

# PERCEIVED IMPACT OF FAMILY COUNSELLING ON STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN FCT ABUJA, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the Perceived Impact of Family Counselling on Students' Emotional and Moral Development in Senior Secondary Schools in FCT, Abuja Nigeria. This study had two objectives, two research questions and one null hypothesis which guided the study. The research design was a survey design. The population of the study was 18,678 students out of which 250 students were randomly sampled within the study area. The instrument used to collect the data was a self-structured questionnaire entitled: Impact of Family Counselling Questionnaire (IFCQ). The demographic data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage while answers to research questions were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. The hypothesis were tested using t-test. This hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that, family counselling enhances students' emotional stability in schools in terms of tolerance, anger and desire tamed among others. It was also revealed that; family counselling help students to gain moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure. Results from the tested hypothesis revealed that, family counselling help both male and female students to develop ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure. It was therefore recommended that, stake-holders like counsellors, social organization and religious bodies should use every available opportunities to educate families on the need to inculcate moral values on their children to enable them manage stress, anxiety and negative peer pressure.

**Key words:** Family Counselling, Emotional and Moral Development.

## Introduction

In recent years, the importance of emotional and moral development in students has gained considerable attention from educators, psychologists, and policymakers. These aspects of development are very important for students' total well-being as well as the academic performance. Expectedly, family counselling has been suggested as a potential intervention to support and enhance these areas of development in students (Oyinloye, & Akingbulu, 2024). However, by observation, there is limited empirical research examining the specific impacts of family counselling on students' emotional and moral development in school in particular and the society in general.

Therefore, emotional and moral development of students is a critical component of students' growth and success. Sabeen, Shagufta, and Farheen (2024) asserted that, emotional development involves the ability to understand, express, and manage emotions effectively with void of hurting those around them or individual themselves. On the other hand, moral development refers to ability to understand and applying ethical principles and values in daily life. Despite the recognition of the importance of emotional and moral development by some parents, Corey (2016) found that, many students were

seems to be struggle with emotional regulation and moral decision-making, which negatively affect their academic performance, social relationships, and mental health negatively.

Family counseling according to Lorenza, Alessandro, and Antonio, (2024) involves therapeutic sessions with family members to address and resolve interpersonal issues that inhibit the progress of individual member of the family. Becvar and Becvar, (2018) believed that family counselling is a means to improve any member of the families' emotional and moral development include the students. In a more definite term, family counselling according to Yarza, Josu, and Gruber, (2024) is a therapeutic approach that aims to improve communication and resolve conflicts within a family setting. It recognizes the interconnectedness of family members and influence effective relationships on individual behaviour and development. Similarly, Narmina, (2023) believed that, family counselling play a pivotal role in the emotional and moral development of students in respective of gender. He added that, it helps students to learn how to regulate their emotions and thereby provide a safe space to express feelings and learn coping strategies. More importantly, parents and siblings can be taught and support the student on how to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges.

In addition, Utku, Sevilay, and Aynur, (2023) opined that positive reinforcement and validation within family counselling sessions can significantly boost a student's self-esteem. They further added that, when family members communicate more effectively and show appreciation for one another, students may feel more valued and confident. Similarly Yarza, Josu, and Gruber, (2024) found that, family counseling help students to observe and practice healthy conflict resolution techniques. This may not only reduces family tension but also equips students with skills to handle interpersonal conflicts outside the home. In support of the above assertion, Esuabana, Duruamaku, Anake, and Philip, (2023) stressed that, family counselling often involve discussions about values, ethics, and moral principles which may safeguard students' conduct and behaviour. Going by these conversations at family levels, students can develop a clearer understanding of their own values and how to align with those of their family.

Studies have shown that students who participate in family counselling exhibit lower levels of anxiety, stress and depression Lorenza, Alessandro, & Antonio, (2024). They were sometime have better emotional resilience and a more positive outlook on life. Research also indicates that family counselling can lead to higher levels of moral reasoning in students and they are more likely to make ethical decisions and exhibit prosocial behaviour, such as helping others and volunteering (Ponmozhi, 2024). On other hand, Oyinloye, and Akingbulu, (2024) found that, insensitivity of many parents make many students fall short of moral standard and thereby developed emotional instability to the affairs of their studies in particular and social relationship in general. It is further reaffirmed by Lorenza, et al, (2024) that unfavourable and harsh parenting styles include uninvolved kind of attitude by parents contributed to students' antisocial behaviour.

However, students generally may face a range of emotional and moral challenges, including stress, anxiety, behavioural problems, peer pressure and difficulties in distinguishing right from wrong which could be to lack of family counselling among many homes. As a results many students do fall victims of antisocial behaviour, such, stealing, gambling, drug abuse, scammers, money rituals, fraud, lies among many others. These challenges often affect their academic performance, social relationships, and total well-being which made many students to attempt suicide as a result frustration and inhuman behaviours. While schools may provide academic support, the role of family in shaping a student's emotional and moral development is crucial. However, many families lack the tools or knowledge to address these issues effectively, which exacerbate the problems students face in our contemporary.

Furthermore, it has been observed that many students struggle with emotional instability, behavioural issues, and lack of moral direction. These challenges are often linked to stress, peer pressure, and the increasing complexities of modern ideas of getting rich quick syndrome. It is the against this background that researchers decided to investigate if impact of family counselling can help students develop emotional and moral development to manage stress, anxiety, and peer pressure couple with the researcher's experience about a students who ran mad in a bid to do money ritual.

## Objective of the study

This study was guided by the following objectives which are to;

1. find out the perceived impact of family counselling on emotional stability of students in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja.
2. Investigate the perceived impact of family counselling on moral development of male and female students' ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja base.

## Research Questions

The researchers raised the following questions to guide the study.

1. what is the perceived impact of family counselling on emotional stability of students in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja?
2. what are the perceived impact of family counselling on moral development of male and female students' ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was formulated for the study and it was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: male and female students do not differ significantly on the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school FCT Abuja.

## Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Imam (2019), a survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group.

The population for this study was 18678 which comprised of all the senior secondary school students in FCT Abuja. Thus, these 18,678 students became the population for this study (Senior Secondary School Education Board, 2023/2024 Academic Session).

The sample size for this study was 250 which was draw using the formula of Glen (2012). He opined that sample size should be based on percentage which is determine by the total population of the study. SS II students were chosen for this study because they fall into the category of students who were often influence as a result of their inability to take definite decision about their likes and dislikes.

The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers entitled: Impact of Family Counselling Questionnaire (IFCQ). This instrument was validated through face, construct and content validity by the expert in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, faculty of education University of Abuja. The instrument was tested for reliability using 30 students from Government senior secondary school Gwagwalada that would not participate in the main study. The researchers used test-retest method in testing the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested within the interval of three weeks after administering the first test and it yielded an index of 0.72 which was considered reliable for the study.

The researchers with the help of two research assistants who were briefed about the subject matter helped to distribute the copies of the questionnaire to all the respondents in the sample schools during school hours and the completed questionnaire were collected on the spot.

The data collected from respondents were analyzed using frequency count and percentage for the demographic data while answers research questions were analyzed using mean scores and standard

deviation. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was that, a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted and any mean below 2.50 was rejected.

## Presentation of Results

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	102	40.8
Female	148	59.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 showed that 102 respondents (40.8%) were male students while 148 (59.2%) respondents were female students. This implies that the female students were more than the male students in this study.

Research Question one: what is the perceived impact of family counselling on emotional stability of students in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja?

**Table 2: Perceived Impact of Family Counselling on Emotional Stability of Students in Senior Secondary Schools in FCT Abuja.**

N =250

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	My family taught me on how to manage anger	3.30	.88	Agree
2	My parents' counsel help me to control my desire	3.11	.81	Agree
3	I behave matured than my age due to my family counsel.	2.89	1.05	Agree
4	People like me due to the way I behave	3.32	.85	Agree
5	Despite family counselling I hardly control my emotional outburst.	1.65	.90	Disagree
6	Home counsel often restricted me from wrong decision	3.11	.94	Agree
7	Family counsel help me to be positive minded.	3.20	.87	Agree
8	Many enjoy family counselling yet faced with emotional problems	1.83	.98	Disagree
9	Family counsel help me tolerate people.	1.79	.92	Disagree
10	Background encourages me to love people eve when they hurt me	3.24	.83	Agree
	<b>Sectional Mean</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>0.91</b>	

Table 2 showed the mean responses on the perceived impact of family counselling on emotional stability of students in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja. The mean showed agreement with most of the items and disagreement with few others. The sectional mean for the items on students' responses on the perceived impact of family counselling on students' emotional stability in senior secondary school in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja was 2.78 which means that family counselling enhances students' emotional stability in school in terms of tolerance, anger and desire tamed among others. The mean score is above 2.50 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale) with a standard deviation of 0.91, signifying that family counselling help students to tolerate, control their anger and tamed their desire and reject wrong suggestion from friends and associate.

Research Question two: what are the perceived impact of family counselling on moral development of male and female students' ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja?

**Table 3: Perceived Impact of Family Counselling on Moral Development of male and female Students' Ability to Manage Stress, Anxiety and Peer Pressure in Senior Secondary Schools in FCT Abuja.**

N =250

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	I resist every pressure to join yahoo yahoo by my friend due to my parents' counsel	3.30	.88	Agree
2	My parent counsel aid me from join bag gang	3.11	.81	Agree
3	I value my integrity than money or material things through family counselling.	2.89	1.05	Agree
4	Despite counsel, I can't do without lie	1.52	.85	Disagree
5	My parents' counsel make me hate club	2.65	.90	Agree
6	Home counsel often restricted me from committing suicide	3.11	.94	Agree
7	Despite family counsel I loss my virginity	1.48	.87	Disagree
8	I develop hatred for immoral behaviour through family counsel	3.86	.98	Agree
9	My up bringing help me to say no to drug abuse	3.76	.92	Agree
10	I love doing the right thing due to my parents' counsel	2.84	.83	Agree
	<b>Sectional Mean</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>0.89</b>	

Analysis in Table 3 was carried out to determine the perceived impact of family counselling on moral development of male and female students' ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja. The mean scores showed agreement with the most of the items, meaning that family counselling help students to gain moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure. The sectional mean for the items on perceived impact of family counselling on moral development of students' ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja was 2.68. The mean score is above 2.50 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale) with a standard deviation of 0.89, signifying that family counselling help both male and female students to develop moral behaviour to resist negative pressure.

**Ho1:** male and female students do not differ significantly on the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja.

**Table 4: t-test on the difference between male and female students on the impact of family counselling as regard to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja.**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S. D	t-value	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	103	1.72	.59	2.12	248	.065	Significant
Female	147	1.52	1.51				

Table 4 was analyzed to show the differences between male and female students on the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja. The significant value of .065 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between male and female students on the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, is thus, accepted and concluded that both male and female do not differ significantly in the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in

senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. That family counselling help both male and female students manage stress, anxiety and negative peer pressure.

## **Discussion of Results**

The answer to the first research question revealed that, family counselling enhances students' emotional stability in school in terms of tolerance, anger and desire tamed among others in senior secondary school in FCT Abuja. It has been said, that the failure of the family is the reflection of behaviour disorder among students in the society. This is because family is the first point of contact of any child and if he/she is properly guided, social vices and other behaviour disorder may have effect on any students. It is said that, every child comes from home. This finding is in line with the opinion of Oyinloye, and Akingbulu, (2024) there said, insensitivity of many parents make many students fall short of moral standard and thereby development emotional instability to the affairs of their studies and they often exhibit several behavioural disorder. It is further reaffirmed by Lorenza, et al, (2024) that unfavourable and harsh parenting styles include uninvolved kind of attitude by parents contributed to students' antisocial behaviour. It can be said that family counselling is fundamental to students' emotional stability and behaviour in general. Although, some students despite family counselling may exhibit anti-social behaviour to the detriment of themselves in particular and the society in general.

The second finding from answer to research questions two revealed among others that family counselling help students to gain moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure. It have been said that, character are learned and in the same vein morality is learned consciously or unconsciously. In support of this finding, Lorenza, Alessandro, and Antonio, (2024) found that, students who participate in family counselling exhibit lower levels of anxiety and depression. They also tend to have better emotional resilience to manage stress and anxiety.

They further discovered that family counselling can lead to higher levels of moral reasoning in students and they are more likely to take ethical decisions and exhibit prosocial behaviour, such as helping others and offer volunteering services. There is no doubt that, family is the bed rock of any society in all ramification, because it is said that, the failed family result in a failed society be it socially, morally and culturally. The finding is also inline with opinion of Becvar and Becvar, (2018) they believed that family counselling is a means to improve students' emotional and moral development in the society.

The hypothesis which state that, male and female students do not differ significantly on the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in FCT Abuja is thus, accepted and concluded that family counselling help both male and female to develop ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. Naturally, training and modeling create conscious awareness in every individual which check mate one's action per time. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the opinion of Narmina, (2023) he said that, family counselling play a pivotal role in the emotional and moral development of students in respective of gender. He added that, it help students to learn how to regulate their emotions by providing a safe space to express feelings and learn coping strategies.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that family counselling enhances students' emotional stability to tolerate, manage anger and tamed desire among others. They study further discovered that, family counselling help students to gain moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure. It was also discovered in this study that male and female do not differ significantly in the impact of family counselling as regards to moral development ability to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja and that, family counselling helps both male and female students to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. There should be value reorientation among families as regards to ways and manner students would manage their emotion in terms of tolerance, anger and tamed desire which in turn may enhance peaceful coexistence among citizenry.
2. Government at all should create a forum where parents would be educated on the need to inculcate moral values on their children especially on how to manage stress, anxiety and peer pressure so that the society can be habitable for everyone.
3. There should be periodic counselling programme for all our teeming youths in every educational setting to address the importance of moral development towards their future endeavour in particular and society in general.

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