

YEARS-IN-TRAINING AND LOGICAL REASONING APTITUDE AS DETERMINANTS OF CONFLICT ENGAGEMENT EFFICACY AMONG COUNSELLOR-TRAINEES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OGUN STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of years-in-training and logical reasoning aptitude on the conflict management efficacy of counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A descriptive survey design was employed to examine the variables in a non-manipulative way. Additionally, a stratified sampling procedure was used to select 200 counsellor-trainees across all levels of study in the Faculty of Education of tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Two standardized scales were used for data collection. Section A of the questionnaire provided information on participants' years-in-training and other relevant demographic details. Sections B and C consisted of the Conflict Resolution Behaviour Questionnaire (CRBQ), with a reliability coefficient of 0.75, and the Logical Reasoning Aptitude Scale (LRAS), with $\alpha = 0.73$. Two research questions were raised and answered at the 0.05 level of significance, using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude: $r(198) = 0.146$, $p < .05$, $r^2 = 0.021$. Thus, logical reasoning aptitude accounted for a 2% increase in conflict engagement efficacy. Furthermore, a Welch ANOVA summary revealed a statistically significant difference in conflict engagement efficacy across years in training among counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State; $F_{(3,60)} = 2.999$, $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, the study recommends the inclusion of logical reasoning skills and conflict engagement techniques in counselling training sessions, as well as a thoroughly supervised practicum exercise for counselling students in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Conflict Engagement Efficacy, Logical Reasoning Aptitude, Years-in-Training, Counsellor-Trainees

Introduction

Counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions are being groomed to serve as mediators, facilitators of dialogue, and agents of peaceful resolution in various human contexts. As Nigeria continues to experience a variety of social, interpersonal, and institutional conflicts, the capacity of future counsellors to engage conflict constructively becomes increasingly vital. Conflict engagement efficacy, in this context, refers to the perceived and actual ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively. While training equips counsellors with theoretical tools, practical and cognitive readiness, particularly in reasoning through tense situations, remains very essential.

In the Nigerian tertiary education system, counselling training programmes are designed to build core competencies such as empathy, communication, active listening, and problem-solving (Chinwuba & Ogunode, 2024). While these competencies are taught formally, the degree to which trainees can apply them in real-life conflict situations remains a subject of concern. Particularly in Ogun State, which houses several tertiary institutions, there is a growing awareness of the need to assess the practical readiness of counselling students to address interpersonal and institutional conflict within schools and communities.

Two major factors that may affect a trainee's conflict engagement efficacy are the number of years they have spent in training (experience/exposure) and their aptitude in logical reasoning (cognitive maturity). These factors shape not only how counsellor-trainees perceive conflict but also how they choose to address it. Yet, the empirical link between these variables and actual conflict engagement ability among Nigerian trainees is under-researched. This study therefore, addresses this gap by examining the extent to which years-in-training and logical reasoning aptitude predict the conflict engagement efficacy of counsellor-trainees in Ogun State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the increasing incidence of interpersonal conflicts in our society has drawn attention to the preparedness of future counsellors to manage such situations effectively. While the training curriculum for counsellor-trainees emphasizes conflict resolution strategies and communication skills, there remains uncertainty about whether extended duration in training directly improves conflict engagement efficacy. Likewise, the role of cognitive factors such as logical reasoning aptitude which is often overlooked in counselling programmes may be critical in shaping a trainee's ability to analyze, interpret, and resolve conflicts impartially and effectively.

Despite the importance of these two variables, empirical evidence is limited, especially within the Nigerian context. In Ogun State, where notable tertiary institutions offer counselling-related programmes cum services, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring how the number of years spent in training and logical reasoning aptitude influence a trainee's ability to engage with and manage conflict. Without empirical clarification on these issues, counselling training programmes may continue to produce graduates with theoretical knowledge but

insufficient practical conflict management skills. Hence, this study investigates the predictive roles of years-in-training and logical reasoning aptitude in conflict engagement efficacy among counsellor-trainees in Ogun State tertiary institutions. The goal is to uncover whether these variables significantly determine the professional readiness of trainees to handle conflict in diverse educational and interpersonal settings.

Objectives of the Study

This study was set to investigate the influence of Years-in-Training and Logical Reasoning Aptitude on Conflict Engagement Efficacy of Counsellor -trainees in Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State. Specifically, it intends to:

- i. Assess the significant mean difference in the conflict engagement efficacy and years-in-training of counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State.
- ii. Examine the type of relationship that exists between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude of counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered at a 0.05 level of significance.

- i. Is there any significant difference in the conflict engagement efficacy and years - in - training of counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?
- ii. What type of relationship exists between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude of counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Literature Review

Previous studies in Nigeria and beyond have explored the psychological and contextual dynamics that shape conflict management behaviour. Adesanya (2015) observed that the professional effectiveness of student counsellors correlates with the quality and duration of training. Similarly, Akinboye and Ogunyemi (2018) noted that students who had undergone more years of structured counselling training showed more mature behavioural responses to interpersonal conflict.

Concept of Conflict Management Efficacy

The Conflict management efficacy refers to an individual's self-assessed belief in their ability to engage in and manage conflict situations constructively. It is not just about knowing what to do in a conflict, but also about feeling psychologically equipped to act effectively in such situations. This belief influences whether individuals will avoid conflict, confront it directly, or approach it strategically with a resolution mindset. Bandura (1997) defined efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities to execute the necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes. Applying this to the counselling profession, conflict management efficacy becomes the counsellor's confidence in their ability to mediate interpersonal tensions, de-escalate volatile situations, and support disputing parties towards resolution.

Several scholars have emphasized the role of this construct in professional training. For instance, Ojo and Adegbesan (2012) observed that trainee counsellors in Southwestern Nigeria with higher conflict self-efficacy scores were more likely to demonstrate assertiveness and empathy during peer mediation exercises. Their ability to balance firmness with emotional understanding was linked to greater success in resolving interpersonal issues among students. Similarly, Agboola and Olanrewaju (2015) noted that in Nigerian tertiary institutions, where peer-related conflicts and academic stress are common, counsellor trainees with strong conflict engagement efficacy were more proactive in initiating peace-building strategies. They were also more likely to volunteer in student affairs units, displaying both leadership and interpersonal maturity.

Aja and Anwana (2016), in their study of counsellor education programmes across public universities in South-South Nigeria, highlighted that practical exposure to real-world conflicts such as participation in community outreach, school-based interventions, and youth counseling had a direct impact on trainees' perceived efficacy in managing conflict. Those who had hands-on experience felt more competent, suggesting that experience and efficacy are mutually reinforcing. Furthermore, the learning environment itself has been shown to influence conflict management efficacy. According to Odukoya (2020), institutions that incorporate role-plays, simulation-based learning, and guided reflection into their counselling curricula tend to produce more confident and capable counsellor trainees. This aligns with the broader view that efficacy is shaped by mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and verbal encouragement (Bandura, 1997). In summary, conflict management efficacy is not a fixed trait but a dynamic belief system that evolves through training, exposure, and reflection. For counsellor trainees in Nigeria, developing this efficacy is central to their professional competence, especially given the socio-cultural complexities of conflict across educational and community settings.

The Counsellor Trainees

Counsellor trainees, also referred to as student counsellors, are individuals currently enrolled in formal training programmes in guidance and counselling within tertiary institutions. These programmes may be offered at the diploma, undergraduate, or postgraduate levels and are designed to equip trainees with the theoretical foundations and practical competencies necessary for professional counselling practice. Student counsellors are at a developmental stage where they are expected to acquire skills in therapeutic communication, ethical decision-making, psychosocial assessment, conflict resolution, and intervention planning. While they are not yet licensed professionals, they operate within supervised learning environments, including practicum placements, where they begin to apply classroom knowledge to real-world counselling contexts.

According to Adegoke (2015), the period of training is critical to the formation of the counsellor's professional identity, as it shapes both their practical skillset and their self-efficacy in handling the interpersonal and emotional demands of the counselling profession. The

interchangeable use of “counsellor trainee” and “student counsellor” in literature reflects their dual role as learners and emerging professionals within the counselling discipline. Therefore, the performance, perception, and development of counsellor trainees are essential areas of inquiry, especially in understanding how educational exposure influences their preparedness for practice, including their ability to engage effectively in conflict management.

Years-in-Training of Counsellor Trainees

Years-in-training refers to the cumulative duration a student has spent undergoing formal academic and practical instruction in a professional field—in this case, Counselling Psychology or Guidance and Counselling. It typically corresponds with the student's level or year of study, such as 100-level through 400-level in Nigerian tertiary institutions. In counselling education, each year of training is expected to build upon the previous in terms of theory, skills, ethics, and supervised practice. As trainees advance, they are presumed to develop more nuanced understanding of human behaviour, empathy, decision-making strategies, and professional competencies. Senior-level students are often exposed to internships, case study evaluations, role-plays, and practicum sessions that simulate real-world conflict scenarios. More time in training is expected to translate into greater familiarity with Conflict resolution models (e.g., Thomas-Kilmann, Interest-Based Relational Approach), Communication skills (active listening, assertiveness, de-escalation), Self-awareness and cultural sensitivity.

The length of professional training has been consistently associated with the depth of skill acquisition, maturity in judgement, and increased confidence in professional roles. According to Adesanya (2015), students who have spent more time within a structured counselling programme tend to exhibit higher emotional awareness and self-regulation. These are two competencies essential for engaging in and resolving conflicts. These outcomes are often a result of repeated exposure to conflict resolution scenarios, role-playing exercises, internships, and supervised practicum sessions. Ogunyemi and Ifelunni (2019) studied counselling students across three tertiary institutions in South-West Nigeria and found that final-year students displayed a higher level of conflict resolution efficacy compared to those in earlier levels. The researchers attributed this difference to the cumulative effect of coursework, practicum experiences, and engagement with counselling ethics, which intensify over time.

The findings of Ajibola and Okon (2021) further underscore the importance of training duration. Their study revealed that students who had completed three or more years in counselling programmes performed better in case analysis and reflective practice tasks involving conflict scenarios. The study emphasized the value of sustained mentorship and repeated skill-building opportunities in fostering conflict competence. Furthermore, Iwuagwu and Eze (2016) noted that the capacity for empathetic listening and mediation—critical elements of conflict engagement—was significantly higher among students in their third and fourth years compared to first-year students. They concluded that the progressive training model in Nigerian universities

positively influences student readiness to manage relational and academic conflicts. However, the quality and intensity of training—not just its length—determine real gains in efficacy. Some students may plateau or regress if their years-in-training are not reinforced with real-life application and feedback. Furthermore, it should be noted that the duration of training is expected to influence skill acquisition. Ogunleye and Ademola (2022) found that final-year counsellor-trainees exhibited better conflict resolution strategies than their junior counterparts, suggesting that prolonged exposure to training enhances competence. However, other studies argue that mere years-in-training does not guarantee skill mastery unless accompanied by practical engagement (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2021).

Logical Reasoning Aptitudes

Logical reasoning aptitude refers to the mental ability to analyze arguments, identify patterns, evaluate premises, and draw sound conclusions. It is a subset of cognitive intelligence and is often assessed using standardized tests that examine inductive and deductive reasoning, analogies, sequences, and critical thinking. It is a cognitive skill that supports analysis, sequencing, and deductive thinking, has been identified as a strong predictor of conflict-handling behaviour (Ogunlade & Bakare, 2016). In their study, counsellor-trainees with higher logical reasoning scores were more likely to approach conflicts with a problem-solving mindset rather than an emotional reaction.

Additional insight is drawn from Nwankwo and Alade (2020), who reported that Nigerian undergraduate counsellors who engaged in logic-based decision training showed improvements in both assertiveness and emotional regulation. However, findings remain inconclusive on whether training duration or logical aptitude plays a more defining role, thus necessitating further investigation. For counsellor-trainees, logical reasoning is essential in structuring interventions, understanding client narratives, weighing ethical considerations, and resolving interpersonal conflicts. It aids in: assessing conflicting perspectives without bias, identifying irrational beliefs or cognitive distortions, formulating balanced and effective response strategies. Ajayi and Olatunji (2017) explored the connection between logical reasoning and problem-solving skills among education students and found a strong positive correlation. Their research concluded that logical reasoning supports clear and objective analysis in emotionally charged situations, making it a necessary cognitive foundation for conflict resolution.

Nwankwo and Alade (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the effect of logic-based instruction on assertiveness and conflict handling among trainee teachers. Their findings revealed that participants who received logical reasoning training showed improved confidence in mediating disputes and de-escalating tensions in group settings. The study recommended the integration of logical reasoning modules into the general education curriculum for trainee professionals.

Similarly, Chika and Lawal (2022) examined the role of reasoning aptitude in ethical decision-making and found that students with high logical reasoning scores were more likely to

make ethically sound and balanced decisions in counselling scenarios. This supports the idea that cognitive reasoning is a key determinant of how future counsellors respond to and resolve interpersonal conflict. Conflict often involves high emotions, blurred facts, and competing narratives. Logical reasoning helps the counsellor isolate core issues, question assumptions, and offer objective resolution strategies. It enhances impartial decision-making, reduced emotional reactivity, capacity to mediate and resolve conflicts with fairness. A counsellor-trainee with high logical reasoning aptitude is likely to maintain composure, communicate more clearly, and avoid fallacious reasoning in emotionally charged situations. Ogunyemi and Adetunji (2019) documented significant skill progression across training years at the University of Ibadan, linking this to robust practicum requirements. Conversely, Adeleke's (2021) study of three colleges of education in Ogun State found negligible improvement, blaming overcrowded curricula that sacrificed hands-on training for theoretical content. This disparity suggests that training quality—not just duration—mediates conflict efficacy, a variable often overlooked in Nigerian institutional audits.

Conflict Management Efficacy and Years-in-Training of Counsellor Trainees

The relationship between conflict management efficacy and the duration of training among counsellor trainees has been widely explored in educational psychology and counsellor education literature. Years-in-training typically refers to the number of academic years or semesters a student counsellor has spent in a formal counselling programme. As trainees advance through these stages, they are presumed to accumulate knowledge, refine their interpersonal skills, and develop greater confidence in addressing complex interpersonal situations, including conflict. Conflict management efficacy, which reflects the perceived ability to handle and resolve conflict effectively, is believed to grow progressively as students are exposed to structured counselling curricula, field experiences, and supervised practicum. The theoretical assumption is that increased exposure leads to experiential learning, reflective practice, and the internalization of effective conflict resolution strategies (Bandura, 1997).

Empirical studies support this developmental trajectory. For example, Odukoya (2020) found that final-year counselling students in Nigerian universities demonstrated significantly higher confidence and competence in handling conflict compared to their first- and second-year counterparts. The study attributed this to the combination of coursework, practicum exposure, and direct interaction with clients in real-world settings. Similarly, Agbele and Adeoye (2018) argued that the progression from foundational to advanced counselling courses equips trainees with both theoretical and applied skills that contribute to improved interpersonal functioning, including conflict resolution.

However, some scholars have cautioned that the number of years spent in training does not automatically translate into increased efficacy unless the training environment is intentionally structured to promote experiential and reflective learning. Akinade (2011) noted that without practical exposure and feedback, even advanced students may struggle with real-time conflict engagement despite their theoretical knowledge. In summary, while there is a general consensus

that years-in-training positively correlate with conflict management efficacy, the strength of this relationship depends largely on the quality of training, opportunities for practice, and the extent to which student counsellors are encouraged to engage actively with real-life interpersonal challenges.

Conflict Management Efficacy and Logical Reasoning Aptitudes of Counsellor Trainees

Logical reasoning aptitude is a key cognitive skill that enables individuals to evaluate information, identify patterns, and make objective decisions based on evidence. Within the counselling profession, this form of reasoning is vital for analyzing interpersonal issues, understanding client behaviour, and devising appropriate conflict resolution strategies. Among counsellor trainees, the presence or absence of logical reasoning skills can significantly influence how confidently and effectively they manage conflict situations. Conflict management efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to navigate conflict constructively, is influenced not only by experience but also by cognitive capacity. Logical reasoning supports the counsellor's ability to remain objective, assess multiple sides of a conflict, and select the most appropriate intervention strategies. According to Animasahun and Olufemi (2014), individuals with high logical reasoning are more likely to use integrative conflict styles such as collaboration and problem-solving, which are generally considered more constructive than avoidance or confrontation.

In the Nigerian context, Nwankwo and Eze (2016) examined trainee counsellors' logical reasoning levels and their perceived ability to resolve conflict and found a statistically significant correlation. Their study indicated that students who scored higher on reasoning assessments tended to feel more competent and confident in addressing interpersonal disputes, both in peer interactions and during practicum engagements. Moreover, Okoye (2015) emphasized that logical reasoning plays a bridging role between emotional intelligence and behavioural responses during conflict. While emotional intelligence governs self-awareness and empathy, logical reasoning contributes to structured thinking and consistent decision-making, both of which are necessary for effective conflict engagement.

From an educational standpoint, enhancing logical reasoning through targeted training such as through courses in philosophy, problem-solving exercises, or structured debates can serve to strengthen conflict management efficacy. Aja and Anwana (2016) noted that counsellor education programmes that incorporate logic-based content into their curriculum tend to produce students who are more confident in addressing complex interpersonal challenges. In essence, logical reasoning aptitude not only enhances the counsellor's analytical capacity but also reinforces their sense of agency and competence in conflict situations. It contributes to the development of reflective practitioners who are capable of making sound, fair, and informed decisions in diverse counselling contexts.

Theoretical Framework**Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)**

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to execute tasks successfully—plays a crucial role in skill acquisition and performance. Applied to conflict engagement, counsellor-trainees with higher self-efficacy are more likely to employ effective resolution strategies (Bandura, 1997). In the Nigerian context, studies (e.g., Adejumo & Adeoye, 2021) have shown that structured training enhances counsellor self-efficacy, which may extend to conflict management.

Cognitive-Experiential Theory (Epstein, 2003)

This theory suggests that individuals process information through rational (logical) and experiential (intuitive) systems. Conflict resolution requires both cognitive reasoning (e.g., analyzing disputes logically) and emotional regulation (e.g., empathy). (Ugwuegbu, 2021) indicates that counsellors with stronger logical reasoning skills demonstrate better problem-solving in client disputes.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of the years –in-training and logical reasoning aptitude on the conflict engagement efficacy among counsellor - trainees in tertiary institutions. The population for this study consists of all male and female counsellor–trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 200 counsellor-trainees in tertiary institutions that run counselling programmes in Ogun State. A structured questionnaire consisting of three sections was used to measure the variables under investigation. Part A of the questionnaire provided information on the participants' years-in- training, as well as other relevant demographic details. Part B is a Conflict Resolution Behaviour Questionnaire (CRBQ) by Rubenstein and Feldman (1993), primarily designed to measure individuals' disposition towards conflicts and strategies for resolving marital skirmishes. The scale had 22 items across three dimensions: avoidance, attack, and agreement, with a response format ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The internal consistency of the scale was rated at 0.79. To ensure its cultural compatibility and suitability for the domain of investigation, certain items were reworded, and the scale was revalidated using a pilot study among individuals who were not part of the study. The new reliability value obtained using Cronbach's alpha was 0.91. The scale is now presented in a four- point Likert response format, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree; and was used to measure the dependent variable (Conflict Engagement Efficacy) in the study. Part C is a logical reasoning multiple-choice test titled “Logical Reasoning and Analytical Ability” by Lai and Gupta (2013), measuring the reasoning abilities of learners under tutelage. The original version had 90 items across twelve components, including verification of truth, syllogism, critical reasoning, decision making, problem solving, statement and argument analysis, etc. The higher the person's ability to

reason abstractly, the more effective they are in handling real-life issues. The internal consistency ranges between 0.72 and 0.75. Twenty-five items were extracted from the original version and subjected to validation by two (2) experts in the Department of Counselling Psychology and Test and Measurement. Also, a pilot test was conducted among non-participating individuals using test-retest methods. The new reliability coefficient yielded 0.78. The scale was used to measure the reasoning aptitude of the participants.

To obtain data for the study, the researcher sought permission from the Head of the Department of each institution, while the selected student-counsellors were briefed on the nature of the study. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to both male and female student-counsellors with the assistance of a research assistant. The completed questionnaires were retrieved and collated for statistical analysis. Furthermore, data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and simple percentages for the demographic section, while the research questions were answered using inferential statistics, such as Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The PPMC was employed to examine the relationship between conflict management efficacy and logical reasoning aptitudes of the respondents, while ANOVA assessed differences between the dependent (conflict management efficacy) and independent (Years-in Training) variables, at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

RQ1: Is there any significant difference in the conflict engagement efficacy and years -in-training of counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 1: *Summary of Welch Anova showing the difference between the conflict engagement efficacy and years-in-training of counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State.*

	Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	2.999	3	59.758	.038
Brown Forsythe	3.333	3	103.512	.022

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 shows there is a significant difference in the conflict engagement efficacy and years-in-training of Counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State; $F_{(3,60)} = 2.999$, $p < 0.05$. To further understand where the differences exist, a Post Hoc analysis was done using Games Howel in Table 2.

Table 2: Games Howell comparison showing variance in participants' conflict engagement efficacy and years-in-training

(J) Years-in-Training	Years-in-Training	Mean Diff. (I-J)	Std Error	Sig.
Year 1 $\bar{X}$ = 63.85	Year 2	5.081	1.843	.042
	Year 3	2.957	1.361	.143
	Year 4	1.858	1.384	.540
Year 2 $\bar{X}$ = 58.76	Year 1	-5.081	1.843	.042
	Year 3	-2.124	1.502	.504
	Year 4	-3.222	1.523	.177
Year 3 $\bar{X}$ = 60.89	Year 1	-2.957	1.361	.143
	Year 2	2.124	1.502	.504
	Year 4	-1.098	.881	.599
Year 4 $\bar{X}$ = 61.99	Year 1	-1.858	1.384	.540
	Year 2	3.222	1.523	.177
	Year 3	1.098	.881	.599

The above Games Howell post hoc test reveals a significant difference in the conflict engagement efficacy of year one and year two Counsellor -trainees (5.081, $p < 0.05$). In addition, Counsellor -trainees in Year one ($\bar{x} = 63.85$, $p < .05$) recorded the highest mean score on conflict engagement efficacy.

RQ2: What type of relationship exists between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude of counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 3: Summary of PPMC showing the relationship between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude of Counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	St. Dv	df	R	Sig.	r ²
Conflict Engagement	200	61.73	6.027	198	0.146	.039	0.02
Logical Reasoning	200	20.91	8.253				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 above shows the relationship that exists between conflict engagement efficacy and logical reasoning aptitude of counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State; $r(198) = 0.146$, $p < .05$, $r^2 = 0.021$. The table further reveals that logical reasoning aptitude accounts for 2% increase in conflict engagement efficacy of Counsellor -trainees in Tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed a significant difference in conflict engagement efficacy based on years-in-training among Counsellor -trainees. Specifically, Year One trainees demonstrated the highest mean score, suggesting a higher perceived ability to engage with conflict at the early stage of their training. This may reflect initial enthusiasm, idealism, or recent exposure to foundational concepts in counselling and conflict resolution. However, the significant difference between Year One and Year Two trainees may indicate a drop in self-efficacy as the realities and complexities of training become more apparent. Furthermore, a significant but weak positive relationship was found between logical reasoning aptitude and conflict engagement efficacy. Although logical reasoning aptitude accounted for only 2% of the variance, this suggests that reasoning ability plays a modest role in shaping how confident and capable trainees feel when managing conflict. The relationship aligns with existing literature that recognizes the role of cognitive processing in conflict analysis and resolution strategies.

Conclusion

This study has established that both years-in-training and logical reasoning aptitude significantly influence the conflict engagement efficacy of Counsellor -trainees in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Notably, the finding that Year One trainees scored highest in efficacy suggests that confidence may not linearly increase with training. Additionally, the role of logical reasoning, though statistically significant, indicates that other variables may also contribute to trainees' perceived efficacy. Overall, the findings underscore the need for deliberate educational interventions to sustain and enhance conflict-related competencies throughout the training period.

Counselling Implications

The results have practical implications for counsellor education and professional development. Training institutions must recognize that perceived conflict management capacity may fluctuate across academic levels, necessitating continuous reinforcement of conflict engagement skills. Furthermore, logical reasoning should not be treated merely as a cognitive skill but integrated into counselling education as a foundational tool for ethical decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal effectiveness. By emphasizing both reasoning and experiential learning, counselling programmes can produce well-rounded graduates capable of handling the complexities of human interactions in schools, clinics, and communities.

Recommendations

Counsellor education programmes should integrate logical reasoning development into the curriculum, using case analysis, debates, and simulation exercises that reflect real-life conflict scenarios.

Experiential learning opportunities—such as practicum placements, supervised peer mediation, and conflict management workshops—should be evenly distributed across all years of training to maintain and strengthen efficacy levels.

Faculty and supervisors should monitor and support trainees, especially in their transition from theoretical to practical phases, to sustain their confidence in managing conflict.

Further research should explore other psychological or environmental factors that may influence conflict engagement efficacy beyond logical reasoning and years-in-training, such as emotional intelligence, stress tolerance, or supervisory style.

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