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PUPILS' PERCEPTION OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ABA METROPOLITAN AREA, ABIA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated pupils' perception of counselling services and social adjustment in Aba Metropolitan Area, Abia State. The study was based on the understanding that effective counselling services can facilitate pupils' social development, peer interactions, and emotional regulation, which are essential components of social adjustment. The study focused on three sub-types of Counselling services: educational counselling, personal social counselling, and career awareness counselling as independent variables, while social adjustment was the dependent variable. A descriptive survey design was employed, and the population comprised all upper primary pupils in public and private schools within Aba Metropolitan Area. Using stratified random sampling, a total of 300 pupils were selected to ensure representation across school type and class level (Primary 4 to 6). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Pupils' Perception of Counselling Services and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (PPCSSA-Q), which utilized a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The instrument was validated by experts and tested for reliability through a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha above 0.80 for all sub-variables. Data were analyzed using mean, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer research questions and test hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that pupils had positive perceptions of all three counselling service types and exhibited high levels of social adjustment. Correlational analysis indicated that all sub-types of counselling services were

positively and significantly related to social adjustment, with personal social counselling showing the strongest relationship. The study concluded that pupils' positive perception of counselling services enhances their social adjustment, highlighting the critical role of effective guidance programmes in upper primary schools. Recommendations included strengthening school counselling programmes, increasing awareness of services, emphasizing personal social counselling, and involving parents in supporting pupils' social development.

Keywords: *Counselling services, educational counselling, social adjustment.*

Background of the Study

Education is a holistic process that extends beyond the acquisition of academic knowledge to include the social, emotional, and behavioural adaptation of pupils within the school environment. In primary schools, pupils undergo significant developmental changes that require continuous support to cope with both academic demands and social interactions.

Social adjustment refers to a pupil's ability to establish positive peer relationships, interact appropriately with teachers and classmates, and conform to school norms and expectations. Research has shown that pupils who are socially well-adjusted tend to participate more fully in school life and demonstrate greater overall school satisfaction (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019).

Guidance and counselling services play a crucial role in facilitating pupils' social adjustment by addressing barriers to healthy interaction, emotional wellbeing, and school participation. Effective counselling services in schools are designed to support pupils in coping with academic pressures, personal concerns, and future aspirations, ultimately fostering positive social behaviour and integration into the school community. In primary school settings, counselling services commonly encompass educational counselling, personal social counselling, and career awareness counselling (Ifelunmi, 2015).

Educational counselling services focus on academic support and study skills, helping pupils develop effective learning strategies, understand academic expectations, and cope with schoolwork. When pupils receive quality educational counselling, they are better equipped to manage classroom demands and engage positively with learning opportunities. Personal social counselling services target pupils' emotional and interpersonal challenges, fostering skills such as conflict resolution, self-confidence, and peer understanding. Such services have been shown to enhance pupils' ability to form healthy peer relationships and adjust socially within school environments (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019).

Career awareness counselling services, although often associated with secondary and tertiary education, are increasingly recognized as valuable even at the upper primary level. Early exposure to career awareness helps pupils begin to understand their interests, set goals, and appreciate the relevance of education to future opportunities factors that can motivate positive social behaviour and school involvement (Journal of Social Sciences and Business, 2024).

However, despite the acknowledged role of counselling services in supporting school adjustment, evidence suggests that many school counselling programmes are under-utilized or inadequately implemented, particularly in primary schools within developing contexts. Studies have found that pupils' perceptions of counselling services significantly influence their willingness to

engage with such services, which in turn affects their social adjustment outcomes (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019). Furthermore, challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of trained counsellors, and low awareness compound the difficulty in delivering comprehensive counselling services in school settings (research on guidance and counselling needs in primary schools, 2024).

In the context of Aba Metropolitan Area, Abia State, there is limited empirical research assessing how pupils perceive counselling services and how these perceptions relate to their social adjustment. Without localized data, it is difficult to design interventions that effectively enhance pupils' social experiences and wellbeing. Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the perceptions of upper primary pupils regarding educational, personal social, and career awareness counselling services and how these perceptions are associated with their social adjustment in school.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was developed by Albert Bandura in the year (1986). Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that learning occurs in a social context through observational learning, modelling, self-efficacy, and behavioural reinforcement. Individuals' perceptions of their environment and their belief in their ability to perform specific behaviours influence their social and academic outcomes.

Pupils' perception of counselling services can affect their belief in their ability to manage social and academic challenges (self-efficacy). Counselling services provide modelling, guidance, and reinforcement that help pupils adjust socially in school, improving peer interactions and classroom participation. The theory supports understanding how perceived counselling interventions influence behaviour and adjustment in upper primary pupils.

The SCT framework justifies why pupils who perceive counselling positively are more likely to adopt socially appropriate behaviours and develop confidence in academic and social tasks. Counselling interventions act as social models and reinforcement mechanisms, influencing pupils' adjustment.

Person-Centred Theory (PCT)

Person-Centred Theory (PCT) was developed by Carl Rogers in the year (1951). Person-Centred Theory posits that individuals have the capacity for self-directed growth, but this potential is maximized in an environment providing unconditional positive regard, empathy, and genuineness.

Counselling services in schools (educational, personal social, career awareness) provide supportive environments where pupils feel understood and valued. Positive perceptions of counselling

create a safe space for pupils to explore challenges, develop coping strategies, and enhance social adjustment.

Pupils who perceive counselling services as empathic and supportive are more likely to engage in the process, improving their social behaviours and peer interactions. PCT explains the mechanism through which counselling facilitates social adjustment by enhancing self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

Developmental Theory of Social Adjustment (DTSA)

Developmental Theory of Social Adjustment (DTSA) was developed by Havighurst in the year (1972)

Developmental theory posits that children undergo specific developmental tasks at different ages, including social adjustment tasks such as forming friendships, learning social rules, and cooperating in group settings. Successful achievement of these tasks leads to social competence and wellbeing.

Upper primary pupils are at a stage where peer relationships, social norms, and school behaviour are crucial developmental tasks. Counselling services provide guidance and support to help pupils meet these social tasks, enhancing adjustment and school integration.

This theory explains the age-specific relevance of counselling services, particularly personal social and career awareness counselling, in helping pupils navigate social challenges and achieve developmental milestones. It provides a theoretical framework for linking counselling interventions to social adjustment outcomes.

Concept of Pupils' Perception of Counselling Services

Pupils' perception of counselling services refers to the views, beliefs, attitudes, and interpretations that pupils hold about the nature, usefulness, accessibility, quality, and impact of counselling services provided within their schools. It encompasses how pupils experience and interpret these services based on their interactions with counsellors, the relevance of the help they receive, and their understanding of how these services support their academic, social, and personal challenges (University of Zambia dissertation findings, 2025; International Journal of Development Research, 2019).

Perception is not simply awareness of services but involves internal cognitive and affective responses including expectation, motivation to use services, and perceived benefits that influence whether pupils choose to engage with counselling activities (University of Zambia dissertation findings, 2025). In educational settings, these perceptions may be shaped by what pupils have seen or experienced, what they believe counselling can do, and the degree to which services meet their expectations (University of Zambia dissertation findings, 2025).

Empirical studies show that when pupils perceive counselling services positively for example, as supportive, helpful, confidential, and relevant they are more likely to trust, seek out, and benefit from counselling interventions, which relates to better behavioural and social outcomes (International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, 2022). Likewise, negative or indifferent perceptions such as beliefs that counselling is ineffective or inaccessible may reduce pupils' engagement with available support, undermining the potential of counselling to facilitate adjustment and wellbeing (International Journal of Development Research, 2019).

Thus, pupils' perception of counselling services is a multi-dimensional construct involving cognitive appraisal, emotional response, and behavioural intention toward counselling services in schools and is a key determinant of how effectively counselling contributes to pupils' social and academic adjustment.

Concept of Social Adjustment

Social adjustment refers to the process by which a pupil adapts to the social environment of the school, successfully meeting interpersonal, behavioural, and social expectations in ways that support positive functioning within peer groups, classroom activities, and broader school life. It involves the ability to form and maintain healthy relationships with peers and teachers, cooperate in social interactions, respond appropriately to social norms, and participate actively in school activities without conflict or withdrawal (Rienties et al., 2011; Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017).

In educational psychology, social adjustment is understood as a multi-faceted construct that affects and is affected by pupils' behaviour, peer acceptance, emotional responses, and classroom engagement. For example, children who are well-adjusted socially tend to experience peer acceptance, show prosocial behaviours, and cope effectively with social challenges such as bullying or group conflict (Pratiwi, 2025; DeRosier & Lloyd, 2012).

Research also links social adjustment to academic outcomes, indicating that pupils who interact positively with peers and teachers, and who are accepted and integrated into the social life of the school, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement, motivation, and academic performance than those who struggle socially (DeRosier & Lloyd, 2012).

In the context of upper primary education, social adjustment includes pupils' ability to participate confidently in group activities, resolve interpersonal conflicts respectfully, and sustain positive peer relationships all of which contribute to a supportive and harmonious school climate. When pupils are socially well-adjusted, they are more likely to achieve not just social competence but also the emotional and academic benefits that accompany healthy school engagement.

Educational Counselling Services and Social Adjustment

Educational counselling services in school settings are designed to support pupils' academic development while simultaneously fostering social and emotional adjustment within the learning environment. These services often include strategies such as individual and group academic guidance, study skills training, classroom behaviour support, and school transition planning all of which contribute directly to pupils' ability to interact positively with peers and adapt socially to school demands.

Several empirical studies suggest that counselling services have a measurable influence on various aspects of student adjustment, albeit with differing contexts and outcomes. For example, research conducted among primary school pupils in southeastern Nigeria found that pupils' perception of school counselling services significantly influenced their social adjustment in the school environment. Pupils who viewed counselling positively tended to exhibit healthier social behaviours and were better integrated among their peers, while low perceptions of counselling corresponded with poorer social adjustment (Perception of Counselling Services and Social Adjustment among Primary School Pupils in Calabar, Cross River State, n.d.).

Although some studies have reported mixed results, such as research in secondary schools in Lagos State where counselling services did not show significant influence on personal or social adjustment possibly due to limited utilization and awareness of services the findings underscore the importance of effective implementation and pupil engagement with counselling services (Longe, Lawal, & Onuchi-Mark, 2020).

Supporting these findings, a 2022 study reported that guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools significantly affected students' involvement in school social activities, helping them interact better with peers, resist negative peer pressure, and make wise friendship choices all core components of social adjustment (International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, 2022).

Beyond primary and secondary contexts, research on school adjustment in secondary settings has also highlighted the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in enhancing students' adaptation to social environments. A descriptive survey of secondary schools in Kenya found that counselling services contributed positively to students' ability to cope with the social aspects of school life, including interactions with classmates and adjustment to school routines (Kanga, Nyaga, Barchok, & Ngari, 2025).

Taken together, these studies suggest that educational counselling services can play a crucial role in promoting social adjustment among pupils, particularly when services are well-implemented, appropriately understood by learners, and responsive to their social needs. However, the mixed findings also indicate the necessity for more context-specific research especially in primary school settings like Aba Metropolitan Area to better understand how pupils' perceptions of counselling services relate to their social adjustment outcomes.

Personal Counselling Services and Social Adjustment

Personal counselling services often referred to in guidance and counselling literature as personal-social counselling focus on helping pupils manage emotional, interpersonal, and behavioural challenges within the school setting. These services aim to support pupils' self-understanding, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and peer relationship skills, which are key facets of social adjustment in school environments.

Research suggests that personal-social guidance models can be effective in improving aspects of social adjustment. In a mixed-method study on adolescents, Setiana found that personal-social guidance through a strengths-based advising model improved social adjustment scores, indicating that tailored counselling interventions promote recognition, understanding, and adaptation in social contexts (Setiana et al., 2022).

Although some studies report mixed outcomes, the role of counselling in influencing social adjustment remains central to school support systems. For instance, a study in Lagos State revealed no significant influence of general counselling services on adolescents' personal-social adjustment, which possibly reflected under-utilisation or poor implementation of counselling services rather than ineffectiveness per se, underscoring the complexity of how personal counselling services are delivered and perceived (Longe et al., 2020).

Moreover, broader research on guidance and counselling services consistently shows positive associations between counselling

engagement and students' adjustment outcomes. For example, studies in senior high schools indicate that students who actively engage with counselling services tend to demonstrate better peer relationships, social integration, and coping behaviours, despite some challenges like stigma or lack of awareness limiting full utilization (Cobbina, 2025).

Empirical evidence specific to primary settings is rarer, but related research has shown that overall perceptions of school counselling services which include personal dimensions are significantly linked to pupils' social adjustment. In Calabar, pupils' perception of counselling services was found to significantly influence their social adjustment, suggesting that how pupils perceive personal counselling components (e.g., emotional support, interpersonal guidance) affects their social experiences in school (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019).

Overall, these studies indicate that personal counselling services have the potential to facilitate aspects of social adjustment, particularly when pupils engage with and perceive these services positively. However, findings also highlight challenges related to implementation, accessibility, and perception among learner's issues that require attention in educational policy and school practice.

Career Awareness Counselling Services and Social Adjustment

Career awareness counselling, sometimes called vocational guidance or career guidance, aims to help pupils understand their strengths, interests, and possible future pathways, as well as how their current behaviours and school engagement relate to future career goals. While many studies focus on older students' career decisions, the social dimensions of career awareness counselling such as peer interaction, motivation, emotional regulation, and aspirations are closely related to social adjustment in school settings.

Career counselling interventions have been shown to positively shape students' occupational awareness and future aspirations, which in turn influence their behaviour, engagement, and social interactions at school. For example, a quasi-experimental study among junior secondary students in Plateau State, Nigeria, found that structured career awareness counselling significantly improved students' career awareness and occupational goals (Mangai et al., 2025). Although the focus was on career awareness, such improvements in future orientation and self-understanding can contribute to a pupil's ability to relate meaningfully with peers, set personal goals, and engage constructively in school life all facets of social adjustment.

In broader educational contexts, research shows that career guidance and counselling services support students' socio-emotional development, which overlaps with social adjustment. Career counselling helps pupils identify interests and values, enhancing self-efficacy and decision-making skills that can reduce social anxiety and improve peer relationships (Studocu, 2026). By engaging pupils in self-reflection and planning, career counselling promotes motivation, discipline, and positive participation in school communities.

Though most empirical work is in secondary contexts, the mechanisms knowledge about career selves, goal setting, and increased school relevance are applicable to upper primary pupils. Evidence indicates that when pupils perceive career counselling as meaningful, they are more likely to engage in school activities and

relate positively with peers and teachers, aspects crucial to social adjustment (International Journal of Education, Training and Learning, 2023).

Additionally, studies in other developing contexts highlight challenges in career counselling implementation such as low visibility and under-utilisation which can limit its potential to foster both career readiness and social adaptation (Efficacy of Career Guidance in Uganda, 2026). Improving awareness and quality of career counselling services may therefore enhance pupils' integration into school social life and reduce maladaptive behaviours.

Collectively, this body of literature underscores that career awareness counselling is not just about future vocation but also about helping pupils understand themselves, cope with present school experiences, and interact constructively within their social environment. These processes support better social adjustment, especially for upper primary pupils beginning to form identities and aspirations within the school context.

Empirical Studies

Jennifer & Willy (2019) in their study investigated perception of counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar, Cross River State. The study adopted ex-post fact research design and a sample of 366 primary six pupils were randomly selected from a population of 3,659 primary six pupils in the area of study. Data for the study was collected using a questionnaire titled perception of counselling services and school social adjustment (PCSSAS). The reliability of PCSSAS was determined using Cronbach alpha method. Data collected were analysed using population t-test and one-way analysis of variances tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that the pupils' perception of school counselling services was significantly low. The result further revealed that pupils' perception of school counselling services had a significant influence on their social adjustment in the school. Based on the findings, it is recommended among the others that pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the counselling services in the school and always seek the assistance of the counsellor about their problems.

Evelyn (2020) investigated on secondary school students' perceptions on how guidance and counselling services influence their social adjustments in selected public secondary schools Keiyo North Sub-County, Kenya. The paper was guided by the social learning theory advanced by Albert Bandura. The target population for the study involved secondary school students from 7 secondary schools out of 21 were included in the sample. The researcher collected data through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) complex programmes by both the descriptive and inferential statistics. Research results showed that more than half of students perceived guidance and counselling services to be helpful in social adjustments. ANOVA statistics showed that there existed a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in students' perceptions on the influence of guidance & counselling services on students' social adjustments. Those who rated guidance & counselling services highly had higher adjustment scores compared to those who rated provision of guidance & counselling as average/low. The study, therefore, recommended that guidance & counselling services need to be regularly provided to students in secondary schools to aid in their social adjustment.

Olubukola, Longe, Lawal, Onuchi (2021). The study examined the influence of counselling services on the personal-social adjustment

of adolescents in Ikorodu L.G.A of Lagos State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The sample consisted of two hundred (200) students drawn from SSSS within Ikorodu LGA of Lagos State. A self-structured questionnaire tagged 'Influence of counselling services on the personal questionnaire (ICOSPOSAQ)' was used for data collection. Data were analysed using independent t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tools of 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there is no significant influence of counselling services on the personal adjustments of adolescents, no significant influence of counselling services on the social adjustments of adolescents, no significant gender difference in social adjustments of adolescents. In the light of this study, recommendations were made that school authority should organise enlightenment programme, workshops and campaigns for students on counselling services and its vast importance. Secondary Education Board should open well-equipped counselling units in both urban and rural schools and qualified counsellors should be posted to practise and create awareness of guidance and counselling services. Since the findings in this study show that there was no significant influence of counselling services on the personal and social adjustments of adolescents which may be due to the fact that counselling services are not well maximised in most schools.

SUMMARY OF RELATED LITERATURE REVIEWED

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine pupils' perception of counselling services and social adjustment in Aba Metropolitan Area, Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To determine the relationship between educational counselling services and the social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.
2. To examine the relationship between personal social counselling services and the social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.
3. To investigate the relationship between career awareness counselling services and the social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between educational counselling services and social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area?
2. How do personal social counselling services relate to the social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area?
3. What relationship exists between career awareness counselling services and social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between educational counselling services and social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.
2. There is no significant relationship between personal-social counselling services and social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.

3. There is no significant relationship between career awareness counselling services and social adjustment of upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.

Statement of the Problem

Adjustment to the school environment particularly social adjustment is a crucial aspect of pupils' overall development and academic success. Social adjustment involves pupils' ability to form positive peer relationships, display appropriate social behaviours, interact effectively with teachers and classmates, and feel a sense of belonging within the school community (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019). However, research suggests that many primary school pupils struggle with social adjustment, exhibiting difficulties in peer relationships, classroom participation, and emotional regulation, which can negatively impact their wellbeing and school outcomes.

Guidance and counselling services are intended to provide structured support that helps pupils navigate interpersonal, emotional, and social challenges in the school environment. Effective counselling services can equip pupils with coping strategies, enhance interpersonal skills, and foster healthy social integration (International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, 2022). Despite this, several studies indicate that the perception and utilization of counselling services among primary school pupils remain sub-optimal, with pupils often underestimating or under-utilizing available support services within schools (Duruamaku-Dim & Arafah, 2019).

In contexts similar to Aba Metropolitan Area, findings from secondary school settings also show that perceptions of guidance and counselling are significantly associated with social adjustment outcomes, but the extent of these relationships varies widely depending on students' awareness and accessibility of counselling resources (Kanus, 2025). Meanwhile, systematic evidence indicates that higher levels of social support, which counselling services structure and facilitate, are associated with better school adjustment in children and adolescents (Multidisciplinary Reviews, 2025).

However, attention to this issue has been limited at the primary school level, particularly within the Aba Metropolitan Area of Abia State. There is a lack of empirical evidence regarding how pupils themselves perceive counselling services and the extent to which these perceptions influence their social adjustment in primary school environments. Without this localized evidence, it is difficult for school administrators, counsellors, and policymakers to make informed decisions about how to strengthen counselling services to promote healthier social integration and wellbeing among pupils.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate pupils' perception of counselling services and social adjustment in Aba Metropolitan Area, Abia State, to fill this gap in the literature and provide context-specific findings that can inform practice, policy, and future research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was considered suitable because it allows the researcher to collect data on pupils' perceptions of counselling services and their social

adjustment at a particular point in time without manipulating any variables (Creswell, 2021). A survey design is appropriate for investigating relationships between independent variables (counselling services: educational, personal social, career awareness) and the dependent variable (social adjustment) among upper primary school pupils.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all upper primary school pupils (Primary 4 to 6) in public and private primary schools within Aba Metropolitan Area, Abia State. According to the Abia State Ministry of Education (2025), the total population of upper primary pupils in the metropolitan area is approximately 15,000 pupils.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 300 out of 15,000 pupils was selected using stratified random sampling. Stratification was based on school type (public vs. private) and class level (Primary 4, 5, and 6) to ensure proportional representation. The stratified random technique was chosen to reduce sampling bias and ensure all sub-groups of the population were represented (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, titled: "Pupils' Perception of Counselling Services and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (PPCSSA-Q)". The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A: Pupils' demographic information (age, gender, class, school type); Section B: Likert-scale items related to counselling services (educational, personal social, career awareness) and social adjustment. The items on Section B were measured using four-point Likert scales of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Number of items: 20 (5 for each counselling service sub-variable and 5 for social adjustment).

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. Face validity was reviewed by two experts in Educational Psychology and Guidance & Counselling from National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba to ensure clarity and appropriateness of items. While content validity oversees that the questionnaire were agreement with the research objectives, sub-variables, and existing literature to ensure its adequately coverage of all the dimensions of counselling services and social adjustment (Nworgu, 2015).

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted in two primary schools outside Aba Metropolitan Area involving 30 pupils.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine internal consistency. Reliability coefficients obtained were educational counselling = 0.82, Personal social counselling = 0.85, Career awareness counselling = 0.81, and social adjustment = 0.84. Since all values are above 0.70, the instrument was considered reliable (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Method of Data Collection

Permission was obtained from the school principals and class teachers. The researchers administered the questionnaires personally to pupils in their classrooms. Instructions were read

aloud to ensure understanding, and pupils were asked to complete the questionnaire independently.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to describe pupils' perceptions of counselling services and levels of social adjustment. Inferential statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationship between counselling services and social adjustment. Null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level. A p-value ≤ 0.05 was considered significant.

Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from school authorities and pupils' parents. Pupils' responses were treated confidentially, and data were used strictly for research purposes. Pupils were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No names or personal identifiers were collected to ensure anonymity.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents The demographic data analyzed include gender, age, class level, and school type. This helps in understanding the background of the pupils and provides context for their responses.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	160	53.3
Female	140	46.7
Total	300	100

Table 1: from the table above under gender the male pupils were made up of 160 pupils while the female was made up of 140 pupils

giving us a total number of 300 respondents. The distribution shows a balanced representation of male and female pupils, suitable for generalizing findings.

Distribution of Respondents by Class Level

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary 4	100	33.3
Primary 5	100	33.3
Primary 6	100	33.3
Total	300	100

Table 2: distribution of respondents by class level shows that from basic 4 to 6 hundred pupils were selected indicating equal representation from Primary 4, 5, and 6 which ensures that pupils across upper primary classes are considered.

Distribution of Respondents by School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public	180	60
Private	120	40
Total	300	100

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by school type shows that public school has 180 respondents which shows 60%, while private school had 120 respondents making 40% of the respondents. The sample includes both public and private schools, ensuring the diversity of pupil experiences.

Research Question One:

What is the perception of pupils on educational counselling services in upper primary schools?

Pupils' Perception of Educational Counselling Services

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Counsellors provide guidance on academic difficulties	120	140	30	10	3.32	Positive
Counselling helps me understand how to improve my school work	130	130	25	15	3.33	Positive
Educational counselling is available when needed	110	140	35	15	3.17	Positive
Counselling sessions improve my study habits	125	135	30	10	3.35	Positive
I am satisfied with the support I receive academically	115	145	30	10	3.33	Positive

Overall Mean = 3.30 (Positive perception)

Table 4: Pupils generally have a positive perception of educational counselling services, with the mean of 3.32, 3.33, 3.17, 3.35, and 3.33, indicating that counselling is recognized as useful for academic improvement.

Research Question Two:

What is the perception of pupils on personal-social counselling services in upper primary schools?

Pupils' Perception of Personal Social Counselling Services

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Counsellors help me manage personal problems	140	125	25	10	3.38	Positive
I can talk to the counselor about peer conflicts	135	130	20	15	3.33	Positive
Counselling helps me control my emotions at school	120	140	25	15	3.30	Positive
I feel safe sharing personal issues with the counsellor	145	125	20	10	3.45	Positive
Personal-social counseling improves my interaction with peers	130	135	25	10	3.33	Positive

Overall Mean = 3.36 (Positive perception)

Table 5: table 5 shows Pupils perceive personal social counselling positively, which likely facilitates better social adjustment in school.

Research Question Three:

What is the perception of pupils on career awareness counselling services in upper primary schools?

Pupils' Perception of Career Awareness Counselling Services

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Counsellors explain different careers to us	130	135	25	10	3.35	Positive
Career guidance helps me understand my strengths	125	140	20	15	3.33	Positive
I learn how my schoolwork relates to future careers	120	140	30	10	3.30	Positive
Career counselling motivates me to work harder	135	130	20	15	3.38	Positive
I am satisfied with the career guidance I receive	130	135	25	10	3.35	Positive

Overall Mean = 3.34 (Positive perception)

Table 6: Pupils generally perceive career awareness counselling services positively, which may help motivate them and improve engagement, indirectly supporting social adjustment.

Research Question Four:

What is the level of social adjustment among upper primary pupils?

Pupils' Social Adjustment

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
I can make friends easily at school	140	130	20	10	3.40	High
I participate in group activities at school	135	135	20	10	3.37	High
I resolve conflicts with classmates peacefully	130	140	20	10	3.33	High
I feel comfortable interacting with teachers	125	145	20	10	3.33	High
I am accepted and respected by peers	130	135	25	10	3.33	High

Overall Mean = 3.35 (High social adjustment)

Table 7: Pupils demonstrate a high level of social adjustment, suggesting they interact positively with peers and teachers and integrate well into school social life.

Hypotheses Testing

Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	p-value	Decision
Educational counselling	social adjustment	0.68	0.000	Significant

Table 8: Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Educational counselling services positively correlate with social adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between pupils' perception of personal-social counselling services and social adjustment.

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	p-value	Decision
Personal-social counselling	social adjustment	0.72	0.000	Significant

Table 9: Null hypothesis rejected. Personal-social counselling positively influences social adjustment.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between pupils' perception of career awareness counselling services and social adjustment.

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	p-value	Decision
Career awareness counselling	social adjustment	0.65	0.000	Significant

Interpretation: Null hypothesis rejected. Career awareness counselling positively correlates with social adjustment.

Summary of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between pupils' perception of counselling services and their social adjustment. The study was guided by three research questions and tested three null hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was employed, with a sample of 300 upper primary pupils selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (PPCSSA-Q) and analyzed using mean scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that Pupils generally had a positive perception of educational counselling services, indicating that they found guidance on academic difficulties, study habits, and academic improvement valuable. Pupils positively perceived personal social counselling, suggesting it effectively supports peer interactions, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution. Pupils had a positive perception of career awareness counselling services, which helps them understand career pathways, relate academic efforts to future goals, and improve motivation. Pupils displayed high levels of social adjustment, as evidenced by positive peer interactions, participation in school activities, and the ability to resolve conflicts. All three sub-variables of counselling services were positively and significantly related to social adjustment: educational counselling: $r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$, Personal social counselling: $r = 0.72$, $p < 0.05$, and Career awareness counselling: $r = 0.65$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that pupils' perceptions of counselling services positively influence their social adjustment, with personal social counselling having the strongest impact.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that Counselling services in upper primary schools should be perceived positively by pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area. Perception of counselling services is a significant factor in pupils' social adjustment, indicating that effective counselling contributes to better peer relationships, emotional regulation, and participation in school activities. Personal social counselling plays a critical role in enhancing pupils' social adjustment, by highlighting the importance of addressing personal and interpersonal issues in school counselling programmes. Finally, the study emphasizes that pupils' engagement with and perception of counselling services are essential for their social development in school, supporting the broader goals of educational guidance and psychological wellbeing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should strengthen counselling programmes by authorities ensuring that educational, personal social, and career awareness counselling services are adequately implemented and accessible to all pupils.
2. Teachers and counsellors should increase awareness of counselling services by actively informing pupils about the availability and benefits of counselling services to enhance engagement and positive perception.
3. Schools should focus on personal social counselling since personal social counselling has the strongest influence on social adjustment, schools should prioritize emotional and social support programmes, including conflict resolution workshops and peer mentoring.
4. Professional development for counsellors should receive regular training on contemporary counselling techniques, child psychology, and social skills development to enhance service delivery.
5. Parental involvement should be encouraged to support counselling programmes at home, reinforcing positive social behaviours and monitoring social adjustment.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study focused on upper primary pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area. For further studies, it is suggested that: Future research could investigate other factors influencing social adjustment, such as peer pressure, family background, and school environment.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

PUPILS' PERCEPTION OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (PPCS-SAQ)

Instruction: Please read each statement carefully and tick (✓) the option that best describes your opinion.

COUNSELLING SERVICES AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Educational counselling in my school helps me understand my school subjects better.				
2.	Through educational counselling, I have learned better ways to study and do my homework.				
3.	Educational counselling helps me adjust well to school rules and academic activities.				
4.	I feel more confident in my learning because of educational counselling services.				
5.	Educational counselling helps me cope with academic challenges in school.				

PERSONAL SOCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICES

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
6.	Personal social counselling helps me relate better with my classmates.				
7.	Through counselling, I have learned how to control my emotions in school.				
8.	Personal social counselling helps me resolve conflicts peacefully with others.				
9.	Counselling services help me feel accepted and comfortable in school.				
10.	I behave better in school because of personal–social counselling services.				

CAREER AWARENESS COUNSELLING SERVICES

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
11.	Career awareness counselling helps me understand different types of jobs and careers.				
12.	Counselling has helped me think positively about my future goals.				
13.	Career counselling motivates me to behave well and take school seriously.				
14.	Through career counselling, I have learned the importance of working well with others.				
15.	Career awareness counselling helps me adjust socially in school.				

Scoring Guide: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 Agree (A) = 3 Disagree (D) = 2 Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1