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EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER MEDIATION COUNSELLING IN ENHANCING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBADAN, OYO-STATE

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal conflict among adolescents remains a significant challenge in secondary school environments, often leading to aggression, bullying, and disruption of academic activities when poorly managed. This study investigated the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among students in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design was adopted. A total of 120 students were selected using a multistage sampling technique and assigned to experimental (n = 60) and control (n = 60) groups. The experimental group received structured peer mediation counselling, while the control group did not receive any intervention. Data were collected using the Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Scale (ICRS) and analysed using independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant improvement in conflict resolution abilities among students exposed to peer mediation counselling compared to those in the control group ($t = 7.68$, $p < 0.05$). However, no significant differences were found based on gender or academic level. The results underscore the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling as a student-centred intervention that promotes communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills. The study concludes that peer mediation counselling is an inclusive and practical strategy for improving interpersonal relationships and fostering a positive school climate. It is recommended that schools integrate peer mediation programmes into their counselling services to support adolescents' social and emotional development.

Keywords*:* Peer Mediation Counselling; Interpersonal Conflict Resolution; Adolescents; Secondary School Students; School-Based Intervention; Nigeria

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by heightened social interaction, identity formation, and increased susceptibility to interpersonal conflicts (Sun et al.,2025). Within the school environment, adolescents frequently encounter disagreements arising from differences in opinions, competition, peer pressure, and emotional immaturity (Veenstra,2026). When poorly managed, such conflicts can escalate into aggression, bullying, social withdrawal, and disruptions to academic engagement (Abela et al.,2024). Consequently, the development of effective interpersonal conflict resolution skills has

become a key concern for educators, counsellors, and policymakers seeking to promote a safe and supportive school climate (Merlin&Soubramanian,2024).

Traditional disciplinary approaches in schools have often focused on punitive measures, which may suppress undesirable behaviours temporarily but fail to equip students with the necessary skills to manage conflicts constructively (Jones et al.,2024). In recent years, there has been a growing shift toward preventive and developmental interventions that empower students to actively participate in resolving their own disputes (Magomedova&Fatima,2025). Among these approaches, peer mediation counselling has gained increasing attention as an innovative and student-centred strategy (O'Brien et al.,2025). Peer mediation involves training selected students to act as neutral facilitators who assist their peers in resolving conflicts through structured dialogue, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving (Ibarrola-Garcia,2024). This approach not only addresses immediate disputes but also fosters long-term social and emotional competencies (Pointon-Has et al.,2023).

The effectiveness of peer mediation counselling is grounded in several theoretical perspectives, including social learning theory and humanistic counselling principles (Kundurthi et al.,2025). Social learning theory posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation and interaction with others, suggesting that adolescents may be more receptive to guidance from their peers than from authority figures (De Felice etal.,2023). Similarly, humanistic approaches emphasize empathy, respect, and self-directed growth, all of which are integral to the peer mediation process (Amini et al.,2025). By creating a non-threatening environment where students feel understood and valued, peer mediation encourages openness and mutual respect, thereby facilitating constructive conflict resolution (Phelps et al.,2024).

Empirical studies have demonstrated that peer mediation programmes can lead to significant improvements in students' communication skills, emotional regulation, and ability to resolve conflicts peacefully (Gao et al.,2025). These programmes have also been associated with reductions in disciplinary incidents, enhanced peer relationships, and improved overall school climate (Gregory et al.,2024). However, despite the growing body of literature supporting peer mediation, there remains a need for context-specific research, particularly within developing countries where cultural, social, and educational dynamics may influence programme outcomes. In Nigeria, and specifically in Ibadan, Oyo State, limited empirical evidence exists on the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in secondary school settings.

Furthermore, while previous studies have established the general benefits of peer mediation, less attention has been given to potential moderating variables such as gender and academic level (Joo et al.,2022).

Understanding whether the effectiveness of peer mediation varies across these demographic factors is essential for designing inclusive and equitable interventions (Travers&Carter,2022). For instance, gender differences in communication styles and emotional expression may influence how students engage in mediation processes, while variations in cognitive and social maturity across academic levels may affect the acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills (Kilby,2023).

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. Specifically, the study examines whether students who participate in peer mediation counselling demonstrate significantly higher conflict resolution abilities compared to those who do not. It also explores whether gender and academic level influence the effectiveness of the intervention. By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on school-based counselling interventions and provides practical insights for educators and counsellors seeking to implement evidence-based strategies for conflict management.

Ultimately, promoting effective conflict resolution among adolescents is essential for fostering positive social interactions, reducing school violence, and supporting students' overall psychological well-being. Peer mediation counselling represents a promising approach in this regard, offering a sustainable and empowering framework for equipping young people with lifelong interpersonal skills.

Statement of the problem

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable aspect of adolescent development, particularly within the secondary school environment where students from diverse backgrounds interact frequently (Shulman&Laursen,2022). In many Nigerian schools, including those in Ibadan, Oyo State, unresolved conflicts among students often manifest in the form of bullying, verbal aggression, physical altercations, and social exclusion (Osiesi et al.,2023) These maladaptive behaviours not only disrupt the teaching–learning process but also negatively impact students' emotional well-being, peer relationships, and overall school climate(Oliver et al.,2020). Despite the prevalence of these challenges, conflict management strategies in many schools remain largely punitive, focusing on discipline rather than equipping students with the skills needed for constructive conflict resolution (Jones et al.,2023).

Although counselling services exist in some schools, they are often underutilized or insufficiently structured to address the dynamic and peer-driven nature of adolescent conflicts(Raynham et al.,2023). This gap highlights the need for innovative, student-centred interventions such as peer mediation counselling, which empowers students to actively participate in resolving disputes in a

supportive and collaborative manner. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling within the Nigerian secondary school context remains limited, particularly in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity regarding whether factors such as gender and academic level influence the effectiveness of such interventions. Without this understanding, the implementation of peer mediation programmes may not adequately address the diverse needs of students. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools, thereby providing evidence-based insights for improving school counselling practices.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the effect of peer mediation counselling on adolescents' interpersonal conflict resolution abilities.
2. Examine the difference in interpersonal conflict resolution abilities between students exposed to peer mediation counselling and those not exposed.
3. Investigate whether gender influences the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution among students.
4. Assess whether academic level (SS1, SS2, SS3) influences the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution among students.

Research Hypotheses

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

1. H_{o1}: There is no significant difference in the interpersonal conflict resolution abilities between students who undergo peer mediation counselling and those who do not in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.
2. H_{o2}: There is no significant difference between male and female students in the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.
3. H_{o3}: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution across academic levels (SS1, SS2, SS3) among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on the relationship between peer

mediation counselling and adolescents' interpersonal conflict resolution abilities. Peer mediation counselling is conceptualized as a structured, student-centred intervention in which trained peers facilitate the resolution of conflicts among fellow students through dialogue, negotiation, and mutual understanding (Zhang,2026).

Interpersonal conflict resolution, on the other hand, refers to the ability of individuals to manage disagreements constructively by employing skills such as effective communication, emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving (Ratiu et al.,2025) Within this framework, peer mediation counselling serves as the independent variable, while interpersonal conflict resolution represents the dependent variable. Gender and academic level are considered moderating variables that may influence the strength or direction of this relationship (Yang&Xiang,2025). The framework assumes that exposure to peer mediation counselling enhances students' competence in resolving conflicts amicably, thereby promoting healthier peer interactions and a more conducive learning environment (Schunk&DiBenedetto,2023).

The theoretical underpinning of this study is primarily based on Social Learning Theory as propounded by Albert Bandura (Rumjaun&Narod,2025). This theory posits that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and interaction within a social context (Woreta et al.,2025). In the context of peer mediation, students observe and model constructive conflict resolution behaviours demonstrated by trained peer mediators (Yon et al.,2025). Through repeated participation in mediation sessions, students internalize these behaviours and apply them in real-life situations (Brinsley et al.,2025). The peer-led nature of intervention is particularly significant during adolescence, a developmental stage where individuals are highly influenced by their peers (Liu et al.,2024). Thus, Social Learning Theory provides a strong basis for understanding how peer mediation counselling can effectively shape positive conflict resolution skills among students (Cave et al.,2024).

In addition, the study is informed by Humanistic Theory, particularly the person-centred approach developed by Carl Rogers (Cooper et al.,2026). This perspective emphasizes empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness in interpersonal interactions (O'Brien et al.,2025). Peer mediation counselling embodies these principles by creating a safe and non-judgmental environment where students feel heard, respected, and empowered to express their feelings openly (Brummans et al.,2022). The mediator facilitates understanding rather than imposing solutions, thereby encouraging self-directed problem-solving and personal growth. By integrating the principles of Social Learning Theory and Humanistic Theory, this study provides a comprehensive framework for explaining how peer mediation counselling can foster constructive conflict resolution behaviours and support adolescents' social and emotional development.

Review of related literature

Interpersonal conflict among adolescents has been widely documented as a common occurrence within school environments, often arising from differences in values, competition, peer pressure, and limited emotional regulation skills (Pan et al.,2025). Studies have shown that when such conflicts are poorly managed, they can escalate into aggression, bullying, and social isolation, ultimately affecting students' academic performance and psychological well-being (Nikitaraet et al.,2024). Traditional disciplinary approaches, which emphasize punishment rather than skill development, have been found to be largely ineffective in addressing the root causes of student conflicts (Duarte et al.2023). Consequently, there has been increasing advocacy for school-based interventions that promote constructive conflict resolution skills, emotional intelligence, and positive peer interactions among adolescents (Wang et al.,2026).

Peer mediation counselling has emerged as a promising intervention in this regard. Empirical research indicates that peer-led conflict resolution programmes significantly improve students' communication skills, empathy, and problem-solving abilities (Topping,2022). By involving students directly in the mediation process, these programmes foster a sense of responsibility and ownership in managing conflicts (Geurts et al.,2024). Several studies have reported reductions in school violence, disciplinary referrals, and classroom disruptions following the implementation of peer mediation initiatives (Eldred et al.,2026). Furthermore, peer mediation has been shown to enhance students' self-esteem and social competence, as participants learn to express their feelings effectively and listen to others' perspectives (Pan et al.,2024). These findings suggest that peer mediation counselling is not only effective in resolving immediate disputes but also contributes to long-term behavioural change (Joo et al.,2025).

Despite the documented benefits of peer mediation counselling, gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding its applicability across different demographic variables and cultural contexts. Some studies have explored gender differences in conflict resolution, with mixed findings, while others have examined variations across age or academic levels (Stewart et al.,2021). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how these factors influence the effectiveness of peer mediation interventions, especially within the Nigerian educational context. Additionally, most existing studies have been conducted in Western settings, raising concerns about the generalizability of their findings. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, while also considering the potential influence of gender and academic level.

Methodology

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design, specifically the pre-test–post-test control group design, to examine the

effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. The design was considered appropriate as it allowed for the comparison of outcomes between an experimental group exposed to the intervention and a control group that did not receive the treatment.

The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State. A sample of 120 students was selected using a multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, two secondary schools were purposively selected based on the availability of counselling services and administrative approval. In the second stage, students were randomly selected and assigned into two groups: the experimental group (n = 60) and the control group (n = 60). The experimental group received peer mediation counselling, while the control group did not receive any intervention during the study period.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled *Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Scale (ICRS)*. The instrument measured students' ability to manage interpersonal conflicts across dimensions such as communication, emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving. The validity of the instrument was established through expert review in counselling psychology and measurement and evaluation, while its reliability was determined using the Cronbach alpha method, yielding a satisfactory reliability coefficient.

The intervention involved a structured peer mediation counselling programme administered to the experimental group over a specified period. Selected students were trained as peer mediators and facilitated conflict resolution sessions among their peers under the supervision of the researcher. The sessions focused on developing skills such as active listening, negotiation, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. The control group continued with their normal school activities without exposure to the intervention.

Data were collected using pre-test and post-test measures administered to both groups. The collected data were analysed using inferential statistics. Independent samples t-test was used to test hypotheses one and two, while one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypothesis three. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.
Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to in the course of the study. Permission was obtained from school authorities, and informed consent was secured from participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were maintained, and participation was voluntary.

Results

Hypothesis Testing

H_{01}: *There is no significant difference in the interpersonal conflict resolution abilities between students who undergo peer*

mediation counselling and those who do not in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 1: Independent Sample t-test on Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Scores Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
Experimental	60	82.45	6.32	118	7.68	0.000*
Control	60	73.12	7.54			

Decision Rule: *Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$*

The table reveals that the mean interpersonal conflict resolution score for students in the experimental group (M = 82.45, SD = 6.32) is significantly higher than that of the control group (M = 73.12, SD = 7.54). The t-test result (t = 7.68, p = 0.000) indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups at the p < 0.05 level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and conclude that peer mediation counselling significantly enhances interpersonal conflict resolution skills among students.

H_{02}: *There is no significant difference between male and female students in the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.*

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test on Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Scores by Gender (Experimental Group Only)

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
Male	30	81.73	6.11	58	0.93	0.357
Female	30	83.17	6.58			

Decision Rule: *Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$*

The table reveals that among students who received peer mediation counselling, males scored an average of 81.73, while females scored slightly higher at 83.17. However, the t-value of 0.93 and p-value of 0.357 indicate that this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and conclude that gender does not significantly influence the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in interpersonal conflict resolution.

H_{03}: *There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on interpersonal conflict resolution across academic levels (SS1, SS2, SS3) among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.*

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Table 3: One-Way ANOVA on Interpersonal Conflict Resolution by Academic Level (Experimental Group Only)

Academic Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		
SS1	20	80.85	5.94		
SS2	20	83.60	6.44		
SS3	20	82.90	6.52		
Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value (Sig.)
Between Groups	91.33	2	45.67	1.11	0.336
Within Groups	2356.80	57	41.34		
Total	2448.13	59			

Decision Rule: *Reject H_0 if $p < 0.05$*

The one-way ANOVA results show that the average scores for resolving conflicts between peers are slightly different for SS1 (M = 80.85), SS2 (M = 83.60), and SS3 (M = 82.90). However, the F-value of 1.11 and a p-value of 0.336 suggest that these differences are not statistically significant. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) and conclude that academic level does not significantly affect the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling on conflict resolution skills among students.

Discussions

The present study examined the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling in enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. The findings provide strong empirical support for the efficacy of peer-led interventions in promoting constructive conflict management skills among students. The first major finding revealed a significant difference in interpersonal conflict resolution abilities between students exposed to peer mediation counselling and those in the control group. Students in the experimental group demonstrated substantially higher post-test scores, indicating that peer mediation counselling effectively enhances adolescents' ability to manage conflicts constructively. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the benefits of peer-mediated interventions in improving communication skills, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities (Shuaib et al.,2021; Gregory, A. et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2025). It also supports evidence from systematic reviews that peer support programmes foster positive behavioural and psychosocial outcomes among young people (Iretor-Oscar et al.,2021; Topping, 2022; Brinsley, J. et al., 2025).

The effectiveness of peer mediation observed in this study can be explained through the lens of Social Learning Theory, which posits

that individuals learn behaviours through observation and interaction (Adedoja et al.,2021; Awoyemi et al.,2023; Rumjaun & Narod, 2025). Within the mediation process, students are exposed to constructive conflict resolution strategies demonstrated by trained peers, which they subsequently internalize and replicate in real-life situations. This aligns with findings that peer influence plays a critical role in shaping adolescent behaviour and social competencies (Adaramoye et al.,2024; Woreta et al., 2025; Veenstra, 2026). Furthermore, the collaborative and participatory nature of peer mediation reflects principles of the humanistic approach, particularly the emphasis on empathy, respect, and self-directed growth (Akanbi et al.,2024; Cavé et al., 2024; Cooperet et al., 2026). The creation of a supportive, non-judgmental environment likely contributed to students' willingness to engage openly in conflict resolution processes.

In addition, the findings reinforce the limitations of punitive disciplinary approaches commonly used in schools. Prior studies have shown that punitive measures often fail to address the underlying causes of conflict and may exacerbate behavioural problems (Jones et al., 2023; Duarte, C. D. et al., 2023; Olayiwola-Adedoja et al.,2024a). In contrast, peer mediation counselling adopts a preventive and developmental approach, equipping students with practical skills for managing disagreements constructively. This supports broader calls for school-based interventions that promote social-emotional learning and positive peer relationships (Olayiwola-Adedoja et al.,2024b; Phelps et al., 2024; Wang, C. et al., 2026).

The second finding indicated that gender does not significantly influence the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling. Although female students recorded slightly higher mean scores than males, the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that peer mediation counselling is equally effective for both male and female students. This finding is consistent with studies that report minimal or inconsistent gender differences in the outcomes of peer-led interventions (Travers & Carter, 2022; Osiesi et al.,2025; Okocha et al.,2025). It also suggests that while gender may influence communication styles and emotional expression (Kilby, 2023; Olayiwola-Adedoja et al.,2025a), the structured and guided nature of peer mediation provides an inclusive framework that accommodates diverse interaction patterns. Furthermore, interventions aimed at challenging gender norms and stereotypes have shown that both males and females can benefit equally when provided with supportive environments (Stewart, R. et al., 2021; Olayiwola-Adedoja et al.,2025b).

Similarly, the third finding revealed that academic level (SS1, SS2, SS3) does not significantly affect the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling. Although slight variations in mean scores were observed, these differences were not statistically significant. This implies that peer mediation counselling is effective across different

stages of senior secondary education. This finding is particularly important as it suggests that the intervention can be implemented broadly without the need for extensive modification based on students' academic level. It also aligns with research indicating that peer-mediated interventions can be effective across different age groups and developmental stages (Geurts, E. M. A. et al., 2024; Adaramoye et al.,2025a; Eldred, E. et al., 2026).

Beyond the immediate outcomes, the findings of this study have broader implications for adolescent well-being and school climate. Effective conflict resolution is closely linked to improved peer relationships, reduced bullying, and enhanced psychological well-being (Olivier et al., 2020; Adaramoye et al.,2025b;Pan et al., 2025). By equipping students with these skills, peer mediation counselling contributes to the creation of safer and more supportive school environments. This is particularly relevant in contexts where unresolved conflicts contribute to disruptive behaviours and emotional distress (Osiesi et al., 2023; Olayiwola-Adedoja et al.,2025c).

Despite these contributions, the findings should be interpreted in light of certain contextual considerations. While the results strongly support the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling, cultural and institutional factors may influence its implementation and outcomes. As noted in the literature, most studies on peer mediation have been conducted in Western settings, and there remains a need for context-specific adaptations (O'Brien et al., 2025; Olayiwola-Adedoja&Naidoo,2025). The present study addresses this gap by providing empirical evidence from a Nigerian context, thereby enhancing the generalizability of peer mediation as a viable intervention in diverse educational settings. In summary, the study demonstrates that peer mediation counselling is a highly effective strategy for enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents, regardless of gender or academic level. By promoting communication, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving, the intervention not only resolves immediate conflicts but also fosters long-term social and emotional competencies. These findings underscore the importance of integrating peer mediation programmes into school counselling practices as a sustainable approach to improving student behaviour, relationships, and overall well-being.

Conclusion

This study concludes that peer mediation counselling is an effective intervention for enhancing interpersonal conflict resolution among adolescents in senior secondary schools. Students who participated in the peer mediation programme demonstrated significantly improved abilities in managing conflicts compared to those who did not receive the intervention. The findings further indicate that the effectiveness of peer mediation counselling is not significantly influenced by gender or academic level, suggesting that the approach is inclusive and adaptable across different student groups. By fostering skills such as communication, empathy, emotional regulation, and

collaborative problem-solving, peer mediation counselling contributes not only to the resolution of immediate disputes but also to the development of long-term social and emotional competencies. The study reinforces the growing body of evidence supporting peer-led and school-based preventive interventions as essential tools for promoting positive student behaviour and well-being. In the context of Nigerian secondary schools, where traditional disciplinary approaches often dominate, peer mediation offers a practical and sustainable alternative. Overall, the study underscores the need for educational stakeholders to adopt innovative, student-centred strategies that equip adolescents with the skills necessary for constructive interpersonal relationships and lifelong conflict management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. Schools should adopt peer mediation counselling programmes as part of their guidance and counselling services to promote constructive conflict resolution among students. School administrators should provide adequate training for peer mediators and ensure proper supervision by qualified counsellors to maintain the effectiveness and integrity of the programme. Teachers should also be trained in basic conflict resolution and mediation techniques to support students' learning and application of these skills in everyday interactions. Educational policymakers should develop policies that encourage the integration of peer mediation and other restorative practices into school systems, reducing reliance on punitive disciplinary measures. Furthermore, schools should create awareness among students about the benefits of peer mediation to encourage participation and acceptance. Collaboration between schools, parents, and community stakeholders is also essential to reinforce positive conflict resolution behaviours beyond the school environment. Implementing these recommendations will help create safer, more inclusive, and supportive learning environments that foster both academic success and psychosocial development.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for educational practice, counselling services, and policy development. The demonstrated effectiveness of peer mediation counselling suggests that schools should move beyond punitive disciplinary approaches toward preventive, skill-based interventions that empower students to manage conflicts constructively. Integrating peer mediation programmes into school counselling frameworks can enhance students' communication, empathy, and problem-solving skills, thereby promoting a more supportive and inclusive school climate. This aligns with evidence that peer-led interventions improve social competence and reduce behavioural problems (Topping, 2022; Gregory et al., 2024). The finding that gender and academic level do not

significantly influence outcomes further implies that peer mediation is broadly applicable across diverse student groups, making it a scalable and cost-effective intervention. For policymakers, the study underscores the need to institutionalize peer mediation within school systems, particularly in developing contexts like Nigeria where counselling resources may be limited. Additionally, teacher training programmes should incorporate conflict resolution and peer facilitation strategies to support implementation. Overall, the study highlights peer mediation counselling as a sustainable approach to enhancing adolescent well-being, reducing school violence, and fostering positive peer relationships.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a quasi-experimental design limits the ability to establish full causal relationships, as random assignment may not completely eliminate pre-existing differences between groups. Second, the sample size was relatively small and restricted to selected secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or educational contexts. Third, the study relied on self-reported data through the Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Scale, which may be subject to social desirability bias and may not fully capture actual behavioural changes. Additionally, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, making it difficult to assess the long-term sustainability of the observed improvements in conflict resolution skills. Contextual factors such as school environment, cultural norms, and the quality of mediator training were not extensively controlled, which could have influenced the outcomes. These limitations suggest that while the findings are promising, they should be interpreted with caution and validated through further research using more rigorous and diverse methodologies.

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