
Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Creativity as Predictors of Counselling Competence among Pre-Service Counsellors in Universities in Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study was to examine emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity as predictors of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. One hundred and ninety participants constituted the study's sample using a correlational design. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with validated instruments with 0.86 and the data obtained was analyzed using percentages while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical method was used to test the research hypotheses. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .753$; $p < 0.05$); there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .694$; $p < 0.05$) and there was a significant relationship between creativity and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .633$; $p < 0.05$). In view of these findings, it was recommended that counselling psychologists should intensify their effort to organize a workshop on the implications of these factors (that is emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity among others) and their effects on counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Self-efficacy, Creativity, Counselling competence and Pre-service counsellors*

Introduction

In recent years, the world has emphasized the ability of pre-service counsellors, which has always been the main focus of counselling psychologists. Many pre-service counsellors lack confidence in their ability to correctly implement core counselling strategies. This can be solved by counselling ability. This lack of confidence can have widespread harmful consequences (Abdulkadir, 2018).

Given the country's rapidly changing economic and social climate, a comprehensive guidance and consulting system in the Nigerian education system is needed. Some current social trends include stable families, low academic performance and drug abuse. Due to various reasons such as unemployment and underemployment, some college graduates are no longer suitable for the labour market. In Nigeria, adequate guidance and consulting services must be introduced to reverse this worrying trend.

A person's ability to provide consulting services may be affected by individual differences, which may lead to a range of abilities. According to research conducted by Locke (2013), therapists must first be aware of their own needs to understand the needs of others and provide appropriate

counselling services to clients. In universities in Oyo State, Nigeria and other countries, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity will be tested as predictors of counselling ability.

Serrat (2017) described "Emotional Intelligence" as the ability to recognize the emotions of oneself and other people or groups. To enhance the thoughts and behaviours of oneself and others, the typical feature of emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, manage or integrate the emotional experience or reaction of one person or another. A high degree of emotional intelligence means that the counsellor can be aware of their feelings and can gain insight into the emotions of the people around them. More importantly, it is related to the concept of love and spirituality. Counsellors with high emotional intelligence can deal with interpersonal difficulties faster and more effectively (Serrat, 2017).

A person's level of self-efficacy is based on their specific set of beliefs about their ability to execute an action plan under hypothetical situations (Bandura, 1977). Animasahun (2010) defines self-efficacy as the belief that one can succeed in a given effort. They are more likely than other counsellors to attribute failure to a lack of effort and are better at recovering from setbacks. It's as if they are confident in their ability to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations. Reduced stress and reduced risk of depression are related to these aspects, so it is strongly recommended that counsellors understand this knowledge (Bandura, 2010).

Animasahun (2010) defines self-efficacy as the belief that one can succeed in a given effort. Everything we do affects our confidence in our abilities. Counsellors' self-efficacy is based on their belief in their power to influence the course of events. This is very important when it comes to the counsellor's ability to handle difficult situations and the decisions he or she is most likely to make. This is very clear and powerful for people engaged in profitable business (Krishnan & Krutikova, 2013). They are more likely than other counsellors to attribute failure to a lack of effort and are better at recovering from setbacks. It's as if they are confident in their ability to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations. Reduced stress and reduced risk of depression are related to these aspects, so it is strongly recommended that counsellors understand this knowledge (Bandura, 2010). To become competent and efficient, Jekwu (2016) believes that the self-efficacy of counsellors in proposing new ideas and skills is crucial. A generation

The ability to apply one's imagination, original ideas or appropriate resources in the development of artistic works, especially in the production of visual works, is called creativity (Gladding, 2008). The ability to produce something different is also called creativity, and it is essential for anyone who desires a full and meaningful life (Sternberg, 2009). Creativity requires the ability to break established norms, patterns and connections to come up with important new ideas, methods and explanations. This kind of thinking is characterized by rich originality, growth and creativity (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). Every consulting professional must be able to think creatively and imaginatively to become an effective and efficient consultant (Gladding, 2008).

Due to recent socio-economic trends, many individuals and governments have begun to realize the importance of guidance services in the national education system. Specific actions must be taken after this confirmation to ensure that guidance services are widely available, useful, and an integral part of the entire education system. Despite the guidance and counselling provided, violations are still a problem in public schools in Nigeria. This study, therefore, concentrates on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity as predictors of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Psychologists and counsellors with lower levels of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity are more likely to encounter challenges in employment and personal life and are more likely to receive low salaries. They will adjust their emotions in a distancing way to get rid of the problem, or they will take drastic measures to get rid of the problem (JuErn et al., 2021).

A lack of cultural understanding may prevent pre-service counsellors from understanding the client's point of view, but it is also possible that they may not be able to recognize and respond to the client's nonverbal behaviour. Therefore, cultural incompetence may adversely affect the self-efficacy of counsellors in their roles. Before entering the consulting field, pre-employment consultants from different cultural backgrounds may find it difficult to understand the perspectives of clients, especially when dealing with issues specific to their own culture.

Due to the insufficient guidance and consulting services provided by the Nigerian university system, it is reasonable to conduct this research. Therefore, the goal of this study is to evaluate whether emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and creativity are predictors of the counselling ability of pre-service counsellors at Oyo State University, Nigeria

Research Hypotheses

This study is guided by the following hypotheses;

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors
2. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors.
3. There is no significant relationship between creativity and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Method and Materials

The study used a purposive and proportionate techniques survey research approach. Two sampling techniques were used to select the respondents and the total number of respondents selected was one hundred and ninety (190). Percentage and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistical methods were used to analyse the data collected in this study. The percentage was used to analyse the demographic characteristics of respondents. PPMC was used to establish the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Results

Demographic Data of the Respondents

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in percentages.

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	86	45.3
Female	104	54.7
Total	190	100.0
Age		
Below 20 Years	72	37.9
20 Years and Above	118	62.1
Total	190	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	79	41.6
Islam	111	58.4
Total	190	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	129	67.9
Married	37	19.5
Divorced	13	6.8
Widowed	7	3.7
Others	4	2.1

Total **190** **100.0**

Table 2 showed the distribution of respondents by gender, age, religion, level and marital status. It showed that 190 respondents participated in the study. The male participants were 86 (45.3%) while 104 (54.7%) were females; 72 (37.9%) were below 20 years and 118 (62.1%) were 20 years and above. 79 (41.4%) of the respondents were from Christianity while 111 (58.4%) were from Islam and 129 (67.9%) of the participants were single, 37 (19.5%) married, 13 (6.8%) divorced, 7 (3.7%) widowed and 4 (2.1%) belong to others not indicated on the questionnaire. The implications of this table revealed that a larger percentage of the respondents were female with 20 years and above and Muslims. Also, a larger percentage of the respondents were single.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Table 3: Relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Variable	N	Pearson r	p-value	Remark
Emotional Intelligence Counselling Competence	190	.753	.000	Significant

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3 showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .753$; $p < 0.05$). This means that emotional intelligence influences the level of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Table 4: Relationship between self-efficacy and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Variable	N	Pearson r	p-value	Remark
Counselling Competence Self-Efficacy	190	.694	.000	Significant

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 4 showed that there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .694$; $p < 0.05$). This means that self-efficacy influences the level of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between creativity and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Table 5: Relationship between creativity and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors

Variable	N	Pearson r	p-value	Remark
Creativity Counselling Competence	190	.633	.000	Significant

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5 showed that there was a significant relationship between creativity and counselling competence among pre-service counsellors ($r = .633$; $p < 0.05$). This means that creativity influences the level of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors.

Discussion of the Findings

According to the results of the first research hypothesis, pre-service counsellors' emotional intelligence was shown to be associated with their counselling skills, according to the study's first premise. That is, pre-service counsellors' emotional intelligence affects their level of counselling

proficiency. Findings from the study of Odaci et al. (2017), which sought to determine the correlation between emotional intelligence and counselling skills, as well as to investigate differences in both EI and counselling skills based on gender, prior group study experience, and class level, supported this conclusion. The results showed that 266 female and 83 male prospective psychological counsellors participated in the survey out of a total of 349 prospective psychological counsellors. The data showed a statistically significant negative association between EI and emotional reflection and fundamental counselling skills, but no statistically significant correlation between EI and content reflection. Mustaffa, Nasir,

Also, Aziz and Mahmood (2013) were among those who participated in the study, which sought to explore the relationship between counsellors' levels of emotional intelligence and skills competency, as well as their personal development, in secondary schools in Johor. Many people in the poll had a modest level of EI, but they also had high levels of skill competence and personal progress, according to the results of the study. Emotional intelligence and skill competency have a somewhat strong relationship at the individual level, according to the study. Researchers Ekeh and Oladayo in Rivers State, Nigeria, examined the emotional intelligence and leadership performance of secondary school principals (2011). Those with a high level of emotional intelligence were shown to be more effective leaders than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been found to improve the health, productivity, and well-being of counsellors, as well as the quality of their relationships with their clients.

According to the results of the second research hypothesis, pre-service counsellors' self-efficacy and counselling skills are strongly linked. According to the results, self-efficacy has an influence on the level of counselling competence among pre-service counsellors. Okoye and Anusiem (2017), who studied the impact of reflective counselling style and emotional intelligence training on trainee counsellors' claimed performance anxiety in South-South Nigeria, found that this is consistent with their results. Undergraduate counselling practicum trainees' effectiveness in their counselling duties was enhanced by self-efficacy training, according to the results of this research. It was concluded by Adeoti and Lasode (2016), who performed research on the comparative effectiveness of reality therapy and self-efficacy approaches, that the self-efficacy technique helped lower aggressive behaviour features among students in Osun State, Nigeria.

In addition, Onyekuru studied students in Rivers State, Nigeria, he found that self-esteem and self-efficacy had an impact on their counselling viewpoint (2019). Students' opinions of counselling are negatively impacted by both poor self-esteem and low self-efficacy, according to the results of the study. Counsellors' self-efficacy and work satisfaction were examined by Nwankwo et al. (2019) in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Researchers found that a counsellor's level of self-efficacy was a significant predictor of job satisfaction in the states of Delta and Edo. In a study by Jekwu (2016), a group of Nigerian college graduates were asked to answer questions about their entrepreneurial intentions.

According to the study's results, those with high levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy had much more entrepreneurial intentions than those with low levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. According to Bandura's (2010) findings, those who have a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to succeed in their endeavours and have a positive self-perception. Rather than seeing hurdles as potential threats, a therapist with a high level of self-efficacy views them as challenges that must be overcome.

According to the results of the third research hypothesis, pre-service counsellors' creative abilities were shown to be statistically linked to their capacity to advise, according to the third research hypothesis. This shows that pre-service counsellors' level of creativity influences their level of counselling expertise. A study by Egbo (2015) found that fostering creativity in secondary school pupils in Lagos, Nigeria helped them achieve better long-term health and adjustment outcomes. Using creativity in the counselling process increases self-direction and a clear definition of purpose, as well as the development of life skills for learners in and out of school, according to the results.

Consequently, It has been shown that creative counsellors create fresh ideas, viewpoints, and knowledge that may assist extend the discourse and depth of the therapeutic process (Sternberg, 2009).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, persistent low counselling competence among pre-service counsellors needs not to continue. There is hope that with the improvement of some factors (e.g. emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity among others) the situation can be changed for the better. The study discovered that some factors such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity among others influence counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities. By and large, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity have a great influence on counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities. As such, it is very crucial to improve these factors to eradicate the persistent occurrence of low counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities.

By and large, it was also concluded from this study that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity have a great impact on the counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities. This means that the high emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity of counsellors have negative effects on counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities. By implication, counselling competence among pre-service counsellors in Universities can be improved through improved emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity. Therefore, these factors are to be considered significant and improved in the country for us to have efficient and improved counselling competence not only among secondary school counsellors in Oyo State but also in other States of Nigeria and other countries at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended:

- i. Emotional intelligence skills of the counsellors should be sustained while efforts should be directed towards avoiding those factors that constitute impediments to counselling competence.
- ii. Self-efficacy skills of counsellors should be improved as this contributes significantly to counselling competence among pre-service counsellors.
- iii. Pre-service counsellors should be aware of the importance of creativity and use it to solve clients' challenges to create a more motivating, comfortable, and confident environment in school for better counselling delivery.
- iv. Counselling psychologists should intensify their effort to organize a workshop on the implications of these factors (that is emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity among others) and their effects on counselling competence among pre service counsellors in Universities.

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