

INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION INTO COUNSELLING PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study investigated integrating human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development. The study also examined how the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes promotes learners' personal, social, moral, and civic development, thereby contributing to sustainable human development. Four research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and carried out in public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 289 counsellors drawn from two public universities in Enugu State as follows: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) – 172 counsellors; and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani – 117 counsellors. No sampling was carried out due to the manageable size of the population; hence, the entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Human Rights Integration in Counselling Programmes Questionnaire (HRICPQ). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Counselling and Human Development, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83 using the Cronbach Alpha method, indicating that the instrument was reliable. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a decision rule benchmark of 2.50. The findings of the study revealed that human rights education is integrated into counselling programmes through counselling sessions, classroom instruction, peer and group counselling, moral instruction, and advocacy activities. The findings also showed that integrating human rights education promotes peaceful coexistence, moral development, respect for diversity, and sustainable human development outcomes. However, challenges such as inadequate trained counsellors, lack of instructional materials, curriculum overload, and limited institutional support were found to hinder effective integration. The study concluded that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes significantly enhances learners' behavioural, social, and civic development, thereby contributing to sustainable human development. It was recommended that counselling educators and curriculum planners should systematically integrate human rights education into counselling programmes, provide adequate training for counsellors, and improve resource availability to ensure effective implementation.

Keywords: Human rights education, counselling programmes, sustainable human development, curriculum integration, ethical awareness.

Introduction

There is increasing concern among scholars and practitioners that counselling programmes in tertiary institutions have not sufficiently incorporated human rights education as a core component of training, despite the growing complexity of social problems confronting contemporary societies. This concern is rooted in the realization that counselling, as a helping profession, is expected to go beyond addressing individual

psychological concerns to tackling broader issues of inequality, injustice, and human rights violations. However, many counselling programmes still operate within a limited framework that prioritizes personal adjustment over social transformation (source). This situation raises critical questions about the ability of counselling education to contribute effectively to sustainable human development in the twenty-first century. Human rights education has gained significant attention in recent years as a transformative approach to education that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to promote and protect human dignity. The literature indicates that human rights education is not merely about teaching legal frameworks but also about fostering attitudes and behaviours that support justice, equality, and inclusion Osler and Starkey (2018). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2022), education must be reimagined to promote social justice, solidarity, and respect for human dignity, thereby preparing individuals to address global challenges. Similarly, Robinson, Phillips, and Quennerstedt (2018) argue that effective human rights education requires systemic integration within educational structures to ensure that learners develop a deep understanding of their responsibilities in promoting human rights.

Furthermore, recent studies have highlighted the strong relationship between human rights education and sustainable development. A study by Soomro, Sahito, and Basit (2025) examining the intersection of human rights education and Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes that both frameworks promote inclusive, equitable, and quality education, while encouraging critical thinking and respect for human dignity. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (2023) stresses that human development is fundamentally about expanding people's choices and freedoms, which are closely linked to the realization of human rights. These perspectives reinforce the argument that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes can enhance their relevance in promoting sustainable human development. Counselling programmes play a vital role in shaping individuals' personal, social, and emotional development. They are designed to help individuals understand themselves, relate effectively with others, and make informed decisions. However, without the inclusion of human rights education, counselling may fall short in addressing broader societal issues that influence individual well-being. Osler and Starkey (2018) emphasize that human rights education promotes democratic values, active citizenship, and social responsibility, all of which are essential for meaningful participation in society. This suggests that counselling programmes that integrate human rights education are better positioned to produce individuals who are ethically conscious and socially responsible.

Moreover, the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of human rights education emphasize three key dimensions: education about human rights, education through human rights, and education for human rights. These dimensions collectively aim to develop knowledge, transform attitudes, and promote action toward social change. Bajaj (2017) noted that educational programmes that adopt this comprehensive approach tend to produce learners who are more ethically aware and actively engaged in addressing societal issues. This underscores the importance of integrating human rights education into counselling curricula to enhance both individual and societal outcomes. The linkage between human rights education and sustainable human development is further reinforced by global policy frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations (2021) highlighted that achieving sustainable development requires empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote justice,

equality, and inclusion. MacNaughton (2015) further observes that a significant proportion of sustainable development targets are directly connected to human rights principles, thereby emphasizing the interdependence between human rights and development.

Notwithstanding the growing body of literature supporting the integration of human rights education into professional training programmes, several challenges remain. Studies have identified barriers such as inadequate curriculum design, lack of trained educators, and limited institutional support as major factors hindering effective implementation. For example, Nagengast (2018) reports that educators who lack sufficient understanding of human rights concepts often struggle to integrate them into teaching practices. These challenges highlight the need for systematic reforms and capacity-building initiatives within educational institutions. In the context of counselling programmes, these challenges are particularly significant. Counselling education requires a holistic approach that addresses both individual and societal dimensions of human development. Without the integration of human rights education, counselling programmes may fail to prepare graduates who are capable of addressing complex social issues such as discrimination, gender inequality, and social exclusion. This gap is especially evident in developing countries, including Nigeria, where counselling education is still evolving to meet global standards.

evidence by Merryfield and Duty (2018) also suggests that integrating human rights education into educational programmes leads to positive outcomes in terms of learners' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Studies have shown that students exposed to human rights education demonstrate increased awareness of social issues, improved critical thinking skills, and greater commitment to promoting justice and equality (Robinson, Phillips, & Quennerstedt, 2018; Bajaj, 2017). These outcomes are essential for sustainable human development, which requires individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also socially responsible and ethically grounded. Given the foregoing, it becomes evident that the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes is not only desirable but necessary for achieving sustainable human development. Counselling programmes provide a unique platform for fostering personal growth, social awareness, and ethical responsibility. By incorporating human rights education into these programmes, educators can enhance the capacity of counselling students to function as agents of social change and advocates for human rights.

Recent developments in educational research indicate a growing global shift toward integrating human rights education into different fields of professional training, including counselling, teacher education, health education, and social work. This shift is driven by the increasing recognition that education must go beyond knowledge transmission to include the promotion of dignity, equity, and social justice. According to Banks (2016), contemporary education systems are expected to prepare learners not only for employment but also for democratic participation and responsible citizenship. This aligns with the argument of Merryfield and Duty (2018), who assert that human rights education strengthens learners' capacity to critically examine injustice and actively participate in social transformation. Similarly, Gaudelli (2019) emphasizes that global education frameworks increasingly integrate human rights perspectives as a means of addressing inequality and promoting global citizenship. In counselling education specifically, Corey (2017) highlights that effective counselling practice must incorporate ethical responsibility and social awareness, noting that counsellors are increasingly expected to address systemic and environmental factors affecting clients' wellbeing. In the same direction,

Gladding (2020) argues that counselling is no longer limited to individual adjustment but must engage with broader societal issues such as discrimination, violence, and marginalization.

From a policy and global development perspective, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2022) stressed that education systems must be reoriented to promote peace, human dignity, and sustainable futures. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (2023) affirms that sustainable human development is achieved when individuals are empowered with freedoms, rights, and opportunities to participate fully in society. Furthermore, contemporary research shows increasing empirical support for the integration of human rights education into academic programmes. Andreopoulos and Claude (2017) note that human rights education enhances learners' ethical reasoning, civic engagement, and social responsibility. In a similar vein, Tibbitts and Fernekes (2020) argue that human rights education has evolved into a pedagogical framework that promotes transformative learning and social justice orientation. Within interdisciplinary education, Osler (2021) observes that human rights education is now widely recognized as essential for preparing learners to engage with diversity, inequality, and global interdependence. These developments indicate a clear global trend toward embedding human rights principles into professional education, including counselling programmes.

Despite the expanding body of literature on human rights education, several important gaps remain evident. First, most studies (e.g., Banks, 2016; Gaudelli, 2019; Andreopoulos & Claude, 2017) have focused broadly on general education, citizenship education, or teacher education, with limited attention to counselling programmes as a distinct professional field. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how human rights education can be specifically integrated into counselling curricula. Second, although scholars such as Corey (2017) and Gladding (2020) have discussed the importance of social justice in counselling practice, they have not sufficiently operationalized how human rights education can be systematically embedded into counselling training programmes, particularly at the tertiary level. Third, empirical studies linking human rights education directly with sustainable human development outcomes in counselling contexts remain limited. While global institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2022) and the United Nations (2021) emphasize the theoretical connection between human rights and sustainable development, there is a lack of context-specific empirical evidence, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Fourth, there is also a methodological gap, as many existing studies are conceptual or policy-based, with fewer descriptive survey studies that capture the perceptions of counselling educators, programme coordinators, and postgraduate students regarding curriculum integration.

Finally, there is limited research that simultaneously examines how human rights education influences multiple dimensions of development—personal, social, and civic—within counselling training programmes. This multidimensional relationship remains underexplored in existing literature. However, it is against this backdrop that this study examines the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development. Specifically, the study focuses on how the integration of human rights education (independent variable) can influence individuals' personal, social, and civic development, thereby contributing to sustainable human development (dependent variable). Hence, by addressing the identified gaps, this study provides

empirical evidence from tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria, thereby extending existing literature into a new contextual and disciplinary setting. It also contributes to knowledge by clarifying how human rights education can be systematically integrated into counselling curricula to enhance ethical awareness, civic responsibility, and sustainable human development.

Statement of the Problem

Human rights education has become an essential component of contemporary education systems globally, particularly in the effort to promote dignity, equality, justice, and sustainable human development. Within counselling programmes, it is expected that trainees are not only equipped with psychological and helping skills but are also grounded in ethical, civic, and human rights principles that guide professional practice and social responsibility. Ideally, counselling education should integrate human rights education into its curriculum in such a way that trainees develop strong awareness of human dignity, social justice, and civic responsibility. In such an ideal situation, counselling programmes would produce professionals who are capable of addressing not only individual psychological needs but also broader social issues such as discrimination, marginalization, and inequality. This aligns with global expectations that education systems should contribute to sustainable development by fostering responsible and rights-conscious citizens who can actively participate in building inclusive societies as emphasized in international development frameworks. However, the reality in many educational settings, particularly in developing contexts, shows a different picture. Counselling programmes often place greater emphasis on traditional psychological theories and therapeutic techniques while paying limited attention to structured integration of human rights education. As a result, many counselling graduates may possess adequate clinical or theoretical knowledge but lack sufficient grounding in human rights perspectives needed to effectively address systemic social challenges affecting clients and communities. This gap limits the capacity of counselling programmes to fully contribute to sustainable human development.

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on how the integration of human rights education within counselling programmes influences key developmental outcomes such as personal growth, social responsibility, and civic engagement among trainees. Existing discussions tend to remain largely theoretical and policy-oriented, with insufficient attention given to how such integration functions in actual academic settings, especially within tertiary institutions. This creates a disconnected between global educational expectations and the realities of counselling education practice. Hence, it is against this background that this study seeks to examine the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development. Specifically, the problem of this study is that despite the global emphasis on human rights education as a tool for promoting sustainable development, counselling programmes have not adequately integrated human rights education into their curriculum, thereby limiting their effectiveness in producing socially responsible and rights-conscious professionals capable of contributing meaningfully to sustainable human development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine integrating human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To examine how human rights education is integrated into counselling programmes for sustainable human development.
2. To identify the strategies used in integrating human rights education into counselling programmes.
3. To determine the perceived benefits of integrating human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development.
4. To identify the challenges affecting the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How is human rights education integrated into counselling programmes for sustainable human development?
2. What strategies are used in integrating human rights education into counselling programmes?
3. What are the perceived benefits of integrating human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development?
4. What challenges affect the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate integrating human rights education into counselling programmes for sustainable human development. The study was carried out in public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria, specifically the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani. The population of the study comprised 289 counsellors drawn from the two universities, with UNN having 172 counsellors and ESUT having 117 counsellors. No sampling technique was employed because the population size was manageable; therefore, the entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Human Rights Integration in Counselling Programmes Questionnaire (HRICPQ), developed based on the objectives of the study. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Counselling and Human Development Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to ensure face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating that the instrument was reliable for data collection. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire to the respondents in both universities with the assistance of research coordinators. All completed copies of the instrument were retrieved for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used as the decision rule for acceptance or rejection of items. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$) was regarded as agreed (accepted), while any item with a mean score below 2.50 ($\bar{X} < 2.50$) was regarded as disagreed (rejected).

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Integration of Human Rights Education into Counselling Programmes

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
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1	Human rights education is integrated through counselling sessions	3.60	0.62	1st	A
2	Human rights education is integrated through classroom instruction	3.55	0.65	2nd	A
3	Human rights education is integrated through peer counselling activities	3.50	0.60	3rd	A
4	Human rights education is integrated through group counselling sessions	3.48	0.66	4th	A
5	Human rights education is integrated through value clarification exercises	3.42	0.70	5th	A
6	Human rights education is integrated through moral instruction programmes	3.38	0.72	6th	A
7	Human rights education is integrated through role-playing activities	3.35	0.75	7th	A
8	Human rights education is integrated through advocacy and awareness campaigns	3.30	0.78	8th	A
9	Human rights education is integrated through behavioural guidance programmes	3.25	0.80	9th	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.43	0.70		

Data in Table 1 shows that all item mean scores ($\bar{X} = 3.25 - 3.60$) are greater than the criterion mean set ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), indicating that respondents agreed that human rights education is integrated into counselling programmes through counselling sessions, classroom instruction, peer counselling, group counselling, value clarification, moral instruction, role-playing, advocacy, and behavioural guidance programmes. The aggregate mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) is also greater than the criterion mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), confirming a high level of agreement among respondents. In addition, the standard deviation ($SD = 0.70$) is less than 1.00 ($SD \leq 1.00$), indicating low variability in responses and suggesting that respondents' views are closely clustered around the mean. This demonstrates a strong consensus that human rights education is effectively integrated into counselling programmes for sustainable human development.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Strategies Used in Integrating Human Rights Education into Counselling Programmes

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Role-playing is used as a strategy in integrating human rights education	3.62	0.60	1st	A
2	Group counselling is used to promote human rights awareness	3.58	0.63	2nd	A
3	Peer counselling is used to support human rights education	3.55	0.65	3rd	A
4	Case studies are used to teach human rights issues in counselling	3.50	0.67	4th	A
5	Storytelling is used to communicate human rights concepts	3.48	0.69	5th	A
6	Moral instruction is used in counselling to	3.45	0.70	6th	A

	promote human rights values				
7	Advocacy campaigns are used to sensitize learners on human rights	3.40	0.72	7th	A
8	Mentorship programmes are used to guide learners on human rights issues	3.35	0.75	8th	A
9	Interactive discussions are used to enhance human rights understanding	3.30	0.78	9th	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.47	0.68		A

Data in Table 2 shows that all item mean scores ($\bar{X} = 3.30 - 3.62$) are greater than the criterion mean set ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), indicating that respondents agreed that several participatory and learner-centred strategies are used in integrating human rights education into counselling programmes. The aggregate mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.47$) is also greater than the criterion mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), indicating a high level of agreement among respondents. Furthermore, the standard deviation ($SD = 0.68$) is less than 1.00 ($SD \leq 1.00$), showing low variability in responses and a strong consensus among respondents. This suggests that interactive strategies such as role-playing, group counselling, peer counselling, and advocacy are widely applied in integrating human rights education into counselling programmes.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Perceived Benefits of Integrating Human Rights Education into Counselling Programmes for Sustainable Human Development

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	It promotes peaceful coexistence among learners	3.66	0.60	1st	A
2	It reduces bullying and violent behaviour in schools	3.62	0.62	2nd	A
3	It enhances students' moral development	3.58	0.65	3rd	A
4	It improves respect for human dignity and diversity	3.55	0.67	4th	A
5	It strengthens learners' social responsibility	3.52	0.69	5th	A
6	It improves emotional stability among learners	3.48	0.70	6th	A
7	It promotes justice and fairness in school environments	3.45	0.72	7th	A
8	It enhances students' decision-making skills	3.40	0.75	8th	A
9	It supports sustainable human development outcomes	3.38	0.78	9th	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.51	0.68		A

Data in Table 3 shows that all item mean scores ($\bar{X} = 3.38 - 3.66$) are greater than the criterion mean set ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), indicating that respondents agreed that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes yields multiple benefits for learners and the school environment. The aggregate mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.51$) is also greater than the criterion mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), confirming a high level of agreement among respondents. Additionally, the standard deviation ($SD = 0.68$) is less than 1.00 ($SD \leq 1.00$), indicating low response dispersion and a strong consensus. This implies that respondents consistently

recognize that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes promotes peace, moral development, responsible behaviour, and sustainable human development outcomes.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Challenges Affecting the Integration of Human Rights Education into Counselling Programmes (n = ??)

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std Dev (SD)	Rank	Decision
1	Inadequate trained counsellors affect integration	3.60	0.62	1st	A
2	Lack of instructional materials limits integration	3.58	0.64	2nd	A
3	Overcrowded school curriculum hinders integration	3.55	0.66	3rd	A
4	Insufficient time for counselling sessions affects integration	3.52	0.68	4th	A
5	Lack of institutional support limits implementation	3.50	0.70	5th	A
6	Poor funding of counselling programmes affects integration	3.48	0.72	6th	A
7	Limited professional development opportunities hinder counsellors	3.45	0.74	7th	A
8	Low awareness of human rights education reduces effectiveness	3.42	0.76	8th	A
9	Heavy workload of counsellors affects programme delivery	3.38	0.78	9th	A
Aggregate Score (M & SD)		3.49	0.70		A

Data in Table 4 shows that all item mean scores ($\bar{X}=3.38 - 3.60$) are greater than the criterion mean set ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), indicating that respondents agreed that several institutional, structural, and professional challenges affect the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes. The aggregate mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.49$) is also greater than the criterion mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$), confirming a high level of agreement among respondents. Furthermore, the standard deviation ($SD= 0.70$) is less than 1.00 ($SD \leq 1.00$), indicating low variability in responses and a strong consensus. This implies that respondents consistently identify inadequate manpower, lack of resources, curriculum overload, and poor institutional support as major constraints to effective integration of human rights education into counselling programmes.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that human rights education is integrated into counselling programmes through guidance and counselling sessions, value clarification activities, classroom interactions, moral instruction, and school-based behavioural support systems. It was further revealed that counsellors embed issues such as dignity, equality, respect for diversity, and social justice into both individual and group counselling sessions. This integration enables learners to understand their rights and responsibilities within the school environment and society at large, thereby contributing to sustainable

human development as promoted in global education frameworks. The findings are in consonance with the study of Osler (2021), who posited that human rights education is most effective when embedded within everyday schooling practices, including counselling and classroom interactions, as it strengthens learners' civic awareness and ethical responsibility. Similarly, Tibbitts and Fernekes (2020) found that human rights education is effectively integrated when educators incorporate participatory and reflective approaches that encourage learners to relate rights-based concepts to real-life experiences. These studies support the finding that counselling programmes serve as practical avenues for embedding human rights education in schools.

The findings of the study revealed that strategies used in integrating human rights education into counselling programmes include group counselling, peer counselling, role-playing, storytelling, case analysis, moral instruction, and interactive discussions. It was also revealed that counsellors use advocacy programmes, school campaigns, and mentoring systems to sensitize learners on human rights issues such as bullying, discrimination, abuse, and gender inequality. These strategies were found to be learner-centred and participatory, allowing students to actively engage with human rights concepts and apply them in real-life situations. The findings are in consonance with the study of Banks (2016), who emphasized that culturally responsive and participatory teaching strategies, including dialogue and collaborative learning, are essential for promoting equity and human rights awareness in educational settings. Likewise, Gladding (2020) noted that counselling practices that utilize interactive and experiential techniques such as role-playing and group interaction enhance clients' understanding of social values, including respect for human rights. These studies affirm that participatory counselling strategies are effective in integrating human rights education into school programmes.

The findings of the study revealed that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes leads to improved student discipline, enhanced respect for diversity, reduction in bullying and violence, and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in schools. It was also found that learners develop stronger moral reasoning, empathy, social responsibility, and civic awareness. Furthermore, the integration contributes to sustainable human development by fostering inclusive, equitable, and just school environments that align with global development goals. The findings are in consonance with the study of United Nations (2021), which emphasized that education for human rights is central to achieving peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, United Nations Development Programme (2023) found that human rights-based education strengthens social cohesion, reduces inequality, and promotes human development outcomes across communities. These studies support the finding that human rights education in counselling programmes contributes significantly to sustainable human development.

The findings of the study revealed that several challenges hinder the effective integration of human rights education into counselling programmes. These include inadequate trained counsellors, limited professional development opportunities, insufficient instructional materials, overcrowded school curricula, and lack of institutional and policy support. It was also observed that counselling services are often underfunded and given less priority in many school systems, thereby limiting their effectiveness in delivering human rights education. The findings are in consonance with the study of Andreopoulos and Claude (2017), who posited that inadequate training and lack of institutional commitment remain major barriers to effective human rights education

implementation globally. Similarly, Robinson, Phillips, and Quennerstedt (2018) found that insufficient teacher preparation and unclear institutional roles hinder the effective delivery of human rights education in schools. These studies confirm that systemic, structural, and professional challenges continue to affect the integration of human rights education into counselling programmes.

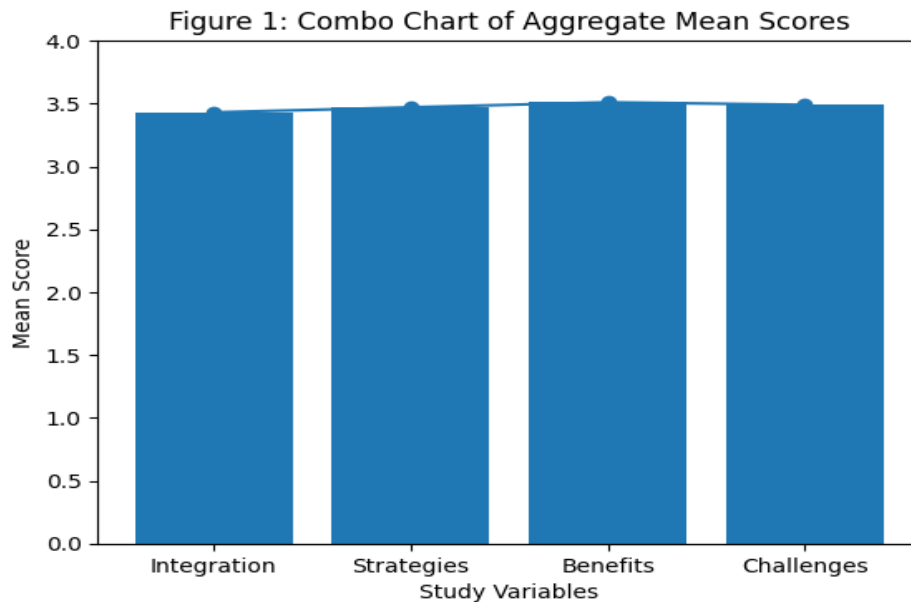


Figure 1: The combo chart indicates a relatively high and stable mean distribution across all study variables ($\bar{X} = 3.43\text{--}3.51$), suggesting that respondents consistently agreed that human rights education is integrated into counselling programmes, with benefits slightly higher than other variables ($\bar{X} = 3.51$). The closeness of the mean values also implies minimal variation in perceptions across the measured constructs.

Figure 2: Pie Chart of Aggregate Mean Scores

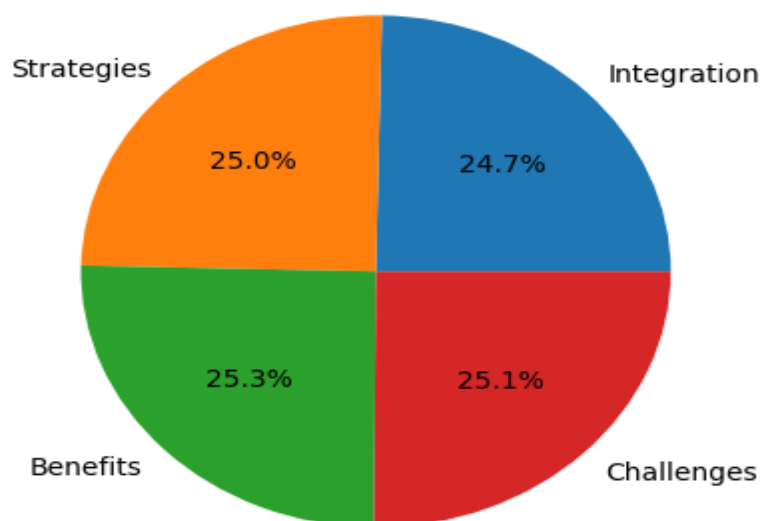


Figure 2: The pie chart shows a nearly uniform distribution of the aggregate mean scores, with benefits (25.3%) and challenges (25.1%) slightly higher than strategies (25.0%) and integration (24.7%). This indicates balanced respondent perceptions, suggesting that all components of the study contribute almost equally to the overall understanding of human rights education integration into counselling programmes.

Educational Implications of the Study

The study implies that counselling programmes in schools should be strengthened as effective platforms for integrating human rights education to promote learners' moral development, social responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. It further suggests that counsellors need to adopt participatory and learner-centred strategies to enhance students' understanding and application of human rights principles. The findings also imply that schools and education stakeholders must provide adequate training, resources, and institutional support to ensure effective delivery of human rights education through counselling services.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by highlighting the role of counselling programmes as a practical channel for integrating human rights education into school systems for sustainable human development. It expands existing literature by showing how counselling strategies such as group work, peer interaction, and advocacy can effectively promote human rights awareness among learners. The study also provides empirical evidence on the benefits and challenges of this integration, thereby offering a framework for improving counselling-based human rights education in educational settings.

Conclusion

The study concluded that human rights education is meaningfully integrated into counselling programmes through guidance and counselling sessions, value-based instruction, classroom interactions, and school-based behavioural interventions that promote dignity, equality, and social justice. It was also concluded that counselling programmes employ participatory strategies such as group counselling, role-playing, peer counselling, and advocacy activities to strengthen learners' understanding of human rights principles. Furthermore, the study established that integrating human rights education into counselling programmes contributes to sustainable human development by improving learners' behaviour, promoting peaceful coexistence, enhancing moral development, and fostering respect for diversity. However, the study also concluded that the effective integration of human rights education is constrained by inadequate trained counsellors, insufficient resources, overcrowded curriculum, and weak institutional support, which limit the full realization of its objectives in schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Counselling programmes should be strengthened to ensure effective integration of human rights education because it enhances learners' understanding of dignity, equality, and social responsibility.
2. School authorities should encourage the use of participatory counselling strategies such as role-playing, group counselling, and peer interaction because they improve learners' engagement and internalisation of human rights values.

3. Government and educational stakeholders should provide adequate training and continuous professional development for school counsellors because it enhances their competence in delivering human rights-based counselling.
4. Schools should be adequately equipped with instructional materials and counselling resources because it supports effective teaching and practice of human rights education in counselling programmes.
5. Curriculum planners should review and reduce curriculum overload because it creates adequate time for effective counselling and proper integration of human rights education in schools.

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