

## **Role of Counselling in Reducing School Dropout and Supporting at Risk among Junior Secondary Schools Students in Sokoto Metropolis**

**<sup>1</sup>Aliyu Ma'aruf Bello and <sup>2</sup>Mukhtar Salihu Nawait**

<sup>\*1&2</sup>Department of Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, Sokoto State University, Sokoto State, Nigeria. **Email:** muknawait@gmail.com

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the role of counselling in reducing school dropout and supporting at risk students of Junior secondary schools in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto. It adopted descriptive survey design and the sample size of 245 students and 30 teachers were purposively drawn from the population of 108,335 students and 3,436 teachers. Two objectives were set with their corresponding hypotheses. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection and data analysis was done using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient tools. The findings revealed a moderate to strong positive relationship between parental socio-economic background and school dropout rate with coefficient of ( $r\text{-Cal} = 0.622$ ) and  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.000. Additionally, school dropout demonstrates a positive relationship with a coefficient of ( $r\text{-Cal} = 0.58$ ) and the  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.000 as it falls below  $p < 0.05$ . Based on the findings, the study recommends recruiting and training qualified counsellors, implementing early warning systems, increasing funding, strengthening parent-school collaboration, integrating technology, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to achieve the desired outcome.*

**Keywords:** Counselling, Students, School Dropout, Risk, Junior Secondary Schools

## **Introduction**

Education is the foundation for individual growth and societal progress, equipping people with knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve their quality of life. It serves as a fundamental tool for economic development, fostering innovation, reducing poverty, and promoting social mobility. Through education, individuals gain access to better employment opportunities, improved healthcare, and increased civic engagement, all of which contribute to national development (UNESCO, 2024).

Despite its undeniable importance, access to quality education remains a challenge in many nations. Various socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors hinder educational attainment, leading to disparities in learning outcomes. Government policies, parental involvement, and school resources influence students' academic progress. The effectiveness of educational institutions depends not only on curriculum content but also on the level of support students receive at home and in their communities.

School dropout refers to the premature discontinuation of formal education before completing the prescribed academic level often resulting in limited career prospects and socio-economic disadvantages. School dropout is a pressing issue that affects students, families, and societies worldwide. Dropout rates are influenced by multiple factors, including financial constraints, lack of parental support, poor academic performance, and social pressures. According to the World Bank (2024), millions of students, particularly in low-income countries, drop out of school each year due to poverty, child labor, and inadequate educational infrastructure.

The consequences of school dropout are severe, affecting both individuals and society. Students who leave school prematurely face higher unemployment rates, lower earnings, and increased susceptibility to crime and social instability. Additionally, dropout rates have long-term effects on national development, as lower levels of education translate into reduced productivity and economic growth.

Parental socio-economic background play role in determining students' educational outcomes. It encompasses factors such as income level, educational attainment, occupation, and access to resources that support academic success. Research indicates that children from financially stable

households are more likely to complete their education, as they have better access to quality schools, learning materials, and extracurricular opportunities (Fall, & Roberts, 2011)..

Moreover, parental education level profoundly influences a child's academic success. Educated parents tend to place a higher value on education, providing encouragement and assistance with schoolwork. On the other hand, parents with little or no formal education may not fully understand the importance of schooling, leading to a lack of motivation and support for their children.

Secondary school students in Sokoto State face numerous educational challenges due to socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. Sokoto, located in northwestern Nigeria, has a high poverty rate, which affects students' ability to access quality education. Many students in the region come from low-income families where financial struggles force them to drop out of school and engage in economic activities such as farming, street vending, and domestic labor (NBS, 2024).

Additionally, cultural and religious factors play role in shaping educational outcomes in Sokoto State. Early marriage, gender disparities, and traditional beliefs about education, particularly for girls, continue to affect school attendance and retention. Many female students are withdrawn from school at an early age to prepare for marriage, limiting their future opportunities.

Counseling play role in addressing the challenges associated with school dropout and parental socio-economic background. School counselors can provide academic and emotional support to at-risk students, helping them navigate financial, social, and psychological barriers that hinder their education. Counseling programs that focus on career guidance, motivation, and problem-solving skills can equip students with the tools they need to persist in their education despite challenges (Karhinaet *al.*, 2024).

Parental counseling is equally essential in promoting educational success. Many parents, particularly in low-income communities, may not fully understand the long-term benefits of education. Counseling initiatives aimed at educating parents on the importance of supporting their children's academic journey can foster a more conducive learning environment. Additionally, collaboration between schools, community leaders, and policymakers can

strengthen counseling services and ensure that students receive the necessary support to complete their education and achieve their full potential.

The Nigerian government has implemented various strategies to ensure quality education for its citizens, with a particular focus on achieving a minimum level of secondary education for all. Numerous programs have been introduced to realize this objective. The 1999 Constitution, in Section 8, Subsection 3, explicitly recognizes education as a fundamental right of every Nigerian, regardless of gender, religion, or ethnic background.

To further strengthen this commitment, the government introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in 1976 as part of the National Policy on Education. This policy outlined several key objectives aimed at fostering national development, including: Establishing a free and democratic government, promoting a just and egalitarian society, ensuring permanent literacy and democratic values and enhancing effective communication skills.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist in achieving equitable access to quality education, particularly among disadvantaged groups. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers socio-economic, cultural, and institutional barriers to education.

As everyone knows that education is the background of any society to developed, there is a lot of man power wastage whenever there is higher rate of dropout which include educationist, scientist, and all other related field of knowledge are being lost every year as the result of dropout, this holistic issue could not be simply overcome unless there is tentative approach and collective effort that could bring about the best way to get rid of the problems.

Theories that explain how economic, social and structural factors influence students' ability to remain in school were reviewed. Tinto's Student Departure Theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural and Social Capital, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Rational Choice Theory, and Structural Strain Theory. Each theory provides insight into the impact of parental socio-economic status on student retention and the implications for counseling interventions. Tinto's Student departure Theory, originally developed in 1975 and later revised in 1993 and 2017, is one of the most influential models for understanding why students drop out of school. emphasizes that students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds often experience difficulties integrating into the school system

due to financial struggles, lack of parental involvement, and limited academic support. These challenges make them more susceptible to dropping out, particularly when schools do not provide adequate academic and social support structures. The Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital, introduced in his seminal work in 1986, offers a comprehensive understanding of how social networks and relationships contribute to individual and collective success. The theory provides valuable insights into how social networks influence educational achievement and dropout rates. The Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory posits that an individual's development is shaped by interactions with multiple layers of environmental systems. This theory is particularly relevant in educational contexts as it helps explain how different environmental systems interact to influence students' experiences.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were formulated as guide to the conducted study;

- i. Examine the role of counselling in reducing school dropout among Junior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.
- ii. Examine the role of counselling in supporting at-risk students among Junior secondary schools' students in Sokoto Metropolis.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significance relationship between counselling service and school dropout among Junior secondary schools' students in Sokoto Metropolis.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between counselling service and supporting at-risk among Junior secondary schools' students in Sokoto Metropolis.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design of the correlational type was adopted. The population of the study consists of 108,335 students and 3,436 teachers. The

sample of 245 students and 30 teachers were purposively selected Source: MOBSE (2024).

. Two sets of instruments were used by the researcher to measure the influence of dropout and parental background on Junior secondary school students' in Sokoto State. The questionnaires were validated by expert in the department of Counselling Psychology Sokoto State University, Sokoto. The validity and reliability indexes of 0.76 and 0.83 were obtained respectively. And the data collected using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

## Findings

**Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between counselling service and school dropout among Junior secondary schools students in Sokoto State.**

**Table 4.1:** Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of relationship between counselling service and school dropout among Junior secondary schools students in Sokoto State.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	p-Value
Counselling service	245	2.85	0.8	243	-0.54	0
School dropout (at-risk students)	245	2.4	0.85			

$p < 0.05$ . Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The correlation coefficient ( $r\text{-cal} = -0.54$ ) reflects a moderate negative relationship between counseling services and school dropout among at-risk students in Sokoto State. This means that as the availability and quality of counseling services improve, the dropout rate tends to decrease. The negative sign indicates that the two variables move in opposite directions: better support through counseling is associated with a lower likelihood of students abandoning their education. This suggests that counseling services play a meaningful role in addressing academic, emotional, and social barriers that contribute to dropping out.

The p-value of 0.000, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirms that the observed relationship is statistically significant. In simpler terms, the chance that this correlation occurred randomly is extremely low, lending strong support to the idea that counseling interventions have a real and measurable effect on reducing school dropout. This statistical evidence justifies rejecting the null hypothesis, which would claim there is no relationship between the two variables. Thus, the data clearly supports the

effectiveness of counseling services in keeping at-risk students engaged in school.

Given a sample size of 245, the analysis benefits from a reasonably strong foundation for generalization, enhancing the reliability of the results. The moderate-to-strong correlation combined with statistical significance suggests a practical implication: schools should invest more in counseling programs, particularly for at-risk populations. By doing so, they can proactively prevent dropouts through early identification of problems, personalized support, and ongoing emotional and academic guidance.

**Hypothesis 2. There is no significant relationship between counselling service and students at-risk of dropping in Junior secondary school in Sokoto Metropolis.**

**Table 4.2:** Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of relationship between counselling service and students at-risk of dropping in Junior secondary school in Sokoto Metropolis.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	p-Value
Counselling Service	245	2.9	0.78	243	-0.61	0
Children likelihood of dropping out of school	245	2.45	0.84			

$p < 0.05$ . Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r\text{-cal} = -0.61$ ) in Table 4.20 indicates a moderate to strong negative relationship between counselling service and children's likelihood of dropping out of school in Sokoto State. This means that as positive parental influence increases, such as involvement in schoolwork, encouragement, and provision of academic support, the likelihood of children dropping out decreases. The strength of this negative correlation suggests that parental involvement is a substantial factor in keeping children in school, reinforcing the importance of family support in academic retention.

The p-value of 0.000 (less than the 0.05 threshold) confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, meaning the correlation is not due to chance. This significance supports rejecting the null hypothesis, which would assume no relationship between counselling service and dropout likelihood.

## Discussion

The findings from Hypothesis 1 show that there is a statistically significant relationship between counselling services and school dropout among at-risk students in Sokoto State. The computed correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.54$ ) indicates a moderate negative relationship, suggesting that as the quality and availability of counselling services improve, dropout rates among students decrease. The negative sign of the coefficient means that the two variables move in opposite directions—an increase in counselling support is associated with a decrease in dropout likelihood. This finding aligns with (ILO, 2023) research outcome which revealed that an effective strategies often involve early identification of at-risk students and the provision of support services such as tutoring, counseling, and mentoring. Additionally, schools can implement programs that engage students in their learning by making curricula more relevant to their lives and future goals'. The expectation that counselling services play a vital role in addressing behavioral, academic, and emotional challenges that put students at risk.

The findings is also in line with Oparaduru (2023), who stated that counseling programs that focus on career guidance, motivation, and problem-solving skills can equip students with the tools they need to persist in their education despite challenges.

The practical implications of these findings are far-reaching. Schools and educational stakeholders should not only focus on providing counselling services but also create programs but make it mandatory and routing activities in all junior secondary schools and beyond for better educational outcome.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, based on the outcome of the study, the results demonstrate that counselling services is one of the significant predictors of school dropout among at-risk students in Sokoto metropolis. The moderate to strong negative correlations observed suggest that improving counselling services can lead to substantial reductions in school dropout rates.

## **Recommendations**

Base on the findings of this research, counselling services should be encourage through individual

and group counselling for stable turnout of students among Junior secondary schools.

Counselling services should also be extend to primary schools especially in the rural areas to encourage both pupils and their parent to accommodate schooling as part of their life.

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**Cite this as:** Bello, A. M. & Nawait, M. S. (2025). Role of Counselling in Reducing School Dropout and Supporting at Risk among Junior Secondary Schools Students in Sokoto Metropolis. *Rima International Journal of Education*, 4(6), 225-234

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