

# Knowledge and Attitude Towards Assessment and Testing Among School and Other Practising Counsellors in Nigeria

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas masalah terbatasnya pengetahuan dan beragamnya sikap terhadap asesmen dan pengujian di kalangan konselor sekolah dan konselor praktik di Nigeria. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara pengetahuan dan sikap terhadap praktik tersebut. Dengan menggunakan empat pertanyaan penelitian dan hipotesis, penelitian ini melibatkan seluruh konselor di Nigeria sebagai populasi, dengan sampel sebanyak 350 peserta yang dipilih secara purposif acak dari konferensi tahunan APROCON dan CASSON. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen "Skala Pengetahuan dan Sikap terhadap Asesmen dan Pengujian di Kalangan Konselor Sekolah dan Praktik di Nigeria (KAATSOPCNS)" yang dikembangkan berdasarkan kajian pustaka mendalam. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Koefisien Korelasi Produk Momen Pearson (PPMCC). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan signifikan antara pengetahuan dan sikap konselor terhadap asesmen dan pengujian, yang menegaskan perlunya pemahaman lebih mendalam dan kompetensi profesional. Disarankan agar konselor memperoleh kualifikasi yang diperlukan, pengalaman praktik yang memadai, serta mengikuti program pengembangan profesional secara rutin untuk meningkatkan keahlian mereka dalam asesmen dan pengujian. Langkah-langkah ini penting untuk memastikan praktik konseling yang efektif di Nigeria.

## ABSTRACT

This study addressed the problem of limited knowledge and varying attitudes towards assessment and testing among school and practicing counsellors in Nigeria. The research aimed to explore the relationships between knowledge and attitudes towards these practices. Using four research questions and hypotheses, the study targeted all counsellors in Nigeria, with a purposive random sample of 350 participants drawn from attendees at the annual APROCON and CASSON conferences. Data were collected through the "Knowledge and Attitude towards Assessment and Testing among School and Practicing Counsellors in Nigeria Scale (KAATSOPCNS)," developed after an extensive literature review. Analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The findings revealed significant relationships between counsellors' knowledge and attitudes towards assessment and testing, emphasizing the need for deeper understanding and professional competence. It is recommended that counsellors acquire requisite qualifications, gain practical experience, and participate in regular professional development programs to enhance their proficiency in assessment and testing. These steps are essential to ensure effective counselling practices in Nigeria.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental pillar for individual and national development by fostering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor growth, enabling individuals to contribute effectively to society (Bathgate & Schunn, 2017; De Brabander & Glastra, 2018). Within this framework, counsellors hold a pivotal role in guiding individuals toward informed decisions that align with personal growth and collective progress. Through systematic testing and assessments, counsellors gain valuable insights into their clients' potential, interests, and challenges, thereby facilitating tailored interventions (Ekstrom et al., 2004; Rudy & Levinson, 2008). The indispensable role of assessments in the counselling process, as they offer reliable data for decision-making across various aspects of life, including career, education, and

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mental health (Papola et al., 2024). The integration of assessments in counselling has been widely recognized as a cornerstone of effective practice (Ekstrom et al., 2004; Whiston, 2009). These tools help counsellors identify and address the nature and scope of clients' concerns while evaluating their readiness for counselling. From educational and career assessments to personality and neuropsychological evaluations, diverse testing methods enable counsellors to establish clear goals and develop actionable strategies (Anthony & Rowa, 2005; Flanagan & Esquivel, 2006). By leveraging standardized and objective testing frameworks, counsellors not only enhance the precision of their interventions but also build a comprehensive understanding of their clients, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and societal engagement.

The knowledge and attitude of counsellors toward assessment and testing are crucial for their effectiveness in addressing clients' academic, vocational, and socio-personal concerns (Heilbrun et al., 2008; Zaliyaperumal, 2004). Knowledge in this context involves an understanding of assessment's purposes, types, processes, and importance within the counselling process. Knowledge of assessment equips counsellors to provide meaningful support, demonstrating better performance compared to those lacking this expertise. Positive attitudes towards assessment—characterized by constructive thoughts and feelings—further enhance the counselling process, fostering more impactful engagements with clients (Sattler, 2002; Snyder et al., 2005). However, there is a lack of literature addressing the specific knowledge and attitudes of school and practising counsellors in Nigeria, presenting a gap in understanding these critical variables.

Several studies underscore the connection between knowledge, attitude, and assessment practices among counsellors and educators. For instance, research by previous researchers establishes relationships between knowledge and attitudes toward assessment in various educational settings (Brookhart & M, 2013; Liberto et al., 2022). Similar findings are reported in studies emphasizing how understanding and perspectives on assessment influence practice quality (Jansen & Moller, 2022; Nenty et al., 2021). Additionally, socio-demographic variables have been identified as predictors of assessment practices (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005). These insights highlight the multidimensional nature of assessment in counselling, revealing its dependence on counsellors' knowledge, attitudes, and contextual factors.

This study aims to explore the knowledge and attitude towards assessment and testing among school and practising counsellors in Edo State, which is a critical aspect for enhancing the quality of counselling services provided to students and clients in the region. By investigating how well these professionals understand and perceive the role of assessments in addressing academic, vocational, and socio-personal issues, this research seeks to identify key areas that may influence their counselling practices. The findings will contribute to the development of targeted professional development programs aimed at improving assessment practices, as well as enhancing the overall effectiveness of counselling services. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the under-explored context of Edo State, offering insights into local perceptions and practices that have not been adequately addressed in existing literature. By examining the specific knowledge gaps and attitudes toward assessment within this unique setting, the study offers new perspectives that can inform both local and national strategies for improving counselling practices and training programs.

## 2. METHOD

The study examines knowledge and attitude towards assessment and testing among school and other practising counsellors in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all counsellors in Nigeria. The total number of counsellors in Nigeria could not be ascertained because the two professional counselling associations in Nigeria Association of Professional counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON) and Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) do not have a comprehensive record of counsellors in Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised of two hundred and eighteen counsellors selected through purposive sampling. The sample of the study was selected during the Annual conferences of the Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON) and Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) which held in 2022. The data for the study were collected using instrument titled "Knowledge and Attitude towards Assessment and Testing among School and other Practising Counsellors in Nigeria Scale (KAATSOPCNS)" designed by the researcher after exhaustive literature review. It was designed to elicit information from the respondents on the knowledge and attitude towards assessment and testing among school and other practising counsellors in Nigeria. The instrument was made up of two parts. Part 1 elicited information in demographic variables of the study, while part 11 was on the content coverage of the study.

There were twenty (20) items in part 11 which elicited respondents' responses on questions relating to the knowledge and attitude towards assessment and testing among school and other practising

counsellors in Nigeria. The items on the research instrument were raised on a four (4) liken scale in degree of agreement and disagreement with the statements or questions in the questionnaire. The scale was based on strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1. The instrument was content validated by two experts in test and measurement. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal constituency of the instrument. Twenty-four copies of the instrument were administered on counsellors. The instrument was administered and re-administered on the selected students after two (2) weeks and scores collated, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to correlate the scores. It yielded correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.79. The shows that the instrument was reliable.

The researchers administer the copied questionnaire with the help of twelve research assistants (counsellors), who were specifically trained for the purpose. The researcher ensured that the purpose of the exercise was explicitly written on the questionnaire to facilitate the exercise. The researcher and research assistants took permission from the president of APROCON and CASSON and thereafter met the respondents during the 2022 conferences of both associations. The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents and their cooperation in responding to the copies of the questionnaire solicited. The researcher and research assistants thereafter administered the questionnaire copies of the questionnaire were collected the same day. This was to ensure the copies of questionnaire were properly filled and returned to ensure high return rate. It took two days to complete the exercise. Copies of the questionnaire were collected from the research assistance by the researcher following the completion of the exercise. The following statistical tools were used to analyze the data collected: percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient were used to determine the knowledge and attitude towards assessment and testing among school and other practicing counsellors in Nigeria.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

##### *Questionnaire Distribution and Response Pattern*

Out of the 235 copies of questionnaires that were distributed and collected back, 218 being 92.8% of the entire number distributed were all found useful.

##### *Demographic Variables of the Respondents*

The research outcome on the demographic distributions of the respondents reveals that almost all the respondents 205 (94%) were married. About half of the entire respondents 108 (49.5%) fall within the age bracket of 30- 39 years old with only 14(6.4%) that were within the ages of 50 years and above. For counsellors' status, 123(56.4%) of the respondents were school counsellors while 85(39%) were para-counsellors. Majority of them 117(53.7%) had 3-5 yrs experience whereas 85(39%) were other practicing counsellors. As regards qualifications B. A, B.Ed., & BSc had 108(49.5) respondents followed by Igbo 81(37.2%). Detailed information about socio-demographic distribution of the respondents is presented in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1. Socio- Demographic Distribution of the Respondents**

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentages
Marital Status	Single	4	1.8
	Married	205	94.0
	Separated/divorces	6	2.8
Age	Widowed	3	1.4
	20-29yrs	59	27.1
	30-39yrs	108	49.5
	40-49yrs	37	17.0
Nature of Counselling	50yrs and above	14	6.4
	Religious counsellors	2	1.0
	Other Practising counsellors	8	3.6
	Para counsellors	85	39.0
Experience	School counsellors	123	56.4
	0-2 yrs	85	39.0
	3-5 yrs	117	53.7
	7-9 yrs	5	2.3
Qualifications	10 and above yrs	13	5.9
	B.A, B.Sc, B.Ed	108	49.5

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentages
	Masters Degree	81	37.2
	Ph.D	22	10.1
	Others	7	3.2

To test Hypothesis 1, which states there is no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among school counsellors in Nigeria, the Pearson  $r$  was applied on the data collected from the respondents. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Hypothesis 1 Testing Result**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson-r	p-value	Decision
Knowledge	218	8.70	3.25	0.114	0.015	Reject Null Hypothesis
Attitude	218	49.37	4.65			

Data in Table 2 revealed that a positive relationship exist between knowledge and attitude. An  $r_{\text{value}}$  of 0.114 at 0.05 level of significance connotes a positive and significant relationship. In the light of this, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis of non-significant relationship. This means that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among school counsellors in Nigeria. The conclusion is that as knowledge increases attitude towards assessment increases. Hence, to some level of certainty we should expect school counsellors with higher level of knowledge to maintain a higher level of attitude towards assessment.

To test Hypothesis 2, which states there is no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among other practising counsellors in Nigeria, the Pearson  $r$  was applied on the data collected from the respondents. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Hypothesis 2 Testing Result**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson-r	p-value	Decision
Knowledge	218	8.60	3.28	0.113	0.018	Reject Null Hypothesis
Attitude	218	46.37	4.68			

Data in Table 3 revealed that a positive relationship existed between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among other practising counsellors in Nigeria. An  $r_{\text{value}}$  of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance connotes a positive and significant relationship. In the light of this, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis of non-significant relationship. This means that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among other practising counsellors in Nigeria. The conclusion is that as knowledge of assessment increases, attitude towards assessment also increases to some extent. Hence, to some level of certainty we should expect other practising counsellors with higher levels of knowledge to maintain a higher level of attitude towards assessment.

To test Hypothesis 3, which states there is no significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among school counsellors in Nigeria, the Pearson  $r$  was applied on the data collected from the respondents. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Hypothesis 3 Testing Result**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson-r	p-value	Decision
Knowledge	218	8.3	3.12	0.112	0.016	Reject Null Hypothesis
Attitude towards Counsellors	218	45.32	4.25			

Data in Table 4 revealed that a positive relationship exist between knowledge and attitude towards testing among school counsellors in Nigeria. An  $r_{\text{value}}$  of 0.112 at 0.05 level of significance connotes a positive and significant relationship. In the light of this, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis of non-significant relationship. This means that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among school counsellors in Nigeria. The conclusion is that as knowledge increases, attitude also increases to some extent. Hence, to some level of certainty we should expect school counsellors with higher levels of knowledge maintain a higher level of attitude.

To test Hypothesis 4, which states there is no significant relationship between knowledge, and attitude towards testing among other practising counsellors in Nigeria, the Pearson r was applied on the data collected from the respondents. A summary of the analysis is presented in [Table 5](#).

**Table 5. Hypothesis 4 Testing Result**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson-r	p-value	Decision
Knowledge	218	8.30	3.24	0.118	0.015	Reject Null Hypothesis
Attitude	218	43.37	4.46			

Data in [Table 5](#) revealed that a positive relationship exist between knowledge and attitude. An  $r_{\text{value}}$  of 0.118 at 0.05 level of significance connotes a positive and significant relationship. In the light of this, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis of non-significant relationship. This means that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among other practising counsellors in Nigeria. The conclusion is that as knowledge increases, attitude also increases to some extent. Hence, to some level of certainty we should expect other practising counsellors with higher levels knowledge to maintains a higher level of attitude towards testing.

## Discussion

The study found a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among school counsellors in Nigeria. This finding suggests that counsellors with a higher level of knowledge about assessment tend to exhibit more positive attitudes towards its use in practice. Such a relationship may stem from the widely recognized principle that knowledge empowers individuals to develop more favorable perceptions and attitudes toward a subject matter. When counsellors possess comprehensive knowledge about assessment types, procedures, and the relevance of assessments in the counselling process, they are more likely to recognize its importance in providing accurate, reliable, and meaningful support to clients ([Epperson et al., 1983](#); [Sattler, 2002](#)). Consequently, their positive attitudes are reinforced through understanding the practical value and impact of assessments on students' academic, vocational, and socio-personal outcomes. The study's findings align with prior research which established that professionals with a sound knowledge base are more likely to implement effective assessment practices, thereby improving service outcomes ([Brookhart & M, 2013](#); [Liberto et al., 2022](#)).

Similarly, the findings reveal a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among practising counsellors in Nigeria, further reinforcing the critical role that knowledge plays in shaping professional attitudes. The well-known adage "knowledge is power" aptly captures this dynamic, suggesting that individuals with a deeper understanding of assessment processes are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward its application in counselling practice ([Jansen & Moller, 2022](#); [Nenty et al., 2021](#)). The confidence gained through knowledge acquisition allows counsellors to approach assessment more constructively and competently. This positive correlation highlights the need for continuous learning to ensure counsellors remain updated on effective assessment practices, which directly impacts the quality of counselling services provided. Supporting this notion, prior researchers emphasize that professionals equipped with adequate knowledge are more likely to perceive assessments as valuable tools for improving client outcomes in both educational and clinical contexts ([Jansen & Moller, 2022](#); [Nenty et al., 2021](#)).

Moreover, the study shows a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among other practising counsellors in Nigeria. This finding suggests that counsellors who possess greater knowledge of testing procedures tend to have more favorable attitudes toward their use in counselling practice. This relationship reflects the broader notion that knowledge not only shapes perceptions but also enhances professionals' confidence and willingness to engage with complex tasks. In the context of counselling, understanding the purposes and outcomes of testing allows practitioners to appreciate the importance of these tools in diagnosing client needs and planning appropriate interventions. Counsellors' attitudes towards testing improve when they are adequately informed about its practical applications and benefits ([Whiston, 2009](#); [Widiger & Samuel, 2009](#)). Therefore, investing in professional development programs that focus on testing practices can significantly enhance counsellors' effectiveness in applying these tools to support their clients.

The significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among school counsellors in Nigeria further underscores the influence of knowledge on professional attitudes and behavior. The study confirms that counsellors with a comprehensive understanding of testing procedures are more likely to engage confidently and constructively with these practices. This finding aligns with the principle that knowledge enhances both competence and perception, leading to more positive attitudes toward professional tasks. Knowledge acquisition fosters confidence, encouraging professionals to apply

assessment tools more effectively (Butcher, 2010; Koch, 2000). These findings highlight the importance of continuous training programs to strengthen counsellors' knowledge base, particularly in the areas of assessment and testing. By enhancing both their cognitive understanding and attitudinal orientation, such initiatives can improve the overall quality of counselling services, ultimately benefiting students' academic, personal, and social development (Mullen et al., 2021; Young, 2017).

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the field of counselling psychology and educational assessment by emphasizing the critical link between knowledge acquisition and attitudinal development among counsellors. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the idea that enhancing counsellors' knowledge about assessment and testing procedures can positively influence their professional attitudes, ultimately improving the quality of counselling services in educational settings. The study highlights the need for integrating assessment-related knowledge into counsellor training programs, ensuring that future practitioners are well-equipped to utilize assessment tools effectively. Furthermore, this research enriches the existing body of literature by addressing the specific context of Nigerian school and practising counsellors, thus offering culturally relevant insights that may inform policy and practice in similar educational systems. By identifying knowledge as a key factor influencing counsellors' attitudes, this study underscores the importance of continuous professional development and lifelong learning in fostering both competence and positive perceptions toward assessment practices, which are crucial for enhancing student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of counselling interventions.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of assessment and testing practices among school and practising counsellors in Nigeria. First, counselling training providers should integrate and emphasize knowledge and the cultivation of positive attitudes toward assessment and testing as a core component of their curricula. This inclusion will ensure that future counsellors are not only equipped with theoretical understanding but also foster favorable perceptions of assessment tools and their applications. Second, counselling educators must prioritize comprehensive training in assessment and testing, ensuring that both school counsellors and other practising counsellors develop the necessary expertise and attitudes to utilize these tools effectively in their practice. Finally, professional bodies such as the Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON) and the Counseling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should actively organize professional education workshops and continuous learning programs. These initiatives would serve to enhance counsellors' knowledge base and reinforce positive attitudes towards assessment and testing, ultimately leading to improved counselling services and student outcomes across educational institutions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment among school counsellors in Nigeria. Similarly, the findings indicate that knowledge and attitude towards testing among school counsellors are also significantly related. Furthermore, the study confirms that the relationship between knowledge and attitude towards assessment extends to other practising counsellors in Nigeria, highlighting the importance of understanding assessment processes in counselling practice. Lastly, the results reveal a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude towards testing among other practising counsellors, emphasizing that both school and practising counsellors need adequate knowledge and positive attitudes towards assessment and testing to enhance their professional competence and the effectiveness of their counselling services.

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