. Students who have strong social support networks are better equipped to cope with academic stress and are more likely to seek help when needed. Research suggests that students who feel connected to their peers and instructors demonstrate higher levels of academic engagement and resilience in the face of challenges. Encouraging mentorship programs, peer support groups, and faculty-student interactions can provide students with the necessary emotional and psychological support to navigate academic demands successfully.

In addition to institutional interventions, students must also adopt personal coping strategies to manage their wellbeing effectively. Time management, regular physical activity, healthy eating, and mindfulness practices have been shown to improve mental well-being and

academic performance. Developing healthy study habits, setting realistic academic goals, and seeking professional wellbeing support when needed are critical steps in ensuring long-term academic success.

The interplay between wellbeing and academic performance is multifaceted and significant. Addressing wellbeing concerns through early intervention, supportive educational practices, and comprehensive wellness programs is essential for promoting academic success and overall student well-being. Without prioritizing wellbeing, students may continue to face academic setbacks that could have long-term implications for their professional and personal lives. Educational institutions, policymakers, and communities must work collaboratively to create an environment where wellbeing is regarded as a fundamental aspect of academic achievement.

Counselling and the Improvement of wellbeing

Through counselling, students gain access to a safe and supportive environment where they can openly discuss their thoughts, feelings, and concerns without fear of judgment. Counselling helps them develop coping strategies, build emotional resilience, and improve their overall psychological well-being. When students experience better wellbeing, they are more likely to remain focused, motivated, and engaged in their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Counselling services in schools aim to address these wellbeing challenges by promoting emotional resilience, self-esteem and confidence, positive behavioural change, and social skills development. The importance of counselling in fostering wellbeing cannot be overstated, especially in the context of senior secondary education, where students are at a formative stage of their personal and academic development.

Below are four specific ways in which counselling can effectively improve the wellbeing of students for academic progress.

Unconditional Positive Regards

Unconditional positive regard is a fundamental concept in humanistic psychology, particularly within the client-centered therapy framework developed by Carl Rogers. In Rogers (2000) as cited in Wilkins 2000. It refers to the therapist's consistent acceptance, support, and nonjudgmental attitude toward the client, regardless of the client's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours. This approach fosters a therapeutic environment where clients feel safe to explore their emotions and experiences without fear of rejection or criticism. Unconditional positive regard is rooted in the belief that every individual possesses inherent worth and the capacity for growth, and it serves as a catalyst for self-exploration and personal development Farber & Doolin (2016). By offering unwavering acceptance, therapists help clients develop self-compassion and self-acceptance, which are critical for psychological healing and well-being. Research has shown that unconditional positive regard is associated with positive therapeutic outcomes, including increased self-esteem, greater emotional resilience, and improved interpersonal relationships Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg (2018).

The practice of unconditional positive regard requires therapists to set aside their personal judgments and biases, creating a space where clients can express themselves authentically. This does not mean that therapists must approve of all client behaviours but rather that they accept the client as a whole person, separate from their actions Wilkins (2016). For example, a therapist might acknowledge a client's harmful behaviour while still affirming their worth as an individual. This distinction is crucial in maintaining a therapeutic alliance built on trust and empathy. Studies indicate that clients who perceive their therapists as genuinely accepting are more likely to engage in deep self-exploration and exhibit meaningful change Farber & Doolin (2016). Furthermore, unconditional positive regard has been linked to reduced psychological distress, as clients feel validated and understood rather than shamed or judged for their struggles.

In addition to its clinical applications, unconditional positive regard has broader implications for interpersonal relationships and societal interactions. When individuals experience acceptance without conditions, they are more likely to develop secure attachments and healthier coping mechanisms Ryan & Deci (2017). Parents, educators, and leaders who embody this principle can create environments that nurture growth and self-actualization. For instance, children raised with unconditional positive regard tend to exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence and resilience, as they internalize the belief that their worth is not contingent on external achievements Ryan & Deci (2017). Similarly, workplaces that foster a culture of acceptance and support report higher employee satisfaction and productivity, underscoring the universal relevance of this concept Geller & Greenberg (2020).

Despite its benefits, practicing unconditional positive regard can be challenging, particularly in situations where clients exhibit behaviours that conflict with the therapist's values. However, maintaining this stance does not require agreement with the client's actions but rather a commitment to understanding their perspective without condemnation Wilkins (2016). Therapists must engage in ongoing self-reflection and supervision to manage their reactions and ensure that their acceptance remains genuine. Research emphasizes that the effectiveness of unconditional positive regard hinges on its authenticity; clients can discern when acceptance is superficial, which may undermine the therapeutic process Farber & Doolin (2016). Therefore, cultivating this attitude demands both professional skill and personal integrity. The enduring relevance of unconditional positive regard in contemporary psychology highlights its transformative potential in fostering human connection and emotional healing. As wellbeing professionals continue to emphasize empathy and client-centered care, this principle remains a cornerstone for effective therapy. Beyond the clinical setting, its applications in education, parenting, and organizational leadership demonstrate its far-reaching impact on human well-being Geller & Greenberg (2020). By embracing unconditional positive regard,

individuals and societies can create more compassionate and supportive environments where people feel valued for who they are, not just for what they do.

Genuineness

Genuineness, also known as congruence, is a fundamental principle in counselling that fosters a trusting and supportive relationship between counsellors and students. Rooted in Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Theory, genuineness refers to the counsellor's ability to be authentic, transparent, and sincere in their interactions with students Rogers (2000). In the context of effective learning, a counsellor's genuineness plays a critical role in promoting students' emotional well-being, self-confidence, and motivation to engage in academic activities. When students perceive their counsellor as genuine, they feel valued and understood, which enhances their ability to learn, process information, and overcome academic challenges.

Students facing academic stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem often struggle with negative self-perceptions that hinder their learning. When a counsellor exhibits genuineness, students are more likely to open up about their academic concerns, making it easier to identify the root causes of learning difficulties Mearns & Thorne (2013). This open communication enables counsellors to provide relevant support, helping students develop strategies to improve their academic performance. Research has shown that when students perceive their counsellors as authentic and sincere, they are more likely to actively engage in counselling sessions and apply problem-solving skills to their studies, Corey (2000). This increased engagement enhances their cognitive and emotional readiness for learning.

A genuine counsellor does not merely provide rehearsed responses but instead interacts with students in a way that is honest and relatable. This authenticity reassures students that their feelings and experiences are valid, making them more receptive to guidance and academic interventions. For instance, when a counsellor acknowledges a student's struggles with learning difficulties and offers practical advice rather than superficial encouragement, the

student feels supported and empowered to take proactive steps toward academic improvemen Coope, Hara., Schmid, and Wyatt (2013). This sense of validation contributes to a growth mindset, where students develop resilience and a willingness to embrace challenges as part of the learning process.

Genuineness also strengthens the impact of other counselling strategies, such as unconditional positive regards, genuineness, empathy, and active listening. A counsellor who is authentic in their approach creates a safe and supportive environment where students feel encouraged to explore their thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment. This self-exploration leads to increased self-awareness, allowing students to identify personal barriers to effective learning and take appropriate corrective measures Elliott. Watson, Goldman and Greenbery (2011). Furthermore, genuineness fosters a sense of mutual respect between counsellors and students, making the learning process more interactive and engaging.

Non-verbal communication also plays a crucial role in conveying genuineness. A counsellor's body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice must align with their verbal messages to reinforce authenticity. When a student perceives inconsistency between a counsellor's words and actions, they may feel disconnected and hesitant to fully engage in the learning process Schmid (2014). On the other hand, when a counsellor consistently demonstrates sincerity and attentiveness, students are more likely to trust their guidance and apply learning strategies with confidence.

Empirical studies highlight the significance of genuineness in counselling and its impact on learning outcomes. Research indicates that students who experience genuine interactions with their counsellors report higher levels of academic motivation, improved concentration, and enhanced problem-solving skills Merry (2000). Additionally, studies show that students who engage in authentic counselling relationships demonstrate greater emotional regulation, reduced academic stress, and increased persistence in their studies Cooper Hara,

Schmid and Wyatt (2018,). These findings underscore the importance of incorporating genuineness into school counselling programs to create a learning-friendly environment.

Given the growing challenges students face in education, schools must recognize the role of genuineness in promoting effective learning. Educational institutions should foster a culture where counsellors are encouraged to be authentic in their interactions with students. By integrating genuineness into counselling practices, schools can help students develop the emotional stability and self-confidence needed to excel academically Corey (2022). Effective learning is not solely dependent on intellectual ability but also on the emotional support and encouragement students receive from trusted counsellors.

Empathy

Empathy is the cornerstone of effective counselling and a critical component of the therapeutic relationship. It refers to the ability of a counsellor to understand and share the feelings of another person, creating a sense of connection and validation that fosters trust and emotional safety MDPL (2023). In the context of senior secondary school students, empathy plays a vital role in addressing wellbeing challenges and promoting academic progress. By demonstrating empathy, counsellors can help students feel understood, supported, and valued, which is essential for their emotional well-being and overall development.

At its core, empathy involves two key dimensions: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to understand another person's perspective or mental state, while affective empathy involves sharing and resonating with their emotions Palumbo, A, Wezyk (2024). In counselling, both dimensions are important, as they enable the counsellor to connect with the student on both an intellectual and emotional level. For example, a counsellor might use cognitive empathy to understand why a student feels anxious about an upcoming exam, while affective empathy allows the counsellor to share in the student's feelings of stress and offer genuine support. This dual approach helps create a

therapeutic environment where students feel heard and validated, which is crucial for building trust and facilitating positive change.

Empathy is particularly important in the context of adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by heightened emotional sensitivity and a strong need for acceptance and understanding. Senior secondary school students often face a range of challenges, including academic pressure, peer relationships, family conflicts, and identity exploration, all of which can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other wellbeing issues. When counsellors demonstrate empathy, they provide a safe space for students to express their concerns without fear of judgment or criticism. This can be especially empowering for students who may feel isolated or misunderstood, as it helps them realize that their feelings are valid and that they are not alone in their struggles Springer (2022).

One of the ways empathy manifests in counselling is through active listening, which involves paying full attention to the student's words, tone, and body language, and responding in a way that conveys understanding and compassion. For example, a counsellor might say, "It sounds like you've been feeling really overwhelmed lately," or "I can see how much this situation has been affecting you." These empathetic responses validate the student's experiences and encourage them to open up further, which is essential for addressing underlying issues and developing effective coping strategies Weger, Castle, & Emmett (2010). By listening empathetically, counsellors can also pick up on subtle cues that may reveal deeper concerns, such as low self-esteem or unresolved trauma, allowing them to tailor their interventions to the student's specific needs.

Empathy also plays a critical role in reducing the stigma associated with seeking help for wellbeing issues. In many cultures, including Nigeria, wellbeing is often stigmatized, and individuals may be reluctant to seek counselling due to the fear of being judged or misunderstood. By demonstrating empathy, counsellors can help break down these barriers and

create a more inclusive and supportive environment for students. For example, a counsellor who shows genuine concern and understanding can help a student feel more comfortable discussing their struggles, which is the first step toward healing and growth Teding Van Berkhout and Malouff (2022).

In addition to its therapeutic benefits, empathy has been shown to have a positive impact on academic outcomes. When students feel understood and supported, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and develop a growth mindset, which is essential for academic success Dweck 2010). For example, a student who is struggling with low grades may feel discouraged and unmotivated. However, if a counsellor responds with empathy, acknowledging the student's efforts and offering encouragement, the student may feel more confident and motivated to improve. This highlights the interconnectedness of wellbeing and academic progress, and the importance of empathy in fostering both.

Despite its many benefits, demonstrating empathy in counselling requires skill and practice. Counsellors must be able to set aside their own biases and assumptions and truly immerse themselves in the student's world. This can be challenging, particularly when dealing with students whose experiences and perspectives are vastly different from their own. However, by cultivating a mindset of curiosity and openness, counsellors can develop a deeper understanding of their students' experiences and respond in a way that is both empathetic and culturally sensitive Sue & Sue (2016). For example, a counsellor working with students must be aware of the cultural and socio-economic factors that may influence their students' experiences and tailor their approach accordingly.

Moreover, empathy is not just about understanding and sharing emotions; it also involves taking action to support the student. This might include providing practical advice, connecting the student with additional resources, or advocating on their behalf. For example, a counsellor who empathizes with a student's financial struggles might help them apply for

scholarships or connect them with community organizations that provide support. By combining empathy with action, counsellors can make a tangible difference in their students' lives, helping them overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential. Empathy is a powerful and essential tool in counselling, particularly in the context of senior secondary school students. By understanding and sharing the feelings of their students, counselors could create a safe and supportive environment that fosters emotional well-being and academic progress. Empathy helps students feel valued and understood, reduces the stigma associated with wellbeing issues, and promotes a growth mindset that is essential for success. While demonstrating empathy requires skill and cultural sensitivity, its potential to transform lives makes it a cornerstone of effective counselling practice.

Active Listening

Active listening is a foundational skill in counselling and communication that involves fully engaging with the speaker, understanding their message, and responding in a way that demonstrates genuine interest and empathy. It is more than just hearing words; it requires the listener to pay attention to the speaker's verbal and non-verbal cues, such as tone, body language, and emotions, to fully grasp their perspective Bodie (2023). In the context of counselling senior secondary school students, active listening is a powerful tool for building trust, fostering emotional well-being, and promoting academic progress. By actively listening, counsellors create a safe and supportive environment where students feel heard, understood, and valued, which is essential for addressing wellbeing challenges and facilitating positive change.

Active listening involves several key components that distinguish it from passive listening. First, it requires the listener to give their undivided attention to the speaker, free from distractions or interruptions. This means setting aside personal biases, judgments, and preconceived ideas to focus entirely on the student's message. For example, a counsellor might

maintain eye contact, nod in acknowledgment, and use verbal cues such as “I understand” or “Tell me more” to show that they are fully engaged in the conversation Weger Castle and Emmett (2020). This level of attentiveness helps students to feel respected and valued, which is crucial for building a strong therapeutic relationship.

Second, active listening involves reflecting and paraphrasing the speaker’s message to ensure accurate understanding. This technique not only demonstrates that the counsellor is paying attention but also helps to clarify the student’s thoughts and feelings. For instance, if a student says, “I’m really stressed about my exams,” the counsellor might respond, “It sounds like you’re feeling a lot of pressure to perform well.” By reflecting on the student’s words, the counsellor validates their experience and encourages them to elaborate further. This process helps students gain clarity about their emotions and challenges, which is crucial step towards problem solving and positive adjustment Corey (2021).

Third, active listening requires the listener to respond empathetically, showing that they understand and share the speaker’s feelings. Empathy is a critical aspect of active listening, as it helps create a sense of connection and trust between the counsellor and the student. For example, a counsellor might say, “I can see how overwhelming this must feel for you,” or “It sounds like you’ve been carrying a heavy burden.” These empathetic responses help students feel understood and supported, which can alleviate feelings of isolation and stress Cooper (2018). In the context of senior secondary school students, who often face academic pressure, peer conflicts, and family issues, this emotional support is essential for promoting wellbeing and well-being.

Active listening also plays a crucial role in uncovering underlying issues that may be affecting a student’s wellbeing and academic performance. Many students, particularly adolescents, may struggle to articulate their thoughts and feelings or may be hesitant to share sensitive information. By actively listening, counsellors can pick up on subtle cues, such as

changes in tone, body language, or facial expressions, that may reveal deeper concerns. For example, a student who appears disengaged or avoids eye contact while discussing their grades may be experiencing anxiety or low self-esteem. By noticing these cues and responding with empathy and curiosity, counsellors can gently explore these issues and provide the necessary support Hayakawa's and Miyahara K (2024).

In addition to its therapeutic benefits, active listening has been shown to have a positive impact on academic outcomes. When students feel heard and understood, they are more likely to engage in the learning process and develop a growth mindset, which is essential for academic success Yeager & Dweck (2023). For example, a student who is struggling with a particular subject may feel discouraged and unmotivated. However, if a counsellor actively listens to their concerns and responds with encouragement and practical advice, the student may feel more confident and motivated to improve. This highlights the interconnectedness of wellbeing and academic progress, and the importance of active listening in fostering both.

Active listening is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where wellbeing stigma and limited access to counselling services are prevalent. Many students in Edo state may face additional challenges, such as poverty, family instability, and cultural attitudes that discourage emotional expression. By actively listening, counsellors can help break down these barriers and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for students. For example, a counsellor who listens without judgment and responds with empathy can help a student feel more comfortable discussing their struggles, which is the first step toward healing and growth Elloitt, Bahart, Watson and Greenbery (2018).

In consonance with its many benefits, active listening requires skill and practice. Counsellors must be able to set aside their own biases and assumptions and truly immerse themselves in the student's world. This can be challenging, particularly when dealing with students whose experiences and perspectives are vastly different from their own. However, by

cultivating a mindset of curiosity and openness, counsellors can develop a deeper understanding of their students' experiences and respond in a way that is both empathetic and culturally sensitive Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquette (2018). For example, a counsellor working with students in Edo South Senatorial District must be aware of the cultural and socio-economic factors that may influence their students' experiences and tailor their approach accordingly.

Moreover, active listening is not just about understanding and responding to the student's words; it also involves taking action to support them. This might include providing practical advice, connecting the student with additional resources, or advocating on their behalf. For example, a counsellor who actively listens to a student's concerns about financial difficulties might help them apply for scholarships or connect them with community organizations that provide support. By combining active listening with action, counsellors can make a tangible difference in their students' lives, helping them overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.

Active listening is a powerful and essential skill in counselling, particularly in the context of senior secondary school students. By fully engaging with the student's message, reflecting their thoughts and feelings, and responding with empathy, counsellors can create a safe and supportive environment that fosters emotional well-being and academic progress. Active listening helps students feel valued and understood, reduces the stigma associated with wellbeing issues, and promotes a growth mindset that is essential for success. While it requires skill and cultural sensitivity, its potential to transform lives makes it the cornerstone of effective counselling practice. In Edo South Senatorial District, where students face unique challenges, active listening can play a critical role in helping them navigate their struggles and achieve their goals.

The Role of Counsellors in Secondary Schools

The first education commission, known as the Modular Commission (1952-53), recognized the importance of proper guidance for students as part of education. The Education Commission (1964-66) expanded the scope of guidance services beyond educational and vocational guidance. A budding journalist of Asia pacific journal of research, Viji K. Ramakrishnan, in September 2013, observed that counselling should be provided from elementary to higher secondary school stage given the needs and learning disorders of students.

Following the rapid changes in our society which has affected educational development, the role of counsellors has become manifest in our school system. This has become ever more pronounced with the 6-3-3-4 system. As Amadi (2019) puts it, during the first three years of secondary school career, every student is expected to take all the subjects in the school curricular. This is irrespective of individual differences in ability, background, experience, social status, maturation, motivation, interest, attitudes, aptitudes etc. Consequently, there is continuous assessment that constantly reminds them that they lack in some areas. This type of situation creates frustration and the feeling of inadequacy in these students who are affected and hence the need for guidance and counselling. Also hinting on the importance of guidance and counselling in schools, Fafunwa (2018) states that guidance and counselling, particularly at the junior secondary school level, would play an important role in the education and social growth of individuals. Awokeye (2016) stated that the purpose of the 6-3-3-4 system of education would not be achieved without academic and career guidance and in junior secondary schools counseling plays an essential role. As Oladele (2016) observes, guidance services are professional interventions provided to individuals and small groups to help them address common personal, educational, and vocational needs and problems

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Cognitive-Behavioural Theory (CBT) and the Person-Centred Theory (PCT). These theories are considered relevant to the study because they explain how counselling strategies can improve students' wellbeing and academic progress. The Cognitive-Behavioural Theory emphasizes the relationship between students' thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, while the Person-Centred Theory focuses on counselling variables such as unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening in helping students develop self-worth, confidence, emotional stability, and positive attitudes towards learning. Therefore, both theories provide a suitable framework for understanding the effectiveness of counselling strategies among senior secondary school students.

Cognitive-Behavioural Theory

Cognitive-Behavioural Theory (CBT), developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960s, serves as the foundation for understanding the effectiveness of counselling strategies in improving the wellbeing and academic progress of senior secondary school students. The theory posits that thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are interconnected, and that maladaptive cognitive patterns contribute to emotional distress and behavioural challenges Beck (2023). When applied to the school counselling context, CBT provides a structured framework for addressing students' wellbeing concerns, which in turn enhances their academic engagement and performance Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer & Fang (2012). By challenging negative thought patterns and reinforcing positive behaviours, counselling interventions based on CBT equip students with essential coping mechanisms that foster resilience and self-efficacy in academic settings Stallard (2019).

Students who struggle with wellbeing issues, such as anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem, often exhibit negative automatic thoughts (ANTs) that hinder their academic

motivation. Beck (2023) identified these thoughts as self-defeating cognitive distortions, which, if unchallenged, reinforce cycles of academic disengagement and emotional distress. In a school environment, such negative thinking patterns may manifest as fear of failure, procrastination, lack of concentration, and avoidance of academic challenges Padesky & Greenberger (2021). Counselling strategies rooted in CBT, particularly cognitive behavioural techniques, serve as an intervention mechanism to help students identify, challenge, and restructure these thoughts. Through cognitive restructuring, students become more aware of their internal dialogue, replace irrational beliefs with constructive ones, and develop a more positive approach towards learning. This process enhances their mental well-being, allowing them to focus better in class, complete assignments on time, and perform optimally in examinations Richardson, Abraham, & Bond (2022).

One of the key strategies employed in CBT-based counselling is the use of genuineness. These questions are designed to encourage students to engage in self-reflection and explore their thoughts and emotions in a structured manner. Unlike closed-ended questions that elicit brief responses, geniuses require students to articulate their concerns in depth, thereby fostering greater self-awareness. When students express their fears, anxieties, and academic pressures, they gain insight into the underlying cognitive distortions that may be affecting their performance Meichenbaum (2017). Counsellors use these responses to guide students in identifying patterns of negative thinking and to introduce alternative perspectives that promote emotional resilience. Research suggests that genuineness enhances students' problem-solving abilities and critical thinking skills, both of which are essential for academic success Beck & Haigh (2014). Furthermore, it empowers students to take ownership of their thoughts and emotions, leading to improved decision-making and academic engagement.

Empathy is another crucial component of CBT-based counselling that contributes significantly to improving students' wellbeing. The therapeutic relationship between

counsellors and students is built on trust, understanding, and non-judgmental support. When students perceive their counsellors as empathetic, they are more likely to share their struggles openly and seek guidance without fear of being dismissed or misunderstood Rogers (2023). Empathy creates a safe psychological space where students feel valued and accepted. This fundamental to alleviating stress and anxiety. Research in educational psychology has shown that students who experience empathy in counselling sessions exhibit higher levels of self-esteem and motivation, which positively influences their academic performance Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer & Fang (2012). The sense of emotional security provided by an empathetic counsellor enables students to develop a growth mindset, where they view academic challenges as opportunities for learning rather than as threats to their self-worth Dweck (2006). This shift in perspective reduces performance anxiety and fosters perseverance, key attributes for long-term academic success.

Active listening, another central element of CBT-based counselling, enhances the effectiveness of the intervention by ensuring that students feel heard and understood. Active listening involves the counsellor's full engagement in the conversation, using techniques such as paraphrasing, summarization, and reflective responses to validate the student's experiences Padesky & Greenberger (2021). When students recognize that their concerns are taken seriously, they are more likely to participate actively in the counselling process and implement suggested coping strategies. Active listening not only helps students clarify their thoughts and emotions but also reinforces positive behavioural patterns. For example, a student who struggles with time management due to academic stress, may through active listening, articulate their challenges more clearly and, with the counsellor's guidance, develop a structured approach to managing their workload Stallard (2019). This process contributes to improved organizational skills, reduced stress levels, and enhanced academic outcomes.

Empirical studies support the effectiveness of CBT-based interventions in academic settings. Research conducted on secondary school students has shown that those who receive CBT-based counselling demonstrate significant improvements in emotional regulation, academic motivation, and overall well-being Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer & Fang (2012). A meta-analysis of school-based CBT interventions found that students who participated in cognitive restructuring programs reported lower levels of test anxiety and higher levels of academic engagement compared to their peers who did not receive such interventions Richardson (2012). Additionally, studies indicate that the integration of CBT techniques in school counselling programs leads to long-term benefits, including increased academic persistence and reduced dropout rates Meichenbaum (2017). These findings underscore the importance of incorporating structured cognitive-behavioural strategies into school counselling services to support students in navigating academic and personal challenges effectively.

The practical application of CBT in school counselling highlights its transformative impact on students' wellbeing and academic progress. Through the use of cognitive behavioural techniques, students learn to challenge self-defeating beliefs and develop a more adaptive mindset towards learning. Genuineness facilitates deeper self-exploration, helping students to identify and modify negative thought patterns that may be impeding their academic performance. Empathy fosters a supportive environment where students feel encouraged to discuss their struggles and seek help without fear of judgment. Active listening ensures that students receive the necessary validation and guidance to implement effective coping mechanisms. Collectively, these counselling strategies create a holistic framework that not only addresses students' wellbeing concerns but also enhances their overall academic resilience and success Beck (2023).

Given the increasing prevalence of wellbeing challenges among students, there is a pressing need for educational institutions to integrate CBT-based counselling approaches into

their support services. Schools should prioritize training counsellors in cognitive behavioural techniques to equip them with the skills necessary to address students' psychological and academic needs Stallard (2019). Additionally, school administrators should advocate for policies that promote wellbeing awareness and reduce the stigma associated with seeking counselling support. By fostering a school culture that recognizes the intrinsic link between wellbeing and academic achievement, educators can create an environment that empowers students to excel both personally and academically Dweck (2006).

The relevance of CBT in addressing students' wellbeing concerns is evident in its structured and evidence-based approach. The theory's emphasis on cognitive restructuring, self-awareness, and behavioural change aligns with the core objectives of school counselling programs aimed at improving students' psychological well-being and academic performance Meichenbaum (2017). As students develop healthier thought patterns and coping mechanisms, they are better equipped to handle academic stress, stay motivated, and achieve their educational goals. The effectiveness of CBT-based counselling lies in its ability to provide students with practical skills that not only enhance their wellbeing but also foster a lifelong commitment to personal growth and academic excellence.

Person-Centered Theory

Person-Centered Theory (PCT), developed by Carl Rogers in 2023, serves as a fundamental framework for understanding the effectiveness of counselling as a strategy for improving the wellbeing and academic progress of senior secondary school students. This theory posits that individuals have an inherent tendency toward self-actualization, which can be facilitated through a supportive and non-judgmental counselling environment. Rogers (2023). The core principles of this approach-empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence-create a therapeutic atmosphere that enables students to explore their thoughts and emotions freely, ultimately leading to enhanced psychological well-being and academic engagement.

When applied to a school setting, Person-Centered Counselling (PCC) empowers students by fostering self-awareness, confidence, and personal responsibility, all of which contribute to their academic success Mearns & Thorne (2013).

Students facing wellbeing challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and academic stress often struggle with negative self-perceptions that hinder their motivation and performance. PCT suggests that such students may experience incongruence, a state in which their self-concept is misaligned with their experiences. Rogers (2023). This incongruence creates psychological distress, leading to self-doubt, fear of failure, and avoidance of academic challenges. Through a counselling approach that prioritizes acceptance and understanding, students gradually develop a more positive self-concept, enabling them to engage more effectively with their studies Schmid (2014). When students perceive their counsellors as accepting and empathetic, they feel safe to explore their concerns without fear of criticism or rejection. This supportive environment fosters self-exploration, which in turn helps students gain insight into their thought processes, emotional responses, and academic behaviours.

A fundamental aspect of PCT in school counselling is the use of geniuness. These questions encourage students to express themselves freely, providing a platform for self-reflection and deeper understanding of their academic struggles. Unlike directive approaches that impose solutions, genuineness allows students to explore their feelings and motivations in a non-restrictive manner, thereby promoting self-awareness and personal growth. Merry (2014). When students articulate their academic concerns, they become more conscious of their challenges and potential solutions. This self-directed exploration enhances their ability to identify personal strengths, set realistic academic goals, and develop effective study habits. Furthermore, research has shown that genuineness in counselling promotes higher-order thinking skills, which are crucial for academic problem-solving and decision-making Corey

(2015). By helping students reframe their academic difficulties as opportunities for learning, person-centered counselling nurtures a mindset that supports perseverance and resilience.

Empathy, one of the core conditions of PCT, plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive counselling relationship that enhances students' wellbeing and academic progress. Rogers (2021) emphasized that empathy involves accurately understanding the student's experiences and emotions from their perspective. When students feel genuinely understood, they are more likely to engage in open and honest discussions about their challenges. This emotional validation reduces feelings of isolation and helps students develop a sense of self-worth, which is essential for academic motivation and persistence Elliott, Watson, Goldman, Greenberg (2011). In a school setting, empathy enables counsellors to create an environment where students feel safe to discuss issues such as test anxiety, peer pressure, and low self-esteem. The resulting emotional security allows students to shift from a state of self-doubt to one of self-acceptance and confidence, leading to greater academic engagement and improved performance. Studies have shown that students who receive empathetic counselling exhibit increased motivation, higher academic achievement, and greater overall well-being Cooper, Hara, Schmid and Wyatt (2013).

Active listening is another essential component of PCT that enhances the effectiveness of counselling in addressing students' wellbeing concerns. Active listening involves not only hearing what the student is saying but also responding in ways that demonstrate understanding, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and using reflective responses Mearns & Thorne (2013). When students perceive that their counsellors are fully present and engaged in the conversation, they feel valued and respected. This perception fosters a sense of trust, encouraging students to explore their academic struggles more openly. Moreover, active listening helps students clarify their thoughts, emotions, and goals, allowing them to develop practical solutions to their academic challenges. For instance, a student who struggles with low

academic confidence may, through active listening, recognize patterns of self-doubt and work with the counsellor to develop positive affirmations and self-motivation strategies. Schmid (2014). Research suggests that active listening in counselling sessions leads to improved self-efficacy, better stress management, and enhanced academic performance among students Cooper, Hara, Schmid and Wyatt (2023).

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of PCT-based counselling interventions in improving students' wellbeing and academic outcomes. Studies have shown that students who receive person-centered counselling report significant reductions in academic stress, increased self-confidence, and higher levels of academic motivation. Merry (2014). A meta-analysis of school-based counselling programs found that students who participated in PCT interventions demonstrated enhanced emotional well-being and greater academic resilience compared to their peers who did not receive counselling Elliott, Watson, Goldman, Greenbery (2011). Additionally, research indicates that fostering a person-centered counselling approach in schools leads to long-term benefits, including improved student-teacher relationships, reduced dropout rates, and higher overall academic achievement Cooper, Hara, Schmid, and Wyatt (2013). These findings highlight the importance of integrating PCT-based counselling strategies into school wellbeing programs to support students in overcoming psychological and academic barriers.

The application of PCT in school counselling underscores its transformative impact on students' wellbeing and academic progress. By providing an environment characterized by empathy, acceptance, and active listening, counsellors help students develop a stronger sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities. Genuineness facilitates deeper self-exploration. This enables students to identify personal and academic strengths that contribute to their success. Empathy creates a supportive atmosphere where students feel safe to discuss their struggles and work towards positive change. Active listening reinforces students' ability to

articulate their thoughts and emotions, leading to improved problem-solving skills and academic engagement Corey (2015). Collectively, these counselling strategies contribute to a holistic approach that not only enhances students' psychological well-being but also promotes their overall academic success.

Given the rising prevalence of wellbeing challenges among students, it is essential for educational institutions to incorporate PCT-based counselling into their support systems. Schools should invest in training counsellors to adopt a person-centered approach, equipping them with the skills necessary to foster positive and meaningful relationships with students Merry (2014). Additionally, school administrators should advocate for wellbeing policies that promote the well-being of students and reduce the stigma associated with seeking counselling support. By fostering a school culture that prioritizes emotional well-being, educators can create a learning environment that encourages students to thrive academically and personally.

The relevance of PCT in addressing students' wellbeing concerns lies in its focus on the individual's capacity for growth and self-directed learning. The theory's emphasis on empathy, acceptance, and active listening aligns with the goals of school counselling programs aimed at promoting student well-being and academic achievement Schmid (2014). As students develop greater self-awareness and confidence, they become more resilient in the face of academic challenges and more committed to their educational goals. The effectiveness of PCT-based counselling lies in its ability to provide students with a supportive framework that not only enhances their wellbeing but also fosters a lifelong commitment to personal and academic development.

Empirical Review

Unconditional Positive Regards and wellbeing of students

Farber, Suzuki and Lynch (2018) conducted a study titled Positive regard and psychotherapy outcome: A meta-analytic review. The study reviewed the association between therapist positive regard (PR) and treatment outcome of students with wellbeing issues. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a meta-analysis research design, which features expanded inclusion criteria and a larger number of studies (k=64) than previous analyses. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The study yielded a small positive association between PR and treatment outcome. To control for the repeated use of data sets and study samples within the database, a multilevel meta-analysis was adopted that indicated a stronger relation between PR and clinical outcome (g=0.36). These analyses support PR's standing as a significant component of the therapy relationship that leads to improved clinical outcomes. The study findings revealed significant influence of positive regard on psychotherapy outcome among students. The study recommended the use of positive regard among therapist in practice.

Firdaus (2025) conducted a study on Profile of Unconditional Positive Regard and Counselor Sincerity in Growing Interest in Counseling Based on Student Perspective. The study sought to determine the profile of unconditional positive regard and sincerity in fostering interest in counseling among students at SMK Muhammadiyah, Surabaya. The study used 68 students as the population of the study, using random sampling techniques. The instrument used for the study was a sincerity and unconditional acceptance questionnaire based on Rogers' theory. The data analysis technique uses descriptive percentages. The findings of the study showed that shows that unconditional positive regard based on students' perspectives is classified as very high with a percentage on students' wellbeing with score of 64.7%, while counselor sincerity based on students' perspectives is classified as high with a percentage score

of 61.8%. This research shows that the counsellor's unconditional positive regard and sincerity have a positive impact on the wellbeing of students.

Griffiths and Griffiths (2023) carried out a study titled Unconditional Positive Self-Regard and Self-Compassion, the Internal Consistency and Convergent/Divergent Validity of Patterson & Joseph's UPSR Scale. The purpose of the study was to test the psychometric properties and validity of the unconditional positive self-regard scale (UPSR) and its two subscales developed by Patterson & Joseph. It also aims to examine and compare the concepts of UPSR with self-compassion and its relation to mental well-being. The study adopted the Correlation survey The validation was conducted using an undergraduate and postgraduate student with a sample of 179. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and inter-item correlations. Convergent and divergent validity was explored in terms of correlations with self-compassion, depression (PHQ-9) and anxiety (GAD-7) scales. The finding of the study showed that there was good internal consistency for both the unconditional positive self-regard scale and the self-regard subscale and somewhat questionable internal consistency for the conditionality subscale. The results supported the hypothesis that unconditional positive self-regard scale is positively correlated with a measure of self-compassion and negatively correlated with measures of depression (PHQ-9) and anxiety (GAD-7). The study conclude that unconditional positive self-regard scale is a valid measure of the person-centred concept of unconditional positive self-regard resulting in improving students' wellbeing. This supports the potential use of the unconditional positive self-regard scale for evaluating therapeutic change for client-centred through the use of this non-medicalized tool.

Jeff, Cochran, Nancy, Cochran and Lindy (2021) carried out a study titled Unconditional Positive Regard and Limits: A Case Study in Child-Centered Play Therapy and Therapist Development. In this case study the therapist struggles to maintain unconditional

positive regard (UPR) for a child whose behavior in child-centered play therapy creates a need for limits. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The child-centered paly therapy was provided within a program to prevent juvenile delinquency among at-risk children at an urban, high poverty elementary school. The clients were referred for highly disruptive oppositional behavior persisting months into kindergarten. Data evidencing progress were provided as a reference point, while analysis focuses on conceptualization of process and mechanisms of change. The client's experience of Unconditional Positive Regard as well as use of limit testing to explore possibilities in relationships and self-concept, is related to his apparent progress, as is his therapist's growth and development toward providing consistent. From the review and therapy session, it was observed that Unconditional Positive Regard showed positive improvement among children. The study also showed that Child-centered play therapy had positive effect on children behaviour.

Igbokwe and Eze (2019) conducted a study titled "Teacher-Student Relationships and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria". The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which the quality of teacher-student relationships marked by empathy, respect, and acceptance influences students' academic achievement. Based on the objectives, four research questions and their corresponding hypotheses guided this study. A descriptive survey design was employed, and two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The sample consisted of 320 students randomly drawn from eight secondary schools in Enugu State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Teacher Relationship Quality Inventory (TRQI), which was validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while t-tests and regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between teacher-student relationships and students'

academic performance. The researchers concluded that promoting unconditional positive regard in teacher-student interactions is vital for academic success in Nigerian schools.

Akin-Little and Laniti (2021) carried out a study titled, The Influence of Teacher Empathy and Positive Regard on Students' Academic Engagement in Nigerian Secondary Schools. This study investigated the impact of teacher empathy and unconditional positive regard on student engagement and learning outcomes. The study adopted a correlational survey design and was guided by two (2) research questions and one (1) hypothesis. A total of 250 students from five government-owned secondary schools in Lagos State were selected through stratified random sampling. The researchers used a validated instrument titled Student Perceived Teacher Support Scale (SPTSS), which yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.84. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and linear regression. Findings revealed that teacher empathy and positive regard significantly predicted student engagement and academic motivation. The study recommended that teachers adopt student-centered communication practices that foster acceptance and emotional support in order to enhance learning in Nigerian secondary schools.

Genuineness and wellbeing of Students

Bockmier-Sommers, Chen, and Martsch (2017) carried out a study to examine the relationship between student engagement and these Rogerian characteristics. Students (n=185) completed an online survey that included the Student Course Engagement Questionnaire and the Barrett-Leonard Relationship Inventory. The results demonstrated that empathy and high regard were significantly correlated with all four engagement areas, and genuineness was significantly correlated with three: interaction, emotional, and performance engagement. As hypothesized, empathy and high regard exhibited the strongest relationships with interaction engagement and emotional engagement. These findings suggest that student engagement (interaction and emotional) does capture aspects of these relationship-building variables. It also

suggests that more can be done to measure and implement empathy, genuineness, and high regard skills in online teaching for more effective instruction.

Kolden, Wang, Austin, Chang and Klein (2018) conducted a study titled Congruence/genuineness: A meta-analysis. The study investigated the effectiveness of congruence/genuineness as a counselling strategy in improving students' emotional behaviour. The study employed Slovin's formula to determine the number of students used in the study and 342 students were estimated to be representative samples for respective groups. The study utilized sub groups of students adopting a pre-test and post-test method in each sub group utilizing genuineness, unconditional positive regard and emotional stability scale to access students' emotional behavior. Cronbach's alpha method was used to compute the reliability of the study tools and determined at 0.7; all variables had an alpha coefficient above 0.7, which implies an internal consistency. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using charts and tables. Qualitative data were analysed using Atlas.it, coded while quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study showed that subgroups of which counsellors utilized congruence/genuiness strategy and UPR scale had high emotional behavioural improvement among students accessed. The finding also showed a weighted aggregate effect size (r) of .23 (95% confidence interval = [13,32]) or an estimated d of .46. Moderators of the association between congruence and outcome are also investigated.

Pertiwi (2025) conducted a study titled Nurturing adolescent identity: humanistic counseling practices among vocational high school students. The study examines the implementation of the humanistic counseling approach in Vocational High Schools (SMK) as a strategy to support adolescents in developing an authentic sense of identity. Through a qualitative study employing in-depth interviews with students and guidance and counseling (BK) teachers, the findings reveal that counselors' approaches particularly unconditional

positive regard, empathy, and genuineness play a crucial role in establishing a safe and reflective counseling relationship. Counselors who present themselves as authentic, honest, and equal partners foster trust and facilitate deeper self-reflection among students. These findings reaffirm the relevance of the humanistic approach in supporting vocational students who often experience identity crises due to social pressures and uncertainty about their future. The study also highlights the importance of corrective emotional experiences in the counseling process and recommends further research with broader contexts and diverse methodological designs to enhance generalizability.

Empathy and wellbeing of Students

Abrams, Salzman, Espina and Daly (2022) conducted a study on the Impact of Providing Peer Support on Medical Students' Empathy, Self-Efficacy, and wellbeing Stigma. The study examined the effects of providing support to students in a medical school peer-support program. Using a pre-post, quasi-experimental study design, the study surveyed medical students who were peer supporters in their second through fourth years of medical school with four measures assessing (1) empathy, (2) self-efficacy, (3) wellbeing stigma, and (4) likelihood to assist peers with wellbeing problems to examine if serving as a volunteer peer supporter had any effect. Participants included 38 medical students that were actively enrolled peer supporters during the 2020-2021 year at a United States allopathic medical school. The findings revealed Empathy and Self-Efficacy showed positive impact on wellbeing of medical student. The study also showed that medical students who participated as peer supporters were found to have higher ratings of empathy scores ($Z = -1.964$, $p = 0.050$, $r = 0.34$) and self-efficacy scores ($Z = -2.060$, $p = 0.039$, $r = 0.35$) after participation in the program. No significant changes were noted for wellbeing stigma or likelihood to assist peers with wellbeing problems.

Onwuka (2024) carried out a study that determined the effect of social interaction intervention on empathy among public school students, as a response to the national question in Nigeria. The study adopted the non-randomized pretest-posttest design method. The sample comprised of 99 participants who were found in 2 intact classes that were selected through random sampling method from the sampling frame of all the 14 public senior secondary schools in Akko LGA in Gombe State, Nigeria. One class was assigned to the control group and the other class to the experimental group by tossing a coin. One research question and one hypothesis provided guide to the study. Data was collected with the use of a questionnaire. The research question was answered using descriptive mean while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using ANCOVA. The finding showed significance difference in post-test empathy mean score of participants in the experimental group. The finding was profound to enhance sufficient care and feelings for one another among participants in the experimental group. It was, therefore, recommended that activities and programmes which promote empathy among individuals and groups in society should be implemented across all levels of education in Nigeria.

Onwubiko (2020) carried out a study on the correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and academic achievement. The study employed correlation design with area of study covering ten universities' library schools in Nigeria. The sampled population for this study was 200 student librarians with each library school providing 20 male and female students who were randomly selected. The data for the study were collected through the administration of two instructions empathy assessment which are Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) develop by Davis in 1980 and Empathy Assessment Instrument by Eisenberg and Lennon (2023) as well as Academic Test Reports of the student librarians from the selected library schools. The reliability of the instrument was conducted using a test-retest method. The test scores were compared using Cronbach Alpha and a reliability coefficient 0.86 was

realized. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The outcome of the study shows that there is significant correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement. In the area of gender, it was established that there is no statistically significant correlation between male empathy scores with that of their female counterparts. It is based on the findings that recommendations were made which include that student librarians should be equipped with useful knowledge and skills that would enhance their empathic behaviours with a view to promoting interpersonal relationship among them and that collaborative instructional approaches should be applied in the teaching of the students.

Onuorah and Nwaru (2025) carried out a study titled teachers empathy skill as correlate of students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study determined the correlation between teachers' empathy skills and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 21,272 senior secondary school students in SS2 in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The population comprised of 9550 male students and 11,722 female students in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire and Students' Academic Achievement Scores (SAAS). The questionnaire was subjected to face validation. A coefficient value of 0.86 was obtained. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability method yielded co-efficient values of 0.83 and 0.87 for cluster 1 and 2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used for data analysis. The finding of the study revealed that teachers' cognitive skill and teachers' affective empathy skill have high positive relationship with students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Findings

further revealed that teachers' cognitive skill and teachers' affective empathy skill have significant relationship with students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on these findings, the researchers conclude that teachers' empathy skill has significant relationship with students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The researchers recommended that principals of public secondary schools should provide teachers with continuous professional development opportunities that focus on enhancing their cognitive empathy skills.

Active Listening and wellbeing of Students

Mutelo and Chatira (2025) carried out a study on the Essential Role of Active Listening in University Counselling Services. Counselling is a process whereby trained therapists and other professionals. The study was conducted listen to clients to help them resolve or overcome issues, problems, or challenges in desired ways. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study with a population of 5,912 students from 6 universities. A sample size of 538 students, representing 10.9% of the population, was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using Interview counselling session which was conducted among students to gather data for the study and validated through expert review and yielding a reliability coefficient of .930 using the test-retest method. The collected data were analyzed using independent sample t-tests at a .05 significance level were used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that active listening was an effective counselling strategy in improving mental behaviour and academic progress among students. The study also revealed that students who seek counselling in universities require sufficient space to share their concerns without unnecessary interruptions or premature problem-solving suggestions from counsellors. The study concludes that without active listening, university counsellors and other professionals

involved in the counselling process will be unable to help students resolve their problems and challenges adequately.

Ozcilnak Unver, Yüksel (2025) carried out study on Active-empathic listening scale: a reliability and validity study in nursing students. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of Active Empathic Listening Scale (AELS-TR) among nursing students. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. The sample of the study consisted of 405 nursing faculty students who voluntarily participated. Data were collected using an online survey method, a descriptive information form, AELS, and the Communication Skills Scale. The scale's language and content validity were ensured, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) models were administered. Item–total correlation analyses and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were calculated to evaluate the reliability of the AELS-TR. The finding of the study showed that Active Empathetic Listening Scale was 1.00 imply a significance of active listening on the development of nursing students. The study further revealed that the χ^2/SD value indicating excellent fit was 1.78; the comparative fit index and goodness of fit index values were 0.97 and 0.96, respectively. Internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86; test-retest reliability was obtained with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.717$ ($p < 0.001$).

Kercher, Heeter, Dannelley, King, Schaefer and Martinez (2025) carried out a study titled enhancing listening skills among future public health professionals: a pre-post educational intervention study. The study investigated the impact of active listening skills among college-students majoring in health professions on mental and behavioral development. The primary objective of this pre-post educational intervention study was to examine how students' confidence in active listening skills changed during a 13-week wellness coaching training course. The secondary objective of the study was to examine how students' baseline active listening skill confidence was correlated with change in active listening confidence

across the course. The study adopted a single-group pre-post design evaluated was used to evaluate listening skills among 74 college-students enrolled in a 13-week course. The service-learning component of the course was in collaboration with the workplace wellness program utilized by university employees. College-student participants engaged in 5-weeks of curricular training prior to being paired with university faculty and staff/employees who served as clients. Pre-to-post training changes in students' confidence and knowledge in the provision of active-listening and behavior change support were evaluated. Three subscales were used to assess listening (AELS; sensing, processing, and responding) and an adapted Communication Evaluation in Rehabilitation Tool. The finding of the study revealed that College students' processing and reflective listening skills improved from pre- to post-intervention ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, sensing, the most complex level of listening, also improved from pre- to post-intervention ($p < 0.1$). Lower baseline confidence in reflective listening was associated with greater improvements in active listening skills.

Paramole, Adeoye, Arowosaye and Ibikunle (2024) carried out a study on the Impact of Active Listening on Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes in Educational Settings. The study explored the theoretical foundations of active listening, including historical developments and key models. The study also discusses the implications of active listening within various learning theories, including constructivism, social learning, and transformative learning. The study adopted a qualitative research design selecting 25 literatures based on the topic under investigation and drawing a conclusion from their findings. The findings of the study revealed how active listening not only improves classroom dynamics but also equips students with essential communication skills. The study also showed that active listening emerges as a transformative practice that supports both academic success and personal development in the educational landscape.

Otamiri and Amadi (2022) carried out a study to ascertain the relationship between active listening communication skills and entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. Positivism philosophical foundation and Correlational survey research designed were adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1538 Business Education lecturers and final year students in south- south universities, Nigeria, with a sample size of 306 respondents using Krejcie and Morgan formula for sample size determination. Questionnaire was formulated on four-point rating scale to elicit data from the respondents. Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between active listening communication skills and entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. This study thus concluded that active listening communication skills is a strong antecedent and undisputable energetic for enhancing entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that Government and relevant concerned stakeholders should develop an effective and efficient mentorship programme which will enhance mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria thus enhance the economy positively; the products produced by the students should be used for their grading and graduation.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter reviewed the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students. The study reviews the concept of counselling, wellbeing, the role of counsellors in secondary schools, at Edo South Senatorial District. The theoretical framework for this study is the Cognitive-Behavioural Theory (CBT), developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960s, serves as the foundation for understanding the effectiveness of counselling strategies in improving the wellbeing and

academic progress of senior secondary school students. The theory posits that thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are interconnected, and that maladaptive cognitive patterns contribute to emotional distress and behavioural challenges Beck (2023). When applied in the school counselling context, CBT provides a structured framework for addressing students' wellbeing concerns, which in turn enhances their academic engagement and performance Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer & Fang (2012).

From the empirical review, it was observed that researchers had conducted several studies relevant to this topic, however, none had specifically examined perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school's students in Edo South Senatorial District. This is the gap the present study intends to fill.

CHAPTHER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The procedures that were adopted in carrying out this study are presented under the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey design. This design is seen appropriate because the study intends to examine the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District and so there would be no manipulation of any variables under this study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study is made up of 607 respondents from Edo State Ministry of Education. This comprised both public senior secondary school students and professional counsellors in senior secondary schools within Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State. This senatorial district includes seven local government areas: Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Ovia North-East, Ovia South-West, Orhionmwon, and Uhunmwonde. A total of 113 public senior secondary schools are distributed across these LGAs with a total number of 470 SSII students which were selected from one school in each of the local government area. With one professional counsellor assigned to each school, the counsellor population is 137. from Edo state Ministry of Education. The total population for the study is therefore 607 individuals (470 students + 137 counsellors).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study is 241 and the figure is derived Using the Taro Yamane's formula. Stratified sampling ensured representation across the seven local government areas in

the senatorial district, followed by proportionate sampling to determine the number of participants per LGA. Then, a simple random sampling was used to select students from the chosen schools, while purposive sampling was employed to select 15 counsellors based on availability and relevance to the study. A detailed breakdown of the sampling distribution is provided in the appendix.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study is a questionnaire designed by the researcher titled "Perceived effectiveness of counselling strategy for improving wellbeing for academic progress questionnaire (ECMHAPQ)". This questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A consists of items requesting the respondents' background data, section B consists of twenty (20) items designed to elicit data on perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving the wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students. The items were used to elicit data from the respondents. The questions are a five (5) point Likert Scale of 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Neutral (U), 2 = Disagree (D), 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of the Instrument

To determine the validity of the instrument, the draft of the questionnaire developed by the researcher was presented to the project supervisor who made some input. The corrected instrument was then presented to three experts all in the Department of Education, Benson Idahosa University, for face and content validation. Their suggestions and corrections were effected into the final draft of the instrument to ensure the validity of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the research instrument, the internal consistency method was adopted. A total of thirty (30) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents who were not part of the main study sample but share similar characteristics 15

students and 15 school counsellors drawn from senior secondary schools within the population of the study in Edo South Senatorial District. The responses were collected and analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha statistical technique to determine the internal consistency of the instrument.

The result of the analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.71, indicating the degree to which the items on the questionnaire consistently measure the constructs under investigation.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study was collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to both students and school counsellors in the selected senior secondary schools within Edo-South Senatorial District. An introductory letter from the Department of Education, Benson Idahosa University, was presented to school authorities to obtain permission for the research. With the help of research assistants, the questionnaire was administered during school hours, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest responses. The completed questionnaires were retrieved within a week and prepared for analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The mean, t-test and Standard Deviation (SD) statistics was used for the analysis of data. The mean and the grand mean was used to answer the research questions. The t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The Standard Deviations was used to determine the extent to which the responses deviated from the mean responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter the summary of the analysis of the data collected from the sample of respondents drawn from the area of study is presented. The results are presented in relation to the research questions and the hypotheses stated in chapter one. These are as follows

Research Question 1

What is the perceived effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

The perceived effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 1

Table 4: The Responses on the Effectiveness of Unconditional Positive Regards as Counselling Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Item	N	Mode	Median	Skewness	Remark
1	Counsellor accepts students without judgement	241	4.00	4.00	-1.184	Agree
2	Counsellor genuinely cares about students total wellbeing	241	4.00	4.00	-1.802	Agree
3	Acceptance helps build students confidence	241	4.00	300	-1.516	Not Sure
4	Students freely express themselves in counselling	241	4.00	3.00	-.919	Not Sure
5	Counsellor unconditionally treat students with respect	241	4.00	3.00	-1.287	Not Sure

Table 4 statistics showed that the modal response category of the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress for items 1- 5 is 4.00 with the medians as 3 & 4 and the responses to all the items in the strategy are negatively skewed. These values showed that the sampled students agreed with the position that Counsellors accept students without judgement and genuinely care about their

total wellbeing, though they were not sure that students acceptance by counsellors helps build their confidence or make them express themselves freely in counselling sessions, or that Counsellors unconditionally treat students with respect.

Research Question 2

What is the perceived effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

The perceived effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 2

Table 2: The Responses on the Effectiveness of Genuineness as Counselling Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Item	N	Mode	Median	Skewness	Remark
1	Counsellor's genuineness makes students feel comfortable to discuss their problems	241	4.00	3.00	-1.343	Not sure
2	Counsellor's genuineness attract students for counseling	241	4.00	3.00	-1013	Not sure
3	Counsellor's sincerity motivates students trust counselling advice	241	4.00	3.00	-.066	Not sure
4	Counsellor's sincerity about their own limitation makes students respect them and their advice	241	4.00	3.00	-1.007	Not sure
5	Counsellor's sincerity makes student treat their own academic matters with devotion	241	4.00	3.00	-1.063	Not sure

Table 2 statistics showed that the modal perception of the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis for items 1-5 is 4.00 with median as 3.00. The responses to the items are negatively skewed with values ranging from -.066 to - 1.343. These values showed that the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis were not sure about the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress

Research Question 3

What is the perceived effectiveness of empathy as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

The perceived effectiveness of empathy as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 3

Table 3: The Effectiveness of Empathy as Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Item	N	Mode	Median	Skewness	Remark
1	Counsellor's empathy makes students feel emotionally supported	241	4.00	4.00	-1.545	Agree
2	Counsellor's empathy makes students seek for solution to their problems	241	4.00	3.00	-1.206	Not Sure
3	Students feel less worrisome when counselors help them understand their worries	241	3.00	3.00	-.966	Not Sure
4	Counsellor's empathy improves students' motivation for learning	241	4.00	3.00	-1.230	Not Sure
5	Counsellor's empathy helps students surmount academic difficulties	241	4.00	3.00	-1.349	Not Sure

Table 1 statistics showed that the modal perception of the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis for the items 1, 2, 4 & 5 is 4.00. The median values for item 2 – 5 is 3 while for item 1 is 4. The skewness ranges from -.966 to -1.545. These values showed that the sampled students agreed with the position that Counsellor's empathy makes students feel emotionally supported. They were however not sure that Counsellor's empathy, makes students seek for solution to their problems, or feel less worrisome when counsellors help them understand their worries, or improves students' motivation for learning or helps students surmount academic difficulties

Research Question 4

What is the perceived effectiveness of active listening as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

The perceived effectiveness of active listening as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 4

Table 4: The Responses on the Effectiveness of Active Listening as Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Item	N	Mode	Median	Skewness	Remark
1	Students feel motivated when the counsellor listens to them attentively	241	4.00	4.00	-1.663	Agree
2	Counsellor' active listening skills increase students ability to express and resolve their challenges	241	3.00	3.00	-1.312	Not Sure
3	Students feel more comfortable when counsellor actively listen to them	241	4.00	4.00	-1.406	Agree
4	Students confidence in finding solutions to their problem increases when counsellor pay attention to them	241	4.00	3.00	-1.207	Not Sure
5	Active listening from counsellors helps student process and understand their academic difficulties	241	4.00	4.00	-1.393	Agree

Table 4 statistics showed that the modal perception of the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis for the items 1, 3, 4 & 5 is 4.00. The median value for items 1, 3 & 5 is 4 while for items 2 & 4 is 3. The skewness ranges from -1.207 to -1.663. These values showed that the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis agreed with the positions that when counsellor actively listen to them students feel motivated or feel more comfortable or helps student process and understand their academic difficulties. They were however not sure that Counsellor' active listening skills increase students' ability to express and resolve their challenges, or increase students' confidence in finding solutions to their problem

Summary of the Test of the Hypotheses

The summary of the test of the hypotheses are presented in the following section

Hypothesis 1

The Responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

One Sample Chi-Square test of the differences between the categories of the responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 5

Table 5: One Sample Chi-Square Test of the Categories of the Responses on the Effectiveness of Unconditional Positive Regards as Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Items	N	Test Stat	df	Sig. (2-sided)	Decision
1	Counsellor accepts students without judgement	241	109.53	4	.000	Significant
2	Counsellor genuinely cares about students total wellbeing	241	167.93	4	.000	Significant
3	Acceptance helps build students confidence	241	64.13	3	<.001	Significant
4	Students freely express themselves in counselling	241	69.33	4	<.001	Significant
5	Counsellor unconditionally treat students with respect	241	98.33	4	.000	Significant

Table 8 statistics showed that the test statistics of the difference between the categories of responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress range from 64.13 to 167.93. And the corresponding p –values ranges from .000 to <.001. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the categories of responses of students on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are significantly different.

Hypothesis 2

The responses on the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

One Sample Chi-Square test of the differences between the categories of the responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 5

Table 5: One Sample Chi-Square test of the Categories of The Responses on the Effectiveness of Genuineness as Counselling Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Item	N	Chi-square stat	df	Sig (2-sided test)	Decision
1	Counsellor's genuineness makes students feel comfortable to discuss their problems	241	101.800	4	.000	Not Significant
2	Counsellor's genuineness attract students for counselling	241	79.000	4	<.001	Significant
3	Counsellor's sincerity motivates students trust counselling advice	241	81.467	4	<.001	Significant
4	Counsellor's sincerity about their own limitation makes students respect them and their advice	241	74.733	4	<.001	Significant
5	Counsellor's sincerity makes student treat their own academic matters with devotion	241	73.533	4	<.001	Significant

Table 8 statistics showed that the test statistics of the difference between the categories of responses on the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress range from 73.533 to 101.800. And the corresponding p –values ranges from .000 to <.001. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the categories of responses of students on the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are significantly different.

Hypothesis 3

The Responses on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

One Sample Chi-Square test of the differences between the categories of the responses on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 5

Table 5: One Sample Chi-Square test of the Categories of The Responses on the Effectiveness of Empathy as Counselling Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Items	N	Chi-square stat	df	Sig (2-sided test)	Decision
1	Counsellor's empathy makes students feel emotionally supported	241	130.467	4	.000	Significant
2	Counsellor's empathy makes students seek for solution to their problems	241	88.800	4	.000	Significant
3	Students feel less worrisome when counsellors help them understand their worries	241	63.200	4	<.001	Significant
4	Counsellor's empathy improves students' motivation for learning	241	100.832	4	.000	Significant
5	Counsellor's empathy helps students surmount academic difficulties	241	95.400	4	.000	Significant

Table 7 statistics showed that the test statistics of the difference between the categories of responses on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress range from 63.200 to 130.467. And the corresponding p –values range from .000 to <.001. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the categories of responses of the students on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are significantly different.

Hypothesis 4

The Responses on the effectiveness of active listening as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

One Sample Chi-Square test of the differences between the categories of the responses on the effectiveness of active listening as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress is presented in table 8

Table 6: One Sample Chi-Square test of the Categories of the Responses on the Effectiveness of Active Listening as Counselling Strategy for Improving the wellbeing of students for Academic Progress

SN	Items	N	Chi-Square Stat	df	Sig(2sided test)	Decision
1	Students feel motivated when the counsellor listens to them attentively	241	146.867	4	.000	Significant
2	Counsellor' active listening skills increase students' ability to express and resolve their challenges	241	97.533	4	.000	Significant
3	Students feel more comfortable when counsellor actively listen to them	241	112.867	4	.000	Significant
4	Students' confidence in finding solutions to their problem increases when counsellor pay attention to them	241	87.067	4	.000	Significant
5	Active listening from counsellors helps student process and understand their academic difficulties	101	81.079	4	<.001	Significant

Table 7 statistics showed that the test statistics of the difference between the categories of responses on the effectiveness of active listening skills as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress range from 81.079 to 146.867. And the corresponding p –values range from .000 to <.001. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the categories of responses of the students on the effectiveness of active listening skills as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are significantly different.

Summary of Major Findings

1. The study showed that the respondents agreed with the position that Counse**l**lors accept students without judgment and genuinely care about students' total wellbeing, but were not sure that student's acceptance by counsellors helps build their confidence or make them express themselves freely in counselling sessions, or that Counsellors unconditionally treat students with respect.
2. The study showed that the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis were not sure about the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.

3. The study showed that the sampled students from secondary schools in Benin metropolis agreed with the position that Counsellor's empathy makes students feel emotionally supported. They were however not sure that Counsellor's empathy makes students seek for solution to their problems, or feel less worrisome through the understanding of their worries or improves students' motivation for learning or helps students surmount academic difficulties
4. The findings showed that the respondents agreed with the positions that when counsellor actively listen to them students feel motivated or feel more comfortable or helps student process and understand their academic difficulties. They were however not sure that Counsellor' active listening skills increase students' ability to express and resolve their challenges, or increase students' confidence in finding solutions to their problem

Discussion of Results

The first finding of this study revealed that respondents agreed that counsellors accept students without judgment and genuinely care about their total wellbeing. However, they were uncertain whether such acceptance builds their confidence, enhances self-expression, or ensures that counsellors treat them with unconditional respect. This result suggests that while students perceive counsellors as supportive and non-judgmental, there remains some skepticism about how far such acceptance translates into practical psychological benefits. This aligns with the humanistic principle of unconditional positive regard propounded by Carl Rogers, which emphasizes acceptance of clients without evaluation as a foundation for therapeutic growth. This agrees with the findings of Farber, Suzuki and Lynch (2018) who conducted a study titled Positive regard and psychotherapy outcome. The study showed a significant influence of positive regard on psychotherapy outcome among students. In the educational context, Igbokwe and Eze (2019) found a significant positive correlation between teacher-student relationships built on empathy, respect, and acceptance, and students' academic

achievement in Enugu State. Likewise. Jeff, Cochran, Nancy, Cochran and Lindy (2021) in their study observed that Unconditional Positive Regard showed positive improvement among children. These findings reinforce the idea that acceptance is crucial for learning effectiveness. However, the uncertainty observed among the current respondents could suggest that while counsellors exhibit care, the level of interpersonal trust or emotional openness required to build confidence has not been fully achieved. As Akin-Little and Laniti (2021) also noted, positive regard alone must be accompanied by empathetic and student-centered communication to strengthen engagement and motivation.

The second finding showed that secondary school students in Benin metropolis were uncertain about the effectiveness of genuineness as a counselling strategy in improving their wellbeing and academic progress. This uncertainty indicates that students may not clearly recognize genuineness in counsellor behaviour or may perceive counsellor neutrality as detachment rather than authenticity. Genuineness, also called congruence, is a counsellor's capacity to be real and transparent within the therapeutic relationship, thereby fostering trust. The finding resonates with the study of Kolden, Wang, Austin, Chang and Klein (2018) who found a positive relationship between genuineness and students' emotional behaviour. Furthermore, the work of Bockmier-Sommers, Chen, and Martsch (2017) found that genuineness was significantly correlated with emotional and performance engagement among university students, implying that authentic communication from educators enhances student involvement and achievement. The divergence observed in this study could stem from a mismatch between counsellors' professional demeanor and students' expectations of interpersonal warmth. In Nigerian school culture, counsellors' adherence to professional boundaries may be misinterpreted as aloofness, thereby reducing the perceived authenticity of the counselling relationship. Moreover, since Rogers' theory posits genuineness as the

foundation for developing trust, students' uncertainty may point to a need for more expressive transparency from counsellors.

The third finding of this study indicated that respondents agreed that counsellors' empathy makes them feel emotionally supported, but they were unsure whether empathy helped them seek solutions, feel less worried, become more motivated to learn, or overcome academic difficulties. This partial agreement reflects that empathy is being perceived primarily as emotional comfort rather than a tool for cognitive and behavioral change. Rogers' theory identifies empathy as a fundamental condition for facilitating self-understanding and growth, and this study's finding affirms its emotional component but suggests that its problem-solving potential may be underutilized. Empirical evidence supports this dual nature of empathy. Onwuka (2024) found that social interaction interventions significantly improved empathy among public school students, enhancing care and emotional awareness among peers. Similarly, Onwubiko (2020) reported a significant positive correlation between student librarians' empathic behaviour and their academic achievement, emphasizing empathy's role in improving learning outcomes. Furthermore, Onuorah and Nwaru (2025) revealed that teachers' cognitive and affective empathy skills significantly correlated with students' academic achievement in Anambra State, confirming empathy's importance for motivation and performance. However, as Onuorah and Nwaru (2025) observed, while empathy contributes to emotional intelligence and self-esteem, its translation into tangible learning outcomes depends on how it is operationalized in guidance practices. The uncertainty in this study thus suggests that counsellors may express empathy without integrating it into solution-focused or cognitive-behavioral strategies.

The fourth finding revealed that respondents agreed that counsellors' active listening makes them feel motivated, comfortable, and more capable of understanding their academic difficulties. However, they were uncertain whether this skill increases their ability to express

and resolve challenges independently or boosts their confidence in finding solutions to problems. This suggests that while counsellors' listening provides immediate psychological relief, it may not fully empower students toward self-efficacy. Active listening involves attending, paraphrasing, reflecting, and responding in ways that demonstrate full comprehension of the speaker's message. The study by Otamiri and Amadi (2022) showed that active listening communication skills significantly correlated with entrepreneurial development among Business Education students in South-South Nigeria, demonstrating its role in enhancing confidence and problem-solving capacity. Similarly, the study of Mutelo and Chatira (2025) on the Essential Role of Active Listening in University Counselling Services and found out that active listening has an effective counselling strategy in improving mental behaviour and academic progress. In the same vein, Onyeke (2023) and Otonkue (2023) both found that listening communication strongly predicts effective service delivery and job performance, respectively-confirming that listening enhances engagement and outcomes in institutional relationships. The uncertainty in this study may therefore indicate that counsellors' listening behaviours are more passive than facilitative, allowing students to speak without necessarily being guided toward insight or problem resolution.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies for improving wellbeing for academic progress among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District. Specifically, the study sought to determine the effectiveness of unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy and active listening as a counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress. Based on these objectives, four corresponding research questions were raised to guide the study, and four null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance as follows:

1. What is the perceived effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?
2. What is the perceived effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?
3. What is the perceived effectiveness of empathy as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?
4. What is the perceived effectiveness of active listening as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress?

Hypotheses includes;

1. The responses on the effectiveness of unconditional positive regards as strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.
2. The responses on the effectiveness of genuineness as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

3. The responses on the effectiveness of empathy as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.
4. The responses on the effectiveness of active listening as counselling strategy for improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress are not significantly different.

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population of the study is gotten from Edo State Ministry of Education. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 241 respondents was selected for the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) were used for data analysis. Based on the results of the analysis, the findings of the study revealed that:

i. There is no significant effect of unconditional positive regard as a counselling strategy on improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
ii. There is no significant effect of genuineness as a counselling strategy on improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
iii. There is no significant effect of empathy as a counselling strategy on improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.
iv. There is no significant effect of active listening as a counselling strategy on improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress.

Implication for knowledge on Wellbeing and Academic Progress

The findings of this study indicate that counselling strategies such as unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening play a vital role in supporting students' wellbeing and academic progress, even though their individual effects were not statistically significant. The results imply that the presence of these counselling strategies contributes to a positive learning atmosphere where students feel understood, valued, and emotionally supported. When consistently practiced, these strategies enhance the psychological

safety of students and foster improved concentration, motivation, and interpersonal relationships within the school environment. The study therefore underscores the importance of effective counsellor-student interactions and highlights the centrality of emotional support as part of holistic education in senior secondary schools.

Conclusion

This study examined the perceived effectiveness of counselling strategies specifically unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening in improving the wellbeing of students for academic progress among senior secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District. The findings of the study revealed that none of the four counselling strategies showed a statistically significant effect on improving students' wellbeing or promoting their academic progress. The result implies that although students acknowledged certain positive behaviours from counsellors, such as care, acceptance, attentiveness, and empathy, these counselling attributes alone may not be sufficient to bring about measurable improvements in their wellbeing outcomes or academic performance. The findings suggest that other factors-such as the depth of counsellor–student relationships, the frequency and duration of counselling sessions, students' willingness to engage, or environmental and institutional supports-may play stronger roles in influencing mental and academic outcomes.

Therefore, it can be concluded that while counselling strategies such as unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening are important components of effective counselling practice, their isolated application may not independently result in significant wellbeing improvements or academic progress among students. Counsellors may need to adopt a more integrated and holistic approach that combines these core counselling techniques with other strategies, such as cognitive-behavioural interventions, psychoeducation, and school-based wellbeing programs, to achieve more substantial outcomes. The study concludes that counselling strategies, though essential for building rapport and trust, must be

contextually adapted and supported by institutional structures and continuous wellbeing awareness to meaningfully enhance students' mental well-being and academic development.

Contribution to learning

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the influence of counselling strategies, unconditional positive regard, genuineness, empathy, and active listening on students' wellbeing and academic progress in Edo South Senatorial District. It highlights that while these strategies are valued by students, their effectiveness depends on how consistently and skillfully they are applied. The study adds to existing literature by emphasizing the relevance of humanistic counselling approaches in improving students' emotional well-being and learning outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Counsellors in Benin secondary schools should consistently reinforce acceptance through authentic respect, validation, and affirmation to help students internalize feelings of worth and confidence during counselling sessions.
2. Counselling education programmes should emphasize the demonstration of warmth and sincerity as visible behaviours, ensuring that genuineness is communicated in ways that students can identify and emotionally relate to, especially within the cultural context of Nigerian secondary schools.
3. Counsellors need to link empathic understanding with actionable steps-such as goal-setting, reflective questioning, and motivational dialogue-to transform empathy from emotional support into a catalyst for resilience and academic progress among students.
4. Counsellors should practice reflective listening, where responses not only affirm understanding but also stimulate students' self-awareness and solution generation. This

interactive approach will help transform listening from a comforting presence into a developmental process that fosters students' confidence, autonomy, and sustained motivation for learning.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

School of Post Graduate Studies
Department of Education
Faculty of Arts and Education
Benson Idahosa University
Ugbor, G.R.A, Benin City.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Postgraduate student from the Department of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo Sate as part of the University requirement I am conducting a research work on the topic: ***perceived effectiveness of counselling strategy for improving wellbeing of students for academic progress in senior secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District.***

In light of this, I humbly request your assistance in answering the questions below, which requires simple ticking the appropriate boxes. I assure you your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and solely for the purpose of this research work

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Researcher

EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING WELLBEING FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESS QUESTIONNAIRE (ECMHAPQ)

Instruction: Please tick on the appropriate column to indicate your opinion on the following statement.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box or fill in the blanks where necessary.

1. **Identification:** Student [ ] Counsellor [ ]

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Instruction: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, N – Neutral, D – Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree

SN	UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARDS	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Counsellor accepts students without judgment, no matter what they share in sessions.					
2.	Counsellor genuinely cares about students well-being, not just their academic performance.					
3.	The acceptance receive in counselling helps students build confidence in my academic abilities.					
4.	Students are free to express their true self in counselling sessions without fear of rejection.					
5.	Counsellor treats students with respect, regardless of my background or personal struggles.					
	GENUINENESS	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
6.	Counsellor's honesty and openness make students feel comfortable to discuss their learning difficulty					
7.	Counsellors attract students for counselling when the former genuinely care about the latters' academic progress					
8.	Counsellors' sincerity motivates students to trust the advice given to them on how to improve on their studies					
9.	Counsellors' sincerity about their own limitations makes students respect them and their advice on academic matters					
10.	Counsellors' sincerity makes students treat their academic matters with true devotion					
	EMPATHY	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
11.	Students feel emotionally supported when counsellors listen to their concerns with understanding					
12.	When counsellors truly care about students' academic struggles the latter tend to seek for solutions o those problems					
13.	Students feel less worrisome in their studies when counsellors help them understand their feelings and worries					
14.	Students' academic motivation improves when the counsellor shows concerns for students personal and school related challenges					
15.	When counsellors understand students struggles the latter feel encouraged to work harder in their studies					

	ACTIVE LISTENING	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
16.	Students feel motivated when the counsellor listens attentively to their academic concerns					
17.	Students' ability to express their thoughts and resolve many challenges in their studies increases when Counsellors exhibit active listening skills					
18.	When counsellors actively listen to students the latter feel more comfortable to discussing academic struggles					
19.	Students' confidence in finding solution to school-related problems increases when they see the counsellor paying attention to them					
20.	Active listening from counsellors help students process and understand their academic difficulties better.					

APPENDIX B
RELIABILITY TEST RESULT

```
RELIABILITY_VIVIAN_AZEKAGBON
  /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=DESCRIPTIVE SCALE CORR

  /SUMMARY=TOTAL MEANS.
```

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	0
	Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha[a]	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items[a]	N of Items
.71	.714	20