

Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control as Predictors of Counsellors' Efficacy among School Counsellors in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the composite emotional intelligence and locus of control as predictors of counsellors' efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study investigated the relative effects of the independent variable on the criterion variable. A total number of three hundred and ninety six male and female school practicing counsellors were randomly selected with the use of simple random sampling technique from the six educational districts of Lagos state. The counsellor self-efficacy scale, Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale and Rotter's Locus of Control Scale were the three instruments used to collect data for the study. Data were analysed using Pearson Moment correlation Coefficient statistical method. The result shows that emotional intelligence and locus of control have significant relationship to school counsellor efficacy in terms of making decisions, solving problems, planning and organizing programmes that are consistent with behaviours of professional counselors. It also reveals that emotional intelligence and locus of control are essential in enhancing counselors' preparedness and discharge of duties while dealing with clients.

Keywords: counsellor efficacy, emotional intelligence and locus of control

INTRODUCTION

Professional school counsellors have struggled throughout the history of the profession to define their professional identities and prioritize their many assigned roles. These roles consist of professional school counsellor activities and non-counsellor activities. Professional school counsellor activities include: counselling students in personal, academic, and career issues; planning, delivering, and evaluating the comprehensive school guidance programme and consulting with parents, teachers, and administration. Non-counsellor activities include: Elective course teaching; substitute teaching; quasi-administrator; disciplinarian, registrar; supervisor; office clerk; attendance recorder; and standardized test administrator. School counsellors perform a myriad of non-counsellor activities, which could more efficiently be delegated to a school paraprofessional. (Owuamanam, 2012).

A potential consequence to professional school counsellors regularly fulfilling duties outside the counselling role is the potential risk of lowered self-efficacy. Self-efficacy or the belief refers to the fact that one can utilize his/her abilities and knowledge to successfully perform certain tasks can affect the school counsellor's ability to perform vital professional duties that ultimately lead to student success. The success and otherwise of any counsellor is a function of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Intrinsic factors are counsellor's characteristics, prsonality traits and attitudes, others includes emotional intelligent, locus of control, self-esteem etc. If these essential counsellors' intrinsic factors are negative and unfriendly the effectiveness of such a counsellor would be hampered since counselling services is primarily a helping service, hence attitude of a counsellor goes a long way to determine how he/she would be patronized. (Popoola, 2015).

Self-efficacy as the beliefs that are based on individual's expectations that one acquires a certain knowledge and skill level. The application of self-efficacy as it relates to counselling is a fundamental issue because it defines how confident a counsellor is in his or her ability to counsel clients. Further, he explains that it is the capacity to overcome challenges in order to succeed in life. Studer (2010) suggested another general definition of self-efficacy which is a theoretical framework that explains, predicts and mediates psychological behaviour change. The confidence level of counsellors influences their ability to obtain positive or negative results when working with client.

Self-efficacy has been defined as one's perceived judgement of performance ability in certain situations (Bandura, 1997). These determine behaviour, thought, patterns and emotional responses of these situations. Greenberg (2008) defined counsellor self-

efficacy as counsellors view of their counselling performance. Two factors have been identified as influencing counselling self-efficacy, counsellor skill level and years of counselling experience (Borders & Drury, 1992). These factors were positively correlated with self-efficacy. Self-efficacy influences task choice, effort, persistence and achievement. Compared with counsellors who doubt their capabilities those who have a sense of efficacy for tasks participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level (Salami & Ogundokun, 2012). Students need such counsellor for they do not engage in activities that believe will lead to negative outcomes.

Self-efficacy is a personal construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997). The theory explains how behaviour, cognitive and personal factors including self-efficacy and environmental events interact and influence each other in a dynamic fashion. Self-efficacy refers to belief in one's capabilities resources and courses of action needed to meeting given situational demands. Emotional intelligence (EI), often measured as an Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ), describes an ability, capacity, skill or a self perceived ability, to identify, assess, and manage the emotion of one's self, of others and of groups (Salevoy, 1998). The most distant roots of Emotional Intelligence can be traced back to Darwin's early work on the importance of emotional expression for survival and second adaptation. There are a lot of arguments about the definition of EI, argument that regard both terminology and operationalization. One attempt toward a definition was made by Salovey and Mayer (2011) who defined EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Locus of control is a term in psychology which refers to a person's belief about what causes the good or bad results in their life, either in general or in a specific area such as health or academics. It can either be internal (meaning the person believes that they control themselves and their life or external (meaning they believe that their environment, some higher power, or other people control their decisions and their life). It was developed by Julian B Rotter in 1954 as an important aspect of personality. Research have been carried out on experience and counsellor self-efficacy. Leach, Stoltenberg, Eichenfield and McNeil (1997) found that among counsellor, self-efficacy increased with more experience. They examined the intervention skills competence and individual differences domains of the integrated developmental model of supervision.

Only a few studies have addressed counsellor self-efficacy and attitudes towards clients. These studies focused on trainee development and reported results related to non-judgmental attitudes (Heppner and Heesacker, 2003). Experience and efficacy have been studied primarily among counsellor trainees. Leach, Stoltenberg, Eichenfield and McNeil (1997) found that among counsellor trainees self-efficacy increased with more experience producing effectiveness. They examined the intervention skills competence and individual differences domains of the integrated developmental model of supervision. This model includes three levels of counsellor development. The level of development impacted on self-efficacy, including the area of multicultural skills. He concluded that more experienced counsellors had higher self-efficacy for counselling diverse clients and were more aware of their own values than less experienced counsellors.

However, a meta-analysis based on 14 studies about the relationship between counsellor self-efficacy and levels of training yielded mixed findings. Some studies found a positive relationship between counsellor's level of training and their counselling self-efficacy, whereas others found no linear relationship (Jakie, 2014) Watson (as cited in Larson & Davels, 1998) reported that counselling course work and related work experience accounted for 43% of the variance in counsellor self-efficacy. Internship experience was found to have a positive impact on a counsellor self-efficacy (Mallum, 2013). Counsellor who had regular supervision had higher level of self-efficacy than counsellor who had little or no supervision (Lake & Bernard, 2006).

Emotional intelligence is a psychological construct that includes a set of both interpersonal and affective skills. Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999) defined emotional intelligence as 'an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and problem-solve on the basis of them. Demonstrating the ability to use one's emotions effectively in making decisions, problem solving, planning and organizing is consistent with behaviours related to counsellor efficacy (Adeyemo & Ogunyemi, 2014).

National Centre for Education Statistics (2006) find that emotions certainly play significant role why people behave the way they do. Other required skills for mental health counsellors related to the unique aptitude of managing the emotions of *managing* the emotion of people includes judgement and decision-making, active listening, and monitoring and assessing one's own performance and that of others. In light of this, identifying levels of emotional intelligence may provide valuable information for persons preparing to be professional counsellors.

American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) (2003) investigated the association between emotional intelligence and counselling efficacy. Participants were 140 counselling students and practicing counsellors who completed the emotional judgment inventory and the counselling self-estimate inventory. Emotional intelligence differentiated counsellors from non-counsellors but provided mixed results in differentiating counselling students and counsellors. Moreover, the emotional intelligence factors identifying own emotions, expressing emotions adaptively, and using emotions in problem solving successfully predicted counselling self-efficacy of both counselling students and practicing counsellors. ($r = 537$). Emotional intelligence may be another marker for individuals exploring professional counselling as a career and for improving counsellor efficacy. The successful counsellor is characterized by a variety of traits, including a strong sense of independence, an appreciation of owning the direction of their inquiry, an ability to shape and manage change, and an internal locus of control (Bamak, 2000).

A series of studies provides strong support for the hypotheses that the individual who has a strong belief that he can control his own destiny is likely to (a) be more alert to those aspects of the environment which provide useful information for his future behaviours; (b) takes steps to improve his environmental conditions; (c) places greater value on skill or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with his ability, particularly his failures; and (d) be resistive to subtle attempts to influence him or her (Rotter, 1966).

Past research has demonstrated that students who are intrinsically motivated, are more persistent, more deeply involved, and show more adaptive, cognitive and achievement outcomes than those who are extrinsically motivated (Windslade & Monk, 2007). A person with strong internal control beliefs is more likely to view a stressful situation as personally controllable, and this appraisal will result in increased problem focused coping efforts (Gerrity & Delucia, 2007).

Jemi — Alade (2013) find a significant relationship between attrition and locus of control, with external adult students demonstrating a higher dropout rate than internal adult students. Sixty two percent of the students who dropped out were external and 38 percent internal. Research studies have focused on the importance of self-confidence and a feeling of being in control. Research suggests that students perform at higher levels if they have confidence in themselves and that personal efficacy is a matter of internal locus of control. Counsellors with more internal locus of control attribute their success to their own abilities and not to luck or chance as do persons

with an external locus of control (Schults & Schults, 2005).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the composite effects of emotional intelligence and locus of control on the counsellors' efficacy in Lagos State. Furthermore, the study investigated the relative effects of the independent variables on the criterion variable (Counsellor Efficacy).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There will be no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counsellors' efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State.
2. There will be no significant relationship between locus of control and counsellors' efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State.

DESIGN

The research design for this study is the survey ex-facto type. This design enables researcher to obtain information from a representative sample of a population in order to describe the situation as they exist from where the researcher infers the perception on the entire population.

POPULATION

The target populations for this study are the practicing professional school counsellors the six educational districts of Lagos State, Nigeria

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The researcher utilised simple random sampling technique to select participants for the study. The participants were drawn from the six educational districts that make up educational area of Lagos State. The participants consist of male and female practicing counsellors in Secondary School. Seventy (70) school counsellors were randomly selected from each educational district. Four hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the counsellors. However, three hundred and eighty five (385) were filled properly to meet the standard for the study. Therefore, 96.3% of the sample was eventually used.

INSTRUMENTATION

Three major instruments used to obtain relevant data for this study were:

- i. Counsellor Self Efficacy Scale (CSES)
- ii. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale
- iii. Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (LOS)

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Two research assistants were trained and mobilised to administer the questionnaire to the school counsellors within each educational district. The questionnaire were administered across the state for over four weeks. The researcher ensured that the participants did not have control or influence over one another in responding to the questionnaire by approaching them separately. Moreover, the researcher explained verbally the main purpose of the test to the participants assuring them of confidentiality. Instructions regarding how to respond to the questionnaires were read out adequately to the participants after distribution. Questions were

entertained before they started reacting to the tests. The researchers were available for further clarification during the process of responding to the rest. There was no time limit for the test response hence; the participants responded to the items at their own pace.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counsellors’ efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State.

Table 1: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Counsellors’ Efficacy Among School Counsellors in Lagos State

Variable	N	\bar{X}	S.D	Df	r	P	Remark
Emotional Intelligence	385	12.57	3.77	768	0.112	<0.05	Significant
Counsellor efficacy	385	69.44	10.81				

Table 1 reveals that correlation coefficient ‘r’ between emotional intelligence and counsellors’ efficacy of counsellors in Lagos State is 0.112 at P<0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counsellor efficacy among school

counsellors in Lagos State. Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant relationship between locus of control and counsellors’ efficacy among school counsellor in Lagos State.

Table 2: Relationship Between Locus of Control and Counsellors’ Efficacy among Counsellors in Lagos State

Variable	N	\bar{X}	S.D	Df	r	P	Remark
Locus of control	385	61.5	11.49	768	.29	<0.05	Significant
Counsellor efficacy	385	121.5	25.81				

Table 2 reveals that the correlation coefficient ‘r’ between locus of control and counsellor efficacy of school counsellors in Lagos State is 0.298 and P<0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is significant relationship between locus of control and counsellor efficacy of school counsellors in Lagos State. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Hypothesis One:

The first hypothesis stated that there will be no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counsellors’ efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State. The finding reveals that significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and counsellors’ efficacy among counsellors in Lagos State. This is in line with the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) (2003) that investigated the association between emotional intelligence and counselling efficacy. It was discovered that emotional intelligence differentiated counsellors from non-counsellors but provided mixed results in differentiating counselling students and counsellors. Moreover, the emotional

intelligence factors identifying own emotions, expressing emotions adaptively, and using emotions in problem solving successfully predicted counseling self-efficacy of both counselling students and practicing counsellors.

This study corroborated studies by (Goleman, 1998; Olonisakin, 2002) that drummed up support for emotional intelligence as a significant variable in predicting human success. The strong prediction of effectiveness by emotional intelligence has been used to explain why Goleman (1998) stated that to achieve overall success especially in one’s career goals one has to be emotionally intelligent.

The second hypothesis result indicated that there is significant relationship between locus of control and counsellors’ efficacy among school counsellors in Lagos State. The likely reason for this finding is that a successful counsellor is characterized by a variety of traits, including a strong sense of independence, an appreciation of owning the direction of their inquiry, an ability to shape and manage change, and an internal locus of control. This

is because the counsellor who has a strong belief that he can control his own destiny is likely to be more alert to those aspects of the environment such as school which provide useful information for his future behaviours and activities; takes steps to improve his environmental (school) conditions; places great value on skill or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with his ability, particularly his failures; and also be resistive to subtle attempts by the students, principals and teachers to influence him/her.

The successful counsellor is characterized by a variety of traits, including a strong sense of independence, and appreciation of owning the direction of their inquiry, an ability to shape and manage change and an internal locus of control (Carden, Bryant & Moss 2004, King, 2004).

A series of studies provides strong support for the hypotheses that the individual who has a strong belief that he can control his own destiny is likely to (a) be more alert to those aspects of the environment which provide useful information for his future behaviours; (b) takes steps to improve his environmental conditions; (c) places greater value on skill or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with his ability, particularly his failures; and (d) be resistive to subtle attempts to influence him (Rotter, 1996).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined emotional intelligence and locus of control as factors that determine counsellors' efficacy among practicing school counsellors in Lagos State. The study reveals that among other variables that could enhance the counsellors' efficacy, the concept of emotional intelligence and locus of control are essential. These two variables differentiate between counsellor that makes impact and counsellor with just paper qualification. Counsellor efficacy is a complex evaluative construct which may be determined by several other factors, however, emotional intelligence and locus of control helps counsellors to work on him/herself seriously which prepare him/her to adequately work on client effectively. Therefore, following recommendations below are made to strengthen counsellors efficacy in school system.

1. Programmes on counsellors' efficacy and effectiveness should be designed for practising counsellors to enhance their professional competences.
2. Personality assessment should form a strong base for recruiting professional counsellors in various spheres of the society.
3. State Counselling Association should bring all counsellors in the state together for continuous seminars, workshops and interactions.

4. The Counselling Association of Nigeria should strive to make counselling profession more professional by organizing postgraduate examinations just like ICAN and other professional bodies. This step will seriously improve commitment of counsellors to counselling profession.
5. Counselling Association in collaboration with various state and federal educational agencies should regularly carry out inspection and evaluation trips on counsellors that operate in schools.

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