



SELF-ESTEEM, COUNSELLING PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCY ON PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRESERVICE COUNSELLORS IN ADEYEMI FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, ONDO

AGOKEI Roland Chukwudi (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Adeyemi Federal University of Education
agokeialexander@yahoo.com

Abstract

Counselling is a recognized helping profession such that any student studying counselling is expected to be altruistic. This in most cases is not correct as most students opt for counselling programmes circumstantially and lack the helping attitude required for the profession. This study examined the influence of self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence on the prosocial behaviour of preservice counsellors in Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. Using simple random sampling, two hundred students were randomly selected from all 2020/2021 part four Guidance and Counselling students in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling as participants. Four valid and standardized instruments, the Counselling Practicum Competence Scale, ($r = 0.71$); Counseling Practicum Experience Scale, ($r = 0.73$); Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, ($r = 0.79$); Prosocial Tendencies Measure, ($r = 0.74$) were used for data collection from the participants. Three research questions were raised. Data were analysed using the Pearson Moment Product Correlation and Multiple regression statistics. The result indicates that there was a positive relationship between self-esteem, counselling practicum experience, competency and prosocial behaviour. Self-esteem, counselling practicum experience, and competency accounted for 35.1% of the criterion measure with self-esteem being the most potent. Based on the findings, values and practices that encourage the development of self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence should be encouraged.

Keywords: counselling practicum, competency, self-esteem

Introduction

Counselling is a recognized helping profession. The nature of counselling emphasizes a psychological helping relationship that pursues individuals' need for adaptive attitude, insight, self-exploring and maximizing potentials with the inclusion of an evaluated personal growth and development. Hence it is expected that students opting for this programme should be altruistic. This in most cases is not correct as most students opt for counselling programmes as a last resort and or after being rejected in other disciplines of their choice. This leaves the programme of counselling to be injected with students who could be described as "damaged goods" and lacking a helping attitude. With exposure to counselling it is expected that the students might change for the best. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the prosocial development of counselling students.

Prosocial behaviour is an indication of a well-adjusted and socially adept child that occurs when people benefit others rather than themselves (Hao, Liu & Cowell, 2016; Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009; Luo, 2018; Vorlauffer, 2019). By these definitions, prosocial behaviour occurs when individuals perform



actions that are beneficial to others, sometimes at a cost to themselves (Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, Bartels, 2007). This explains prosocial activities as being selfless and more of a sacrifice. According to Penner (2000), prosocial behaviour benefits others by looking at the norms that prevail in the social living environment. This behaviour is necessary to maintain a person's active role as a supporter and one being supported (Klein, 2016; Kuem, Ray, Siponen & Kim, 2017; Malti & Buchmann, 2010). The literature on the subject illustrates prosocial behaviour as being beneficial to society since helping, caring and sharing behaviour enhances the social fabric and provides supportive mechanisms to individuals. Hence, there is an orientation towards the social good in children who exhibit prosocial behaviour.

Prosocial behaviours may be performed for a host of reasons including egoistic, other-oriented, or practical concerns (Boxer, Tisak, & Goldstein, 2004). It is a broad construct that can be classified into at least two different categories of global prosocial behaviour and situation-specific prosocial behaviour. Humans have long been considered a prosocial species. In other words, prosocial behaviour is a socially competent behaviour and appears to be associated with positive humane relationships that in turn are related to successful attainment and or processes. Countless examples of people helping unrelated individuals are cited not only anecdotally but in scholarly literature as well, seeming to demonstrate that this behaviour is a component of human nature (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). Prosocial behaviour in the form of sharing, helping, and cooperating is a hallmark of behaviour that has been related positively to intellectual outcomes, including classroom grades and standardized test scores (Agokei, 2020). Displays of prosocial behaviour also have been related positively to other socially competent outcomes, including social acceptance and approval among classmates and being liked by teachers. Most scholars assume that cognitive and affective skills such as perspective talking, prosocial moral reasoning, adaptive attribution styles, perceived competence, and emotional well-being provide a psychological foundation for the development of prosocial behaviour. Individual differences such as genetic and temperament characteristics also have been noted. In addition, theoretical perspectives also propose environmental influences, including parenting within authoritative structures and positive interactions with peers (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkens & Spinrad, 2015). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effect of self-esteem counselling practicum experience and competence on the development of prosocial behaviour among pre-service counsellors.

For instance, self-esteem is the ability to be assured of one's abilities, talents, worth, and value as well as having personal acceptance, approval and respect for oneself. It is an important factor contributing to an individual's behavioural outcomes as well as an important outcome in its own right. It has also been described as the evaluation that persons make about themselves that expresses a self-judgment of approval, disapproval, and personal worth. Self-esteem means appreciating our worth and importance. It also means having a strong enough character to be accountable for ourselves and to act responsibly toward others (Matthews, 1998). Self-esteem is usually considered a sign of positive adjustment. Low self-esteem is related to many negative outcomes, such as poor mental and physical health (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, Moffitt, Robins, Poulton & Caspi, 2006), depression (Orth, Robins, & Roberts, 2008) and aggressive behaviour (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005). Most individuals experience difficulty in developing positive self-esteem, research indicates that persons who maintain positive self-esteem report more positive affective states and greater wellness. Positive self-esteem does



not require that the individual be perfect. Research indicates that adolescents who maintain positive self-esteem report more positive affective states, greater wellness and more life satisfaction (Dixon, 2005).

A counselling practicum is a supervised clinical experience aimed at enabling trainee counsellors to build and expand basic skills of counselling and integrate professional knowledge (Agokei, 2020). According to Nwachuku (2009), the practicum period is a period of closely supervised fieldwork experience in guidance and counselling during which theoretical skills, techniques and organizational strategies are practiced in a selected and approved setting. The practicum is generally aimed at giving the student counsellors practical experience in guidance and counselling. For instance, the practicum period enables the trainees to have an opportunity to integrate the courses they have been taught in the programme (Misigo, 2014). It is designed to provide student-counsellors with closely supervised counselling practice at approved field sites in either schools or non-school settings, such as hospitals, industries, and government agencies. The goal of practicum is to give student-counsellors practical experience in guidance and counselling (Nwachuku, 2009).

The counselling practicum programme is about the most challenging emotional experience a student can undertake with strict intense academic and clinical pressures that have to be contained and exceeded. The way students learn to meet the demands of the counselling practicum is pertinent to the development of competence and experience. It is suggested that as pre-service counsellors develop counselling practicum competence and experience that their helping and selfless ability may increase prompting prosociality amongst them. The need for developing prosocial behaviour is exacerbated by social symptoms, which are in line with the economic growth of the rapidly developing world. Expectations and experimentation of first-year students go contrary to school and departmental orientations resulting in the degenerate behaviours observed amongst students. More so being that the majority of counselling students at this level are circumstantial as earlier noted, their behaviour is a far cry from expectations. Pre-service counsellors in this study are final-year students who had completed the required six-month practicum programme. The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the effect of self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence on the prosocial behaviour of preservice counsellors.

Research Questions

To actualize the objective of this study the following research questions were addressed in the study.

1. Would there be significant correlations among counselling practicum experience, competency self-esteem and prosocial behaviour?
2. Would the combination of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem predict the prosocial behaviour of pre-service counsellors?
3. What is the relative contribution of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem to the prediction of prosocial behaviour of pre-service counsellors?

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design and *ex-post facto* type. It was conducted with two hundred (200) students of Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo State in South-West Nigeria who were part four Guidance and Counselling students in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling. The selection was made using the simple random sampling technique. The participants were all registered students of the university during the 2020/2021 session and were between the ages of 21 and



29 with a mean age of 24.7 years. Part four students were chosen because they had completed six months of counselling practicum exercise in preparation for real-life experience.

The study employed the following standardized instrument:

Counselling Practicum Competence Scale (CPCS): The self-developed scale assesses students' perceptions of their capability to demonstrate helping skills, communicate without hindrance and provide effective counselling to client satisfaction. The scale contains twenty items scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale (high scores+ high counselling practicum competence). The scale reports an internal consistency using a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.71.

Counseling Practicum Experience Scale (CPES): the scale is a multidimensional questionnaire containing questions about counselling students' experiences of practicum and practicum situations. The questions were developed based on theories that can be linked to a sense of coherence, flow, comportment, and the demand-control-support as well as the effort-reward model. The content of the questions provides the opportunity to measure counselling student's practicum experiences. For this study, the scale reported a two-week test-retest reliability of 0.73.

The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSS): The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965. The scale can be used to assess global self-esteem and it is one of the most widely used self-esteem tests among psychologists and sociologists. The scale is a ten-item Likert scale with items answered on a four-point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For this study, the scale reported a two-week test-retest reliability of 0.79.

Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM): The scale used is the prosocial tendencies measures developed by Carlo and Randall, (2002). Items for the Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM) were selected from previously developed prosocial disposition and behaviour scales (Johnson et al., 1989; Rushton et al., 1981) and responses to prosocial moral reasoning interviews with college-aged students (Eisenberg et al., 1995). The 23-item version of the PTM was composed of 6 sub-scales: public (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$), anonymous (5 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$), dire (3 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.63$), emotional (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$), compliant (2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$), and altruism (5 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$). The response pattern for the scale is a 5- 5-point scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 5 (describes me greatly).

The researchers distributed and collected the questionnaire from the students themselves, and made sure to obtain the participants' consent before administering it. A response rate of 100% was recorded. To determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation, while multiple regressions were used to determine the predictive capacity of the independent variables.

Results

Research Question 1: *Would there be any significant relationship between counselling practicum experience, competency self-esteem and prosocial behaviour?*

Table 1: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4
1 Prosocial Behaviour	82.28	13.08	1.000			
2 Self-Esteem	39.16	3.14	.087	1.000		
3 Counselling Practicum Experience	30.40	5.53	.032	.133	1.000	
4 Counselling Practicum Competency	78.07	7.89	.061	.245**	.225**	1.000

**Correlation is significant at 0.01(2-tailed)

Table 1 revealed the relationship of each independent variables (counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem) with the dependent variable (pro-social behaviour); Pro-social behaviour positively correlated with self-esteem ($r=.087$, $p>0.01$), followed by counselling practicum experience ($r=.061$, $p>0.01$), and counselling practicum competency ($r=.032$, $p>0.01$). This implies that the higher the influence of these independent variables the better the pro-social behaviour of pre-service counsellors.

Research Question 2: *Would the combination of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem predict the prosocial behaviour of pre-service counsellors?*

Table 2: Summary of multiple regression analysis for the joint contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of prosocial behaviour.

R =.594

R Square =.353

Adjusted R square =.351

Std. Error = 13.167

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16642.37	3	5547.457	321.14	.000. ^b
	Residual	3385.787	196	17.274		
	Total	20027.27	199			

Table 2 reveals a significant joint contribution of the independent variables (counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem) to the prediction of pro-social behaviour. The result yielded a

coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.17$ and multiple R -square = 0.14. This suggests that the three factors combined accounted for just 35.1% ($\text{Adj.}R^2 = .351$) variance in the prediction of prosocial behaviour. The other factors accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there is a significant effect of the independent variables on pro-social behaviour, $F_{(3, 196)} = 321,14$ $P > 0.05$.

Research Question 3: *What is the relative contribution of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem to the prediction of prosocial behaviour of pre-service counsellors?*

Table 3: *Relative effect of the independent variables on the prediction of pro-social behaviour.*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	70.025	13.662		5.345	.000
Self-Esteem	.507	.450	.121	1.127	.000
Counselling practicum experience	.030	.255	.113	.117	.000
Counselling practicum competency	.164	.189	.109	.114	.000

Table 3 shows that the three predictors (counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem) are potent predictors of pro-social behaviour. Invariably, the most potent factor was self-esteem (Beta = .121, $t = 1.127$, $P < 0.01$), counseling practicum experience (Beta = .113, $t = .117$, $P < 0.05$) and counseling practicum competency (Beta = .121, $t = 1.127$, $P < 0.01$). This implies that an increase in self-esteem counselling practicum experience and competency will increase students' prosocial behaviour by 12.1, 11.7% and 10.9% respectively.

Discussion

The analysis of the relationship among counselling practicum experience, competency, self-esteem and prosocial behaviour as shown in the correlation matrix of Table 1 indicates that there is a positive significant correlation among the variables. This suggests that high levels of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem could predict prosocial behaviour among the participants. That is, as prosocial behaviour increases, counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem increase.

The multiple regression analysis in Table 2 shows that counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem could predict the prosocial behaviour of the participants. The magnitude of this relationship in predicting the academic self-efficacy of students is reflected in the values of the coefficient of multiple R^2 (0.353) and in multiple R^2 adjusted (0.351) as shown in Table 2. Thus it can be said that 35.1% of the total variance in the prosocial behaviour of the students is accounted for by the combination of counselling practicum experience, competency and self-esteem. The F-ratio value of 321.14 which is significant at 0.05 level further attests to the fact that the predictive capacity of the



independent variables are not due to chance factors.

With regards to the extent to which each of the two independent variables contributes to the prediction, it could be ascertained from Table 3 that self-esteem is the best predictor of prosocial behaviour. The finding complements a prior study by Huebner (2003). Self-esteem describes the evaluation of self-worth placed on the self. Hence, individuals with high self-esteem are expected to have a strong evaluation of their worth for themselves. Such self-worth brings forth straightforwardness which includes being candid with others, dependability, responsibility, and consistency of personality. Those with straightforwardness are turned to for advice and also have insight into their motives and behaviours. They could give, nurture positive feelings towards others, behave in a giving manner, and be protective of others, in addition to being warm and compassionate. Thus, it is only at the point of having high self-worth that these individuals can find worth for others and provide needful helping hands that are prosocial. This provides a plausible explanation of the effect of self-esteem on prosocial behaviour.

This study has also revealed counselling practicum experience and competence to be predictors of prosocial behaviour. One major personality requirement of a counsellor to a client is unconditional positive regard. This involves respect, support, acceptance, recognition, and mutual help are found to be the most important critical factors in cultivating prosocial behaviour. Offering genuine respect, trust, recognition and support to the client is not only conducive to the formation of a healthy counsellor-client relationship but additionally fosters mutual respect as well as a client's active perception of strong counsellor assistance. The experiential learning in counseling practicum where trainees learn how to reflect and analyze their concrete experience gained to form and expand their configuration of meaning which they could further validate through their actions and experimentations reflects prosocial nature. This is such that, the main aim of this process of experiential learning is to transform their thinking and actions as counsellors so that they can effectively affect the thinking and action of their clients. In other words, a counselling practicum gives trainee counsellors an opportunity for change and growth personally and professionally, especially in improving prosociality.

Conclusion

This study attempts to make up for the lack of research on the relationship between the influencing factors of prosocial behaviour among counselling students. The study's findings have instructive significance for improving the prosocial behaviour of counselling students as well as the trainee programme, The institution of the school is also very important in this respect. School systems must advocate policies that work to increase teachers' positive guidance for students. An example of this is the tutoring program, which provides students with professional learning and career development guidance but can also guide students' outlook on the world at large as well as their outlook on life and values, and additionally enhance a student's sense of belonging and identity.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made

1. Preservice counsellors should be encouraged to improve on their self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence.



2. values and practices that encourage the development of self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence should be encouraged.
3. Training and re-training programmes, seminars, symposiums and workshops should be organized geared at investing and modifying counselling practicum instructions and programmes and promoting prosocial behaviour among the trainees.
4. The counsellor education curriculum should be redesigned to include the use of self-esteem, counselling practicum experience and competence in strategic personality development for counsellors.

References

- Agokei, R. C. (2020). Examining counselling practicum competency among pre-practica trainees in Adeyemi College of Education. *Journal of Concepts Issues and concern in Education* 2(1), 26-36.
- Boxer, P., Tisak M., S, Goldstein S., E. (2004) Is it bad to be good? An exploration of aggressive and prosocial behavior subtypes in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 33, 91-100.
- Dixon R., A. (2005). Adolescent gender differences in mattering and wellness. *Journal of Adolescence*, 28, 753-763.
- Donnellan, MB Trzesniewski, KH Robins, RW Moffitt, TE Caspi A (2005). Low self-esteem is related to aggression, antisocial behavior, and delinquency. *Psychological science* 16 (4), 328-335.
- Eisenberg, N., Eggum-Wilkens, N. D., & Spinrad, T. L. (2015). The development of prosocial behavior. In D. A. Schroeder & W. G. Graziano (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of prosocial behavior* (pp. 114–136). Oxford University Press.
- Fehr, E . and Fischbacher, U. (2003). The nature of human altruism. *Nature* 425 (6960), 785-791,
- Hao, J., Liu, Y., & Cowell, J. M. (2016). A Mind-Reader Does Not Always Have Deontological Moral Judgments and Prosocial Behavior : A Developmental Perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(August), 1–15.
- Kavussanu, M Boardley ID (2009) The prosocial and antisocial behavior in sport scale. *Journal of sport and exercise psychology* 31 (1), 97-117.
- Klein, N. (2016). Prosocial behavior increases perceptions of meaning in life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(4), 354–361.
- Kuem, J., Ray, S., Siponen, M., & Kim, S. S. (2017). What Leads to Prosocial Behaviors on Social Networking Services : A Tripartite Model What Leads to Prosocial Behaviors on Social Networking Services : A Tripartite Model. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 34(1), 40–70.
- Luo, J. (2018). The Neural Basis of and a Common Neural Circuitry in Different Types of Pro-social Behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(June), 1–17.
- Malti, T., & Buchmann, M. (2010). Socialization and individual antecedents of adolescents' and young adults' moral motivation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(2), 138–149.



- Misigo, B. L. (2014). Student-counsellors' perception of practicum experience: A case of Moi University bachelor of education guidance and counselling students. *International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 1(3), 1-11.
- Nwachuku, D. N. (2009). *Guidance and counselling practicum in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. A guide to guidance counsellors: Methods, skills, techniques and competencies*. Calabar, Nigeria: University of Calabar Press.
- Orth, U., Robins, R. W., & Roberts, B. W. (2008). Low self-esteem prospectively predicts depression in adolescence and young adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(3), 695–708.
- Penner, L. A. (2000). Promoting prosocial actions: The importance of culture and values. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 31(4), 477–487.
- Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., Moffitt, T. E., Robins, R. W., Poulton, R., & Caspi, A. (2006). Low self-esteem during adolescence predicts poor health, criminal behaviour, and limited economic prospects during adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(2), 381–390.
- Twenge, J. M., Baumeister, R. F., DeWall, C. N., Ciarocco, N. J., Bartels, J. M. (2007). *Social exclusion decreases prosocial behaviour*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 92(1), Jan 56-66.
- Vorlauffer, T. (2019). Effects of double-anonymity on pro- and anti-social behaviour : Experimental evidence from a lab in the field. *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*, 81(June), 216–225.