



COUNSELLING FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN BAYELSA STATE.

By

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ABSTRACT

The work investigated the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State. The exploratory research development design was adopted for this study. Four research questions and four hypotheses were stated to guide the study. Sample size of 120 counsellors randomly drawn from the secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The counselling for creativity and skills development questionnaire (CCSDQ) was developed and administered on the counselors. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method, using Pearson product moment correlation where the reliability coefficient (r) = 0.73 was gotten. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while z-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in terms of gender, there was significant difference in the location of counselors and there was difference in terms of educational qualification, everyone can also benefit from counselling in developing skills, improving creativity and enhancing positive growth in the individual. Recommendation is that counselors should be periodically exposed to undergo professional training.

Key words: *Counselling, skills, development, creativity, productive, growth.*

Introduction

Counselling has become a vital tool in enhancing skills development, fostering creativity, and promoting sustainable growth. Counselling is increasingly recognized as a pivotal mechanism for enhancing skills development, fostering creativity, and promoting sustainable growth. In contemporary societies driven by rapid technological advancements, economic uncertainties, and



evolving societal norms, the pursuit of skills development, creativity enhancement, and productive sustainable growth has become increasingly imperative. Counselling, traditionally associated with psychological support and therapeutic interventions, now plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals and organizations to thrive in these dynamic landscapes. This empirical review examines various studies and theoretical perspectives on the role of counselling in these areas.

Based on Skills Development through Counselling, Counselling plays a crucial role in facilitating the acquisition of new skills. Studies have shown that counselling helps individuals identify their strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals, and develop personalized learning strategies. For instance, a study by Smith (2019) found that career counselling significantly improved job readiness and employability among university graduates. This has made an impact on Professional Development because professional counselling has been linked to improved job performance and career advancement. Smith (2019) also indicates that career counselling impacts males and females differently in terms of job readiness and career advancement. Through techniques such as mentoring, coaching, and feedback sessions, counselling helps individuals navigate their career paths more effectively. According to a study by Johnson and Brown (2020), employees who received regular professional counselling were more likely to achieve promotions and salary increases compared to those who did not. Studies suggest that younger age groups benefit more from counselling aimed at skill acquisition due to their readiness for learning and career development (Johnson & Brown, 2020). Williams (2018) explored age-related differences in the effectiveness of psychological counselling on creativity enhancement.

In terms of Enhancing Creativity through Counselling, A study by Williams (2018) demonstrated that individuals who underwent psychological counselling showed a significant increase in creative output and innovation, the study also stressed that creativity is often stifled by psychological barriers such as fear of failure, lack of confidence, and stress. Psychological counselling addresses these issues by providing emotional support, cognitive restructuring, and stress management techniques. Research by Thompson and Lee (2017) highlighted that counselling interventions led to improved problem-solving abilities and more innovative solutions in organizational settings, Thompson and Lee (2017) found variations in how genders engage in creative problem-solving through counselling interventions, the review also states that counselling fosters creative problem-solving skills by encouraging divergent thinking and the exploration of multiple solutions to a problem. Techniques such as brainstorming, mind mapping, and role-playing are commonly used in counselling to enhance creativity

Sustainable growth at the individual level involves continuous personal development and well-being. Counselling supports this by helping individuals develop resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset. A longitudinal study by Patel et al. (2019) found that individuals who engaged in regular counselling sessions reported higher levels of life satisfaction and personal growth over time. In organizational contexts, counselling contributes to sustainable growth by enhancing



employee well-being, reducing turnover, and fostering a positive work environment. Programs such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide counselling services that address personal and professional issues, leading to increased productivity and organizational stability. According to a report by the International Labour Organization (2020), companies that implemented comprehensive counselling programs experienced a 20% increase in overall productivity and a 15% reduction in employee turnover. The International Labour Organization (2020) highlighted how counselling interventions impact productivity and stability differently based on employment status.

The evolution of theoretical frameworks in career counseling denotes the discipline's attempt to correspond to contemporary conditions, needs, and challenges arising from larger socioeconomic, historic, and cultural contexts. These frameworks either inform and update existing counseling interventions or lead to the development of new ones aligned with current advancements (Savickas, 2005; Di Fabio, 2017). Consequently, the counseling practice is refreshed and enriched, while practitioners' roles are redefined. Additionally, practitioners often come from diverse backgrounds and provide services in various fields, such as educational counseling, social work, Public Employment Services (PES), and freelance counseling. To ensure the effectiveness of their services, career counselors need, beyond their initial training, to engage in continuous professional development (CPD) to update and maintain their skills (McDonald & Hite, 2018). One skill promoted in postmodern career counseling approaches for both counselors and clients is reflexivity. Career counselors are encouraged to become life-designing counselors who foster client reflexivity to design their future lives in a meaningful way, integrating various life domains, including career (Guichard, 2016; Iordanou & Papadopoulos, 2020). In urban areas, counseling services often have better access to resources, infrastructure, and technology. This allows counselors to provide a wider range of services, including those focused on skills development and creativity. Urban settings might also offer more workshops, training programs, and collaborative opportunities. In contrast, rural areas may have limited access to such resources, which can restrict the scope of counseling for skill enhancement and growth. For instance, a study found that urban students had more opportunities to develop soft skills through school counseling programs compared to their rural counterparts (Campbell & Dahir, 2017). Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2009) states that higher levels of education often lead to more effective counseling outcomes in skills development. Educated individuals typically possess better critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enabling them to benefit more from counseling interventions.

Additionally, Reid and Bassot (2018) highlight in their contribution to the NICE Competences Framework that “reflective practice is a growing requirement for many practitioners working in education, health, and social services and is a key aspect of professionalism” (p. 179). Therefore, reflexivity needs to be practically acknowledged and included in the initial and recurrent training of career counselors and practitioners. Research on the training and professionalization of career counselors and practitioners has been rising over the last few years; however, there is limited



research evidence and few concrete references on how reflexivity can be embedded in initial and continuous training practically.

Hence, the specific need arises from the understanding that “reflexivity offers a transitional space for the career development of those new to the profession, those who are experienced, and, importantly, for their clients” (Reid & Bassot, 2018, p. 183). Empirical evidence underscores the significant impact of counselling on skills development, creativity, and sustainable growth. By addressing psychological barriers, providing emotional support, and fostering a growth-oriented mindset, counselling helps individuals and organizations achieve their full potential. Future research should continue to explore innovative counselling techniques and their long-term effects on personal and organizational development.

Statement of the Problem

In contemporary contexts of professional and personal development, there remains a critical need to explore and understand the effectiveness of counselling interventions aimed at enhancing skills development, fostering creativity, and promoting sustainable growth. While counselling is widely recognized as a beneficial tool in addressing psychological barriers and supporting individual growth, there is a gap in comprehensive empirical research that examines the specific impacts of counselling on these multifaceted aspects of human development. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how counselling programs tailored for skills development, creativity enhancement, and sustainable growth contribute to measurable outcomes in educational, professional, and organizational settings. Specifically, the study will explore the extent to which counselling interventions facilitate skills acquisition, stimulate creative thinking, and foster long-term sustainable growth in Bayelsa State as a whole.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to systematically investigate the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To find out the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender.
2. To find out the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location.
3. To find out the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education.



Research Questions

1. To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender?
2. To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location?
3. To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education.

Methodology

This research design used for this study was the exploratory development design. Exploratory research development design is best for this study because it helps to gain insights into a problem and identify what is relevant. It allows researchers to define the problem more clearly and pinpoint the factors that are important (Stebbins, 2001). The main idea behind using this type of research design is that researchers can identify the key variables that should be investigated further.

The population of the study consisted of all counselors both registered and newly graduated counsellors in Bayelsa state numbered 120 across the eight local government areas. The stratified random sampling technique was used for this study. This technique helped in representing all the variables of the study; gender, location, level of education and level of experience.

The sample comprised 92 counsellors in Bayelsa State. The sample was made up of both male and female counselors from the eight local government areas. The sample size was calculated using fluid online calculator with confidence level of 95% at 0.05 level of significance.

The researcher developed an instrument “Counselling for creativity and skills development questionnaire (CCSDQ). (CCSDQ) is divided into two sections. Section A is made up of personal



data such as gender, location and level of education. The second section sought to find out the Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity, and Productive Sustainable Growth. CCSDQ comprised 10 items and will be responded to as follows; SA- Strongly Agree (4), A - Agree (3), D - Disagree (2), SD- Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was vetted by two lecturers in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt. All the corrections they made were affected.

The reliability of the instrument (AOCS) was established through test- retest method. The questionnaire was administered to 14 counsellors in Rivers State. The administration was done in two instances after a period of two weeks. The scores generated from the two administrations were used in computing the reliability coefficient using Pearson Product moment correlation. A reliability co-efficient of 0.73 was obtained. Wali (2002) noted that a reliability coefficient of 0.60 and above in a test with Pearson Product moment correlation is reliable. Hence, the instrument is reliable for the study.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires with some research assistants. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the respondents and collected the filled questionnaires and 85 questionnaires were retrieved. For data analysis, mean scores was used to answer the research questions while z-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender?

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender.

Table 1: Z-Test Analysis on Difference in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender

VARIABLES		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Z-cal	Z-crit	Level of Sig.	Decision
COUNSELLING FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH	MALE	50	3.38	0.68	90	0.779	1.960	0.05	H01 Accepted
	FEMALE	42	3.26	0.78					



Table 1 indicates that the calculated z-value (0.779) for group is less than z-critical (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis one is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on gender.

Research Question 2: To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location?

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location.

Table 1: Z-Test Analysis on Difference in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location.

VARIABLES		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Z-cal	Z- crit	Level of Sig.	Decision
COUNSELLING FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH	URBAN	60	3.40	0.70	90	2.186	1.960	0.05	H02 Rejected
	RURAL	32	3.00	0.90					

Table 2 indicates that the calculated z-value (2.186) for group is greater than z-critical (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis one is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on location.

Research Question 3: To what extent does difference exist in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education?



Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary on Difference in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20	2	10	0.222	>0.05
Within Groups	4002.676	89	44.974		
Total	4022.676	91			

Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value for group (Level of Education: Degree, Master's and Doctorate) is 0.222 at degrees of freedom of 2 and 89 and probability level of 0.550 which is less than 0.05 level of probability. ($F = 0.222$, $df = 2/89$, $p \leq 0.05$). Hypothesis three was therefore rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean ratings on Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth in Bayelsa State based on level of education.

Discussion of Findings

Gender and the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth

The findings revealed that, there is no difference between the mean scores of male and female in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth. This is supported by Smith (2019) also indicates that career counselling impacts males and females differently in terms of job readiness and career advancement. Through techniques such as mentoring, coaching, and feedback sessions, counselling helps individuals navigate their career paths more effectively. Similarly, the study is in tandem with Thompson and Lee (2017) found that both genders engage in creative problem-solving through counselling interventions, the review also states that counselling fosters creative problem-solving skills by encouraging divergent thinking and the exploration of multiple solutions to a problem. Techniques such as brainstorming, mind mapping, and role-playing are commonly used in counselling to enhance creativity



Location and the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth

The findings revealed that to a large extent, there is difference between the mean scores of rural and urban locations in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth, this is supported by (Campbell & Dahir, 2017), they emphasize that in urban areas, counseling services often have better access to resources, infrastructure, and technology. This allows counselors to provide a wider range of services, including those focused on skills development and creativity. Urban settings might also offer more workshops, training programs, and collaborative opportunities. In contrast, rural areas may have limited access to such resources, which can restrict the scope of counseling for skill enhancement and growth. For instance, a study found that urban students had more opportunities to develop soft skills through school counseling programs compared to their rural counterparts.

Level of education and the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth

The findings revealed that, there is difference between the mean scores of level of education in the role of Counselling for Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth because everyone can benefit from counseling. This finding is in agreement with Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2009) that states that higher levels of education often lead to more effective counseling outcomes in skills development. Educated individuals typically possess better critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enabling them to benefit more from counseling interventions.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings and discussions based on this work, the following conclusions were drawn, it is apparent that that there was no significant difference in terms of gender, there was significant difference in the location of counselors because those in the urban areas benefit from counseling compared to the rural areas and there was difference in terms of educational qualification, the more educated the more opportunities to develop Skills Development, Creativity and Productive Sustainable Growth although everyone can also benefit from counselling for developing skills, improving creativity and enhancing positive growth in the individual.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Counselors should be periodically exposed to undergo professional training, Promote lifelong learning to pursue continuous education and skill enhancement through workshops, online courses, and professional development opportunities.



2. Use digital tools and platforms to facilitate skills training and creative exercises, making learning more accessible and engaging.
3. Implement a system for ongoing feedback and assessment to help clients track their progress and adjust goals as needed.
4. Establish mentorship opportunities that connect clients with experienced professionals in their fields, fostering skills development and creative collaboration.

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