

Correlates of School Counsellor Effectiveness in South Western Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The need to evaluate the effectiveness of counsellors is of paramount importance in the practice of professional counselling. An appraisal of counsellor effectiveness is necessary to understand the counselling process and ascertain why and under what conditions counsellors are effective (Boy and Pine, 1978).

The term 'counsellor effectiveness' has various definitions in counselling literature. Owuamanam (1990) defined it as the extent to which the counsellor meets the needs of the client and assists him in solving his problems. In the same vein, Boy and Pine (1978) submitted that effective counselling is the degree to which the client is sensitive to the existence of a behavioural problem; the counselling is voluntary for the client and the counsellor meets the needs of the client. For Rogers (1957), the effective counsellor engages in a definitely structured and permissive relationship, which allows the client to gain an understanding of himself to a degree which enables him to take positive steps in the light of new orientation.

In contemporary counselling research, there have been a substantial number of empirical studies which sought to identify the factors that correlate with counsellor effectiveness. Among the factors that have been investigated in this regard are the counsellor demographic variables of age (Helms and Rode, 1982; Hassan, 1989); sex, (Tipton, 1984); marital status (Simons and Helms, 1976); religious background (Long, 1978; Wyatt and Johnson, 1990), educational qualifications (Heppner and Heesacker, 1983) and work experience (Spiegel, 1976; Auerbach and Johnson, 1977). Several other studies have identified counsellor personality characteristics as factors which correlate highly with their effectiveness. Such personality characteristics

include warmth (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967), caring and sincerity (Rogers, 1957), concreteness (Truax and Carkhuff, 1964), empathy (Bergin and Jasper, 1969) genuineness, openness and self-confidence (Carkhuff, 1969). Also, findings from a few studies tend to indicate that the work attitudes of counsellors are a valid predictor of counsellor effectiveness (Akinpelumi, 1996 and Popoola, 2002).

It would seem from the foregoing that no directional trend is discernible in the results of several studies which have sought to identify the factors which correlate with counsellor effectiveness. Apparently, many of the factors identified in the literature have, for the most part, been arrived at through conjectures and subjective counsellor experience. As a consequence of this, the list of identified factors has become too long for any coherent and precise theory on counsellor effectiveness to emerge. There is therefore the need for rigorous empirical research which will tend to ascertain the contributions of each of the identified counsellor personality characteristics, social and demographic variables to the prediction of counsellor effectiveness.

To do this, this investigator identified, from among the compendium of major personality factors in the literature, the personality characteristics of self-concept, locus of control, achievement motivation and extraversion as well as the counsellor demographic variables of age, sex, marital status, academic qualification, counselling experience and work attitudes as appropriate and relevant for investigation to determine the potency of each factor as a predictor of counsellor effectiveness. From this, it was hypothesized that a combination of counsellor personality characteristics, demographic variables and work attitudes will not significantly predict counsellor effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: Two different samples were used for the study. The first sample comprised of 50 practising counsellors drawn from 50 purposively selected secondary schools in three South-Western states of Nigeria namely Ondo, Osun and Ekiti. The procedures for selecting the counsellors were carried out in two stages. First, 25 local government areas representing 54.3% of the entire local government areas in the three states were selected by simple random sampling for inclusion in the study.

The second stage involved the selection by purposive sampling of two schools from each of the initial sample of 25 local government areas in the three states. To qualify for inclusion, each school must have a counsellor who had practised in the school for at least two academic sessions prior to the time of study. Following these procedures, 50 counsellors from 50 schools were selected for inclusion in the study. The counsellors were required to complete a work-attitude questionnaire. The distribution of counsellors who participated in the study according to state, sex, age, marital status, qualification and counselling experience is presented in Table 1.

The second sample consisted of 2,500 senior

Table 1: Distribution of counsellors according to demographic variables

Classification		Male	Female	Total
State	Osun	7	13	20
	Ondo	9	8	17
	Ekiti	5	8	13
	Total	21	29	50
	Under 25 years	3	6	9
Age	26-35 years	14	16	30
	Above 35 years	4	7	11
	Total	21	29	50
Marital Status	Single	2	6	8
	Married	19	23	42
	Total	21	29	50
Qualifications	First Degree	11	21	32
	Master's Degree	6	8	14
	Ph.D	4	-	4
	Total	21	29	50
Counselling Experience	0 - 5 Years	5	8	13
	6 - 10 Years	9	14	23
	Above 10 Years	7	7	14
	Total	21	29	50

secondary school students (Male=1350, Female=1150) made up of 50 students from each of the secondary schools from which the 50 counsellors who constituted the first sample were selected in the three states. The students, who were required to rate the effectiveness of their school counsellors using a counsellor effectiveness rating scale, were in the senior secondary classes 1 to 3 and had a mean age of 16.5 years. To qualify for inclusion in the study, a student must have had at least two counselling sessions with the school counsellor during the current academic session. The distribution of students who participated in the study according to their sex, classes and states is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of students (clients) according to sex, classes and states

Classification		Osun	Ondo	Ekiti	Total
Sex	Male	544	454	352	1350
	Female	438	406	306	1150
	Total	982	860	658	2500
Classes	SS 1	244	250	238	732
	SS 2	328	336	215	879
	SS 3	410	274	205	889
	Total	982	860	658	2500

Research Instruments

Six research instruments were used to collect relevant data for this study. They are Counsellor Work Attitude Questionnaire (CWAQ), the Counsellor Effectiveness Rating Scale (CERS) and four personality inventories namely the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (LCS), Questionnaire Measure of Need Achievement and Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI).

The Counsellor Work Attitudes Questionnaire (CWAQ) was developed by Olaniyi (1990). The questionnaire, which measures four dimensions of work attitudes, contains 40 items in four sub-scales namely job satisfaction, job commitment, job involvement, and psychological growth satisfaction. Each sub-scale contains a total of 10 items. The items, which were largely adapted from a number of sources with some modifications, were subjected to rigorous validation by the author. Before their use, the items were administered twice on a sample of 120 college workers at an interval of 30 days. Test-

retest reliability examination was carried out and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. This figure was considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument in this study.

The Counsellor Effectiveness Rating Scale (CERS) measured counsellor effectiveness based on clients' expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the counsellor. The instrument was originally developed by Linden, Stone and Shertzer (1965). In its original form, it contained 21 items. The items were randomly arranged into three sub-scales namely counselling climate (9 items), counselling comfort (5 items) and client satisfaction (7 items). The adapted version of the instrument used in this study contains all the 21 items in the original instrument. The items were however re-arranged to ensure that items which belong to the same sub-scale follow one after the other. It is expected that the re-arrangement of items, which is intended to make the scoring procedures less tedious, and the re-wording of some items to remove sex-bias, would not significantly affect the psychometric properties of the original instrument. However, the adapted version of the instrument was subjected to test-retest reliability procedures before its use in this study. The instrument was administered twice on 85 senior secondary class two students who did not take part in the main study. Test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained after an interval of two weeks. Based on this result and considering that the original instrument had been extensively used and ascertained to have robust psychometric properties by many researchers, the CERS was considered a valid and reliable instrument for measuring counsellor effectiveness in this study.

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) was used in this study to measure counsellor's self-concept. The TSCS is a widely used standardized instrument developed by Fitts (1964) to measure the overall perception of an individual about himself. The instrument contains 100 self-descriptive statements. All items on the scale are of Likert type and they are scored numerically from 1 to 5. The sum of a respondent's scores on all the items represents his total self-concept score. A high score indicates a positive self-concept while a low score is indicative of a negative self-concept. A number of factor-analytic studies (e.g. Gable, Lasalle and Cook, 1971; Melanie *et al*, 1978) have generally

supported both the construct and content validity of the TSCS. The validity of the scale using Nigerian subjects has been confirmed by many researchers among them Dibu-Ojerinde (1984), Boyinbode (1988) and Odeyemi (1995).

The Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale (LOC) was also used in the study to measure subjects' locus of control orientation. The instrument contains 29 items including five filler items. Each of the 29 items is a forced choice item of two alternatives 'A' and 'B'. A respondent is required to choose one of the two alternatives to each item that is true of him. Each of the two alternative responses represents either an internal or external belief. The former attracts a score of zero while the latter is scored one. The total minimum and maximum scores on the instrument are 0 and 24 respectively. A low score indicates an internal locus of control orientation while a high score is indicative of an external locus of control orientation.

The validity of the Rotter's scale has been ascertained by its author in many respects. First, in the original study, Rotter (1966) reported that the scale has a relatively stable internal consistency. Kuder-Richardson and split-half Spearman Brown correlational analysis performed on four different samples yielded correlation coefficients of 0.73, 0.73, 0.70 and 0.69 respectively. Test-retest reliability coefficient over a period of one month for two different samples were 0.72 and 0.78. A coefficient of 0.85 was reported for another sample over a two-month interval.

The Questionnaire Measure of Need Achievement (QMNA) was developed by Eyo (1986). The instrument, which was developed for use in the Nigerian context, has 29 items with seven components. Its responses are of the multiple-choice formats with three alternatives per item. The minimum and maximum obtainable scores by a respondent over the 29 items are 29 and 87 respectively. The instrument has been validated for use in the Nigerian context. For instance, studies such as Boyinbode (1988) and Odeyemi (1995) adjudged the instrument to be a valid and reliable measure of the achievement motivation of Nigerian undergraduates.

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) is also a standardized and widely used instrument that measures subjects' placing on the introversion-extroversion continuum. The instrument is made up of 24 items. Each of the items has three response alternatives namely

'Yes', 'No' and 'Undecided'. The respondent is expected to tick one of the three response alternatives that is true of each item on the scale. The instrument is scored 1 for 'Yes', 0 for 'No' and ½ for 'Undecided'. With this procedure, the least obtainable score is 0 and the maximum possible score is 24. The higher the score, the more extraverted a respondent is. The validity of the EPI has been established in various studies in Nigeria such as Eysenck, Adeleye and Eysenck (1977); Olaniyi (1990) and Odeyemi (1995). In this study, the EPI, along with the other personality inventories, were administered on school counsellors.

RESULTS

The major hypothesis of this study is that the combination of counsellor personality characteristics, demographic variables and work attitudes do not significantly predict counsellor effectiveness.

In testing this hypothesis, data collected on the selected counsellor demographic and personal variables, work attitudes, personality characteristics and counsellor effectiveness were subjected to stepwise multiple regression analysis following the procedures indicated in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, four variables were entered in the first round of the regression analysis. In the second, third and fourth rounds of the analysis, five, eight and ten variables respectively were entered into the regression analysis. It is pertinent to state that counsellor demographic and personal variables of sex, age, marital status, qualifications and experience were given dummy values before they were entered into the regression analyses. Table 4 shows the summary of the analysis of variance of each of the four blocks of independent variables in the regression procedures.

The results in Table 4 show that the analyses of variance of the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio of 9.723, 8.707, 6.363 and 5.002 in the first, second, third and fourth rounds respectively. Each of these values is significant at .05 level. This suggests that various combinations of the independent variables are significantly related to counsellor effectiveness (dependent variable). A summary of the stepwise regression analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable (counsellor effectiveness) and the

Table 3: Entry Procedures of independent variables into regression analysis

<i>Step/Round</i>	<i>Variable entered</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	Personality Characteristics Self Concept Extraversion Locus of Control Achievement Motivation	4
2	Personality Characteristics + Work Attitudes Self Concept Extraversion Locus of Control Achievement Motivation Work Attitudes	5
3	Personality Characteristics + Work Attitudes + Demographic Variables Self Concept Extraversion Locus of Control Achievement Motivation Work Attitudes Sex Age Marital Status	8
4	Personality Characteristics + Work Attitudes + Demographic + Personal Variables Self Concept Extraversion Locus of Control Achievement Motivation Work Attitudes Sex Age Marital Status Academic Qualification Counselling Experience	10

various combinations of the independent variables is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that combining the four selected personality characteristics (Self-Concept, Extraversion, Locus of Control and Achievement Motivation) to predict counsellor effectiveness yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .698 and a multiple correlation square (R²) of .487. These values are statistically significant at 0.05 level, which suggests that only 48.7 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness were explained by the combination of selected personality variables. In round two of the analysis when the work attitudes variable was added to the four personality variables, a

Table 4: Summary of analysis of variance of independent variables and counsellor effectiveness

<i>Rounds/Steps</i>		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
1	Regression	4102.514	4	1025.628	9.723	< 0.05
	Residual	4324.790	41	105.483		
	Total	8427.304	45			
2	Regression	4391.947	5	878.389	8.707	< 0.05
	Residual	4035.357	40	100.884		
	Total	8427.304	45			
3	Regression	4880.295	8	610.037	6.363	< 0.05
	Residual	3547.009	37	95.865		
	Total	8427.304	45			
4	Regression	4958.232	10	495.823	5.002	< 0.05
	Residual	3469.072	35	99.116		
	Total	8427.304	45			

Table 5: Summary of multiple regression analysis of the relationship between CE and combinations of independent variables

<i>Rounds</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R square</i>	<i>Std. error of the estimate</i>
1	.698	.487	.437	10.2705
2	.722	.521	.461	10.0441
3	.761	.579	.488	9.7911
4	.767	.588	.471	9.9557

statistically significant coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .722 ($P < 0.05$) and a multiple correlation square (R^2) of .521 ($P < 0.05$) were obtained. This suggests that only 52.1 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness was explained by the combination of counsellor personality characteristics and work attitudes. Also in the third round, a combination of personality, work attitudes and demographic variables (age, sex and marital status) yielded a multiple regression coefficient of .579 and R^2 of .488 were obtained. However, when all the independent variables were entered into the regression analysis, the results were a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .767 and a multiple correlation square (R^2) of .588. Since these values are significant at 0.05 probability level, it was concluded that a combination of personality, work attitudes, counsellor demographic and personal variables had the potency to predict 58.8 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness.

Further attempt was made to ascertain the relative power of each of the independent variables when they combine to predict counsellor effectiveness. Table 6 shows, for each of the variables, the Standardised Regression

Weights (B), Standard Error of Estimate (SEB), Beta, T-ratio and the level at which T-ratio is significant.

From Table 6, it is shown that when all the independent variables investigated in this study were entered into a regression analysis to determine the relative contribution of each to the dependent variable (counsellor effectiveness), the relative weights of most of the variables appear very small. Except for extraversion and work attitudes which have significant Beta weights of -.252 and .242, the regression weights of all other variables appear negligible. From these results it may be concluded that though a combination of personality variables, work attitudes, counsellor demographic and personal variables had the potency to predict 58.8% of the variance of counsellor effectiveness, the relative contribution of any one of these variables to the prediction is negligible except for the extraversion and work attitudes variables. In the light of this, the null hypothesis which states

Table 6: Significant tests of regression weights of independent variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>T</i>
(Constant)	42.560	19.698		2.161
Self Concept	7.668E-02	.079	.166	.969
Extraversion	-.773	.404	-.252	-1.914*
Locus of Control	-.769	.438	-.234	-1.755
Ach. Motivation	-.115	.119	-.116	-.962
Work Attitude	.143	.096	.242	1.491*
Sex	5.539	3.408	.202	1.625
Age	.954	4.710	.045	.203
Marital Status	5.798E-02	5.422	.002	.011
Qualifications	2.123	3.270	.095	.649
Experience	2.522	4.342	.137	.581

* Significant ($P < 0.05$)

that a combination of personality characteristics, work attitudes, counsellor demographic and personal variables do not significantly predict counsellor effectiveness, is rejected.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this study to ascertain the extent to which a combination of some and all of the independent variables would predict counsellor effectiveness. Data obtained from stepwise multiple regression statistical procedures revealed that while 48.7 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness were explained by the combination of the four selected personality characteristics, 52.1 percent were accounted for by a combination of counsellor personality characteristics and work attitudes. Further more, the analysis revealed that a combination of all the independent variables examined in the study had the potency to predict 58.8 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness. However, it was observed that the regression weights of most of the independent variables except extraversion and work attitudes appear too small to suggest that they be relied upon to predict counsellor effectiveness.

From the foregoing, it is interesting to note that certain predictor variables, which might reasonably be assumed to be associated with effective counsellor performance, did not occur as significant predictors of counsellor effectiveness in this study. A plausible explanation for this might be the entry procedures or the order in which these variables were entered into the regression analysis. Therefore, it would appear too hasty to conclude that the variables are not important when attempting to get an overview of the factors which are predictive of counsellor effectiveness.

The result of the study indicating that only 58.8 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness was accounted for by a combination of all the independent variables is very remarkable. This tends to suggest that there are other variables that have not been implicated in this study which might contribute to the prediction of counsellor effectiveness. Continued research is therefore needed to define more precisely other factors which can be used to delineate the effective counsellor. The result of the present investigation seems to provide a

substantial basis for further inquiry into the subject matter of counsellor effectiveness.

KEYWORDS Counsellor preparation and education; effective counselling; counsellor selection

ABSTRACT This study investigated the effectiveness of school counsellors in South Western Nigeria with a view to finding out the extent to which demographic variables, counsellor personality characteristics and attitude to work could be relied upon to predict counsellor effectiveness. Four personality inventories and a Work Attitude Questionnaire were administered on fifty school counsellors while counsellor effectiveness ratings were obtained from 2500 counsellees. Results from stepwise multiple regression statistical analysis indicated that a combination of all the independent variables examined in the study had the potency to predict 58.8 percent of the variance of counsellor effectiveness. However, it was observed that the regression weights of most of the independent variables except extraversion and work attitudes appear too small to suggest that they be relied upon to predict counsellor effectiveness.

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