

PREVAILING ELEMENTS AFFECTING PROFICIENT COUNSELOR'S VOCATION RESPONSIBILITY IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study investigates the demographic factors influencing the prevailing elements affecting proficient counsellors' vocation responsibilities in Kwara state, Nigeria. The main purpose of this study is to investigate demographic factors influencing the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Four hypotheses were raised and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that a positive significant relationship existed between gender and career commitment ($r = 3.21, p (.02) < .05$), age and career commitment ($r = 3.64, p (.02) < .05$), academic qualification and career commitment ($r = 3.08, p (.03) < .05$) and marital status and career commitment ($r = 3.78, p (.02) < .05$). The findings of the study showed that there were significantly different between the demographic factors of (gender, age, academic qualification and marital status) and career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State. Based on this it was suggested that irrespective of their gender, age, academic qualification and marital status every counsellor should put forward skills and responsibility of rescuing present-day school children, as a means of doing their work diligently and committed.

Keywords: Proficient Counsellors, Career Commitment, Counselling program, Demographic Parameters

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INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the 20th century, counselling has been a part of daily life. Despite this, even when experts are hired to do the job, they struggle to define the counselling industry. The lives of people, families, and communities can be significantly impacted by counselling delivered by

qualified specialists. This service aids people in navigating life's challenging circumstances like losing a loved one, divorcing, natural disasters, school stress, and losing a job. The service offered by a school counsellor doesn't just apply to higher education; it also extends to colleges, polytechnics, secondary schools, and even early childhood education. School counsellors create and administer counselling initiatives that boost student performance. Counsellors act as leaders, advocates, and collaborators to advance equity and access for all. However, from a theoretically grounded professional standpoint, its extensive descriptions (Adeyemo, 2002; Akinboye, 2002; Ugoji, 2009) leave the counsellor with a significant responsibility that only a fully qualified, psychologically stable, and ethically conscientious individual can assume. Through the integration of theory, research, and practice, sensitivity to multicultural issues, and a wide range of practices, the counsellor assists people in improving their well-being, reducing distress and maladjustment, resolving crises, and strengthening their ability with respect. The counsellor can fulfil nurturing needs by rescuing people with problems and participating in intimate relationships while always maintaining control (Kottler, 1995).

Therefore, a counselling program is among the most emotionally taxing experiences a student can have, with rigorous academic and clinical demands that must be met. Counsellors coordinate their activities in a comprehensive, optimally working model in response to their client(s), but they also systematically handle a range of spontaneous emotions with exceptional competence and sincere dedication. To handle the session's constantly shifting circumstances, counsellors in every session must coordinate and continuously improvise a variety of cognitive, social, and behavioural sub-skills. Assessments of operative capacities play a role in the initiation and regulation of counselling measures. The counsellor's role is to support the student in making personal attempts to behave more responsibly rather than to attempt to actively alter the student. Additionally, they can be found in government agencies, medical facilities, jails, schools, and other sizable institutions where interactions with people are important or where a lot of people are involved and vulnerable to behavioural temptations (Popoola, 2008). School counsellors can accomplish their objectives and perform well for their parent organization due to several circumstances. These variables include the counsellors' dedication to their careers, their skill level, the facilities available for counselling, their leadership style, etc. Counsellors' commitment to their careers has an impact on how they do their job obligations.

According to Chapman (2013), professional commitment is the degree to which a person is motivated to continue in a certain vocation. In other words, career commitment refers to a person's attitude toward working in a certain profession or vocation. According to Yusuf and Ilo (2012), professional dedication entails the capacity to strive toward advancing one's vocation. Career commitment, then, is the capacity of employees to stay in their careers and be productive in all spheres to ensure that objectives are met. Akintayo (2010) claims that commitment entails identity, engagement, and loyalty. According to the researcher, loyalty is an expression of an individual's partisan fulfilment; when a person sincerely connects with a group, leader, or subordinate, he is essentially declaring that the causes, aims, and values associated with those things have become his own. He intentionally focuses his energies on achieving those objectives and benefits that bring him intrinsic fulfilment. Adio and Popoola (2010) identified three components of professional dedication. These include normative commitment (i.e. the conviction that one must continue in a chosen career or line of work), and affective commitment (i.e. the degree to which people feel a sense of identification and involvement with chosen careers).

Continuance commitment refers to the costs associated with leaving or quitting a chosen career or line of work. Iroaganachi and Enwefa (2013) assert that a person's level of devotion is crucial to developing a fulfilling profession. For a career to flourish and advance, commitment is essential. This requires constant capacity building to achieve efficacy and relevance without any outside assistance. All firms place a high priority on employees' career commitment. People that are dedicated to their careers will probably perform better, which will improve the organization's performance as a whole. According to Rasudin and Shohaimi (2017), a key factor in ensuring organizational performance is a worker's dedication to his or her career. Low levels of commitment could lead to higher withdrawal rates, which would have an impact on the organization. The degree of dedication a person shows to his or her work heavily influences how far they can advance in it. Professionals and paraprofessionals in a variety of disciplines must show some amount of devotion to their work to keep up with new advances, stay relevant, and ingrain best practices. Awoyemi and Odefadehan (2017) quote Aryee and Tan (1992) in their study on the career commitment of Singaporean teachers and nurses. They found that individuals who showed a commitment to their profession did so to stay current with changes in their field and to get new knowledge and training.

Career commitment may be used to assess employee behaviour among Nigerian counsellors. According to concerns made by professors, students, and the government, certain employees have a negative attitude toward their jobs. In this research, demographic parameters (such as age, employment history, and educational background) are taken into account because they are among the most important things to take into account when hiring counsellors. The professional commitment of counsellors may be favourably or negatively impacted by several demographic characteristics. Studies have demonstrated that demographic variables such as marital status, educational attainment, age, and gender have a substantial impact on professional commitment (Adio, 2010; Animashaun & Oludemi, 2013; Johnson 2004; Adio & Popoola, 2010; Igere, 2020). In their study on demographic and psychological variables as predictors of organizational and career commitment among prison officers in South-West Nigeria, Animashaun and Oludemi (2013) found that gender, age, educational attainment, job satisfaction, job stress, motivation, and emotional intelligence are the actual predictors of organizational and career commitment among prison officers in South-West Nigeria. According to Adio (2010), the career commitment of librarians in Nigeria's federal institutions is influenced by demographic parameters like age, sex, employment position, and length of time employed at the university.

Igere (2020) also reaffirmed the significance of demographic parameters including age, marital status, gender, and academic background in determining career commitment. According to the study, an older individual may be more devoted than a younger person who might be open to changing jobs at any time. In light of this, the study examined the influence of demographic variables on professional counsellors' commitment to their careers in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement Of The Problem

The state-run Kwara counselling program for primary and secondary school pupils started to decline at some point. Not just at the university level, counselling demands normal concentration and commitment at all educational levels. Counsellors were employed in schools to carry out duties outside of those that were specifically given to them, such as collecting school fees and running errands for the principal, both of which were crucial to the growth and improvement of the state's educational system. To achieve this, earlier researchers like Adio (2010) and Animashaun and Olusemi (2013) investigated the effects of demographic factors including marital status, educational attainment, age, and gender on career commitment and discovered a strong

correlation with it. In their research on demographic and psychological factors as predictors of organizational and career commitment among prison officers in south-west Nigeria, Animashaun and Oludemi (2013) discovered that gender, age, educational attainment, job satisfaction, job stress, motivation, and emotional intelligence are the actual predictors of organizational and career commitment among prison officers in south-west Nigeria. The current study will concentrate on the gender, age, marital status, and academic background of professional counsellors in Kwara State and how these aspects connect to their commitment to their careers.

Purpose Of The Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate demographic factors influencing the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific purposes of this study are to:

- i.** Examine the influence of gender on the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria.
- ii.** Determine the influence of age on the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria.
- iii.** Ascertain the influence of academic qualification on the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State.
- iv.** Ensure the influence of marital status on the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at $p < 0.05$ level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on gender

Ho2: there is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on age.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on academic qualifications.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on marital status.

Literature Review

The social cognition career theory (SCCT), which evolved from Albrt Bandura's social cognitive theory, makes an effort to address issues relating to

culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context, and unforeseen life events that may interact with and supersede the effects of career-related decisions. According to the SCCT, a person's decision about their vocation is impacted by the advantages they acquire and hone from four main sources: personal, performances, accomplishments, vicarious learning, and social persuasion. According to Ribadu (2021), counselling and guidance are processes that assist a person in overcoming challenges to their personal growth, which may include issues with their schooling, careers, relationships, or other aspects of their lives. The person aspires to maximize the growth of his resources in this regard. He continued by saying that counselling and coaching help the youngster find the most efficient means of defining and realizing desirable goals for better adjustment and living. In a multiple mediator route analysis, Chukwud and Akinlolu (2019) also report that counselling self-efficacy was discovered to be a significant predictor of counsellor commitment, confirming the predictions. The findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a moderator of the association between counselling self-efficacy and the development of critical counsellor preparation outcomes and professional commitment.

Numerous studies on the factors that influence commitment have focused on individual traits like age, marital status, level of education, gender, and work history. The age of an employee was discovered to be positively correlated with dedication (Animasahun & Oludemi, 2013; Adio & Popoola, 2010; Konya, et al., 2016). According to Adio and Popoola (2010), there is a substantial correlation between career dedication and age, gender, educational attainment, and married status. Gender, age, educational attainment, job satisfaction, job stress, motivation, job stress, and emotional intelligence are the true correlates of career and organizational commitment among prison officers in South-west, Nigeria, according to Animashaun and Oludemi's (2013) study on demographic and psychological factors as correlates of organizational and career commitment among prison officers. According to Nwangi (2014), senior employees in any firm are more likely to be dedicated to their professions than younger ones since they tend to appreciate their careers more as they get older. Konya et al. (2016) also confirmed that older workers are more devoted than younger ones because they lower their expectations at work to levels that are more realistic and are better able to adapt to their working environments.

In some professions in a few industrialized nations, a study by Jack and Folkman (2020) on gender and career commitment indicated that professional women are more dedicated to their careers than their male colleagues. In their

study, Chughtai and Zafar (2006) asserted that gender is not a significant predictor of the dedication of instructors in Pakistani universities. The well-cited meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajak (1990) raised the possibility that gender and commitment were related, but they came to the contrary conclusion as a result of differences between professional groups. As a result, it seems that there is no agreement on whether gender and commitment are associated. The perception of women's career dedication has revealed, according to Pala et al. (2008), that they are frequently seen as being less committed than their male counterparts, particularly in professional groups (Adio & Popoola, 2010). Igere (2020) found a considerable correlation between academic competence and career commitment, showing that highly educated workers are more likely to continue in their field since higher academic achievement leads to higher hierarchical status and more lucrative rewards.

Employees' marital status is thought to have a favourable impact on their devotion to their careers. This might be the case since married workers with dependent children are frequently the family's primary providers, meaning they shoulder heavier financial and personal obligations than their single counterparts. They are therefore more reluctant to take the risk of abandoning their profession or employment. Marital status is also a demographic factor, which influences commitment. Current literature shows that married people are more committed than single people. This is because they need a stable job and career, due to their perceived responsibility to their families (Choong et al., 2012). Based on these findings, one could reason that demographic factors play important roles in the career commitment of counsellors in our various schools. It shows that demographic factors also had a significant correlation with career commitment, for example, Age and tenure are believed to be demographic characteristics, which are positively correlated with commitment. As people get older, they remain in their professions, and their commitment increases, probably because alternative career opportunities diminish for older people or because commitment may be a successful strategy for getting along (Rabindarang et al., 2014).

METHOD

The correlational survey was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised One Hundred and fifty (150) counsellors working in the central, southern and Northern parts of Kwara State, Nigeria. The purposive and convenient methods were used to administer the questionnaire, purposive in the

sense that only one hundred and fifty counsellors were used and convenient because only those who are ready were used. The Counsellor Commitment Scale was used. The scale is an adapted version of the career commitment scale developed and validated by Carson and Bedeian (1994), based on the conceptualization and definition of career commitment as one's motivation to work in a chosen vocation. The scale consists of twelve (12) items designed in a 5-point Likert format. Increasing scores imply high counselling commitment while decreasing scores imply the converse. The scale has reported an internal consistency of 0.76 and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 using a two-week test-re-test procedure. The inferential statistical tools of the T-test were used to analyze the stated hypotheses and the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on gender.

Table 1

Table Showing the Difference in the Career Commitment of Professional Counsellors in Kwara State Based on Gender

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Df	t. Cal	Sig
Remarks						
Male	78	36.58	8.32			
Female	42	31.67	7.22	118	3.21	
	0.02	0.05 (Significant at 0.05 critical region)				

Table 1 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis one. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated is 3.21; the degree of freedom is 118 and $P < 0.05$. Based on this result, null hypothesis one is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on gender.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on age.

Table 2

Table Showing the Difference in the Career Commitment of Professional Counsellors in Kwara State Based on Age

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Df	t. Cal	Sig
Remarks						

Younger	48	32.61	7.82		
Older	72	37.33	9.27	118	3.64

0.02 0.05
(Significant at 0.05 critical regions)

Table 2 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis two. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated is 3.64; the degree of freedom is 118 and $P < 0.05$. Based on this result, null hypothesis two is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on age.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on academic qualifications.

Table 3
Test Table Showing the Difference in the Career Commitment of Professional Counsellors in Kwara State Based on Academic Qualification.

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Df	t. Cal	Sig
Remarks						
First Degree	63	30.26	7.82			
Higher Degree	57	38.73	9.42	118	3.08	

0.03 0.05 (Significant at 0.05 critical region)

Table 3 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis three. From the table, it is shown that t. calculated is 3.08; the degree of freedom is 118 and $P < 0.05$. Based on this result, null hypothesis three is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on academic qualifications.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on marital status.

Table 4
Table Showing the Difference in the Career Commitment of Professional Counsellors in Kwara State Based on Marital Status

Variable	No	Mean	SD	Df	t. Cal	Sig
Remarks						
Married	85	35.82	9.78			
Unmarried	35	30.38	6.32	118	3.78	

0.02 0.05
(Significant at 0.05 critical regions)

Table 4 shows the results obtained from testing hypothesis four. From the table, it is shown that t . calculated is 3.78; the degree of freedom is 118 and $P < 0.05$. Based on this result, null hypothesis four is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on marital status.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the first Null-hypothesis showed that there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on gender. This is agreed with the findings of Jack (2004) who found gender and career commitment across some professions in selected developed countries, found that professional women are more committed to their careers than their male counterparts. There appears to be a lack of consensus as to whether gender and commitment are interrelated. The result of the second Null-hypothesis showed that there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on age. This is in line with the findings of Nwangi (2014) submitted that old workers are more likely to be committed to their careers than young workers in any organization because the older the employees, the more the tendency to place value on their careers. Given this aged counsellors are more committed to their job than younger ones, in the sense that older counsellors have lowered their expectations to more realistic levels and adjust themselves better to their work situations.

The third result of the Null-hypothesis showed that there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on academic qualification. Igere (2020) reported that academic qualification was strongly correlated with career commitment, this indicated that when employees are highly educated, they tend to stay in their career because the more they go higher academically, the higher they become hierarchically and the higher the benefits attached. The present findings were shown that counsellors with higher academic qualifications were more committed than their counterparts with lower qualifications in Kwara State. The forty Null-hypotheses showed that there is a significant difference in the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara State based on marital status. Marital status is also a demographic factor, which influences commitment. This is concurring with the findings of Choong et al (2012) who stated that married people are more committed than single people. This is because they need a

stable job and career, due to their perceived responsibility to their families. Given this, it was affirmed in the present findings that married counsellors were more committed than their single counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The counselling program 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. While coordinating themselves in a fully optimally functioning model in response to the client(s), counsellors also systematically deal with varied spontaneous reactions with patent skills and deep commitment. Without an adequate level of job commitment, students' challenges would not be properly managed and sustained. This work paid attention to demographic factors influencing the career commitment of professional counsellors in Kwara state. From the findings of this study, it was evident that demographic factors such as gender, age, academic qualification and marital status are positively related to the career commitment of counsellors in Kwara State. The majority of the respondent who was married, aged and female were shown commitment to their career and it was concluded that demographic factors of gender, age, academic qualification and marital status are the real influence of career commitment.

RECOMMENDATION

Having gone through the study the following recommendation are therefore highlighted for consideration by counsellors and all educational stakeholders as follows:

1. That in respective of their gender every counsellor should put forward skills and responsibility of rescuing present-day school children, as a means of doing their work diligently and committedly.
2. That counsellor in school should strive to advance their knowledge by obtaining more qualification in their profession, to boost their commitment in the sense that man cannot gives more than what he possessed.

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