



Correlating Communication and Time Management: Keys to Counselor Effectiveness

Abdulkareem Olalekan Abubakar¹, Kamoru Abidoye Tiamiyu², Habibat Bolanle Abdulkareem³, Isiaq Abdulfatah⁴

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education,
Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State

Correspondence: E-mail: abdulkareemhabibat001@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study utilized a correlation research design and employed the Simple Random Sampling Technique to select 100 counselors. Data were gathered using scales developed by Cameron, Berling, and Kataria, which respectively measured Communication Skills (CSS), Time Management Skills (TMS), and Effective Service Delivery Skills (ESDS). Statistical analyses included Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression, with a significance level set at 0.05. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between communication skills and effective service delivery ($r = 0.64$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$), as well as between time management and effective service delivery ($r = 0.64$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a significant combined contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.59$, $df = 2/97$, $F = 71.13$, $p < 0.05$). Communication skills ($\beta = 0.47$) and time management ($\beta = 0.46$) both made significant relative contributions to effective service delivery among counselors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many individuals may find themselves in counseling roles without a full grasp of what counseling entails or the skills required of a professional counselor. It's important to distinguish between a professional counselor and someone who employs counseling skills as part of their duties. A key distinguishing factor of an adept counselor lies in their proficiency in communication and time management (Ahmed et al., 2023). Sociopsychological elements encompass social, mental, and emotional factors that influence counselors' effectiveness in fulfilling their professional duties. Among these factors are communication skills and time management (Ayo, 2023; Ehindero et al., 2023).

Effectiveness is a measure of success in achieving a clearly defined objective. This is the extent to which the stated objectives were met. This is the range in which something has been done to achieve a targeted outcome. This indicates the degree of closeness of the achieved objective with the predetermined goal of examining the potency of the whole entity (Julius, 2018). Therefore, opined that counsellor effectiveness is result-oriented, showing how excellently a counsellor has been performed that led to the achievement of the intended outcome, which is either accurate or next to perfect (Hassan et al., 2024).

Counseling entails a professional connection between a trained counselor and a client, typically conducted in person. Its aim is to assist clients in comprehending and clarifying their life circumstances, aiding them in making informed choices and addressing problems to achieve self-determined goals. According to Kabir (2018), counseling is geared towards individuals functioning within a normal range, dealing with adjustment, development, or situational concerns that necessitate short-term interventions. These individuals are seen as "stuck" rather than "sick" and seek clarification and guidance to utilize their existing information effectively. Counseling is rooted in theory and is conducted in a structured environment, often within an office setting, involving various individuals, groups, or families (Kabir, 2018).

The personal qualities of a counselor not only influence their interactions with clients but also impact their own personal and professional growth. Gibson (2019) suggests that a counselor's "personhood" is paramount in counseling, with the counselor's actions potentially having a profound effect on the client. Various studies have examined counselors' traits and experiences, with the concept of a counselor's selfhood being explored as an internal dialogue.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful counseling, constituting a vital social factor. Without proficient communication between counselor and client, the counseling process may falter. The term "communication" stems from the French word "communicare," signifying both conveying and informing. It involves the transmission of information and mutual understanding from one individual to another (Lunenburg, 2020). Competent communication is pivotal for counselors, enabling engagement in various activities (Ntoumanis et al., 2018). Stakeholders in counseling must recognize that communication breakdowns can impede counseling activities, often due to a lack of shared language between counselors and clients. Hence, counselors must possess adept communication skills to mitigate such issues. Communication proficiency is essential for establishing accurate and effective dialogue, minimizing communication conflicts. It encompasses skills in speaking, writing, reading, listening, and critical thinking for counselors.

Communication skills include answering questions by reflecting the speaker's emotions and thoughts, asking open questions that are not directing, responding correctly to messages, being willing to listen, making eye contact, concentrating on understanding, and

giving correct feedback. Some of these may be considered as verbal or non-verbal skills (Cunningham, 2019). When pre-service counsellor knows how to use both skills, they would be able to ask effective questions, make summaries, and make sense of what the client says during counselling session, thus increasing the counselling effectiveness (Korkut, 2016).

The concept of time on the other hand has been defined in many ways. Time cannot be perceived by human senses and it includes philosophical, psychological, and sociological dimensions. Time can be expressed as an abstract concept as it is an uninterrupted process in which events come from past to present and follow each other to the future. Time also means the perceptions of human being based on the events that occur consecutively. Time is a true treasure that is presented to people and necessary to know its value well. That is why a successful management of time becomes an imperative for everyone. Making good use of time puts human lives in balance or helps people identify the source of the imbalance. Being aware of using time is the key to continually improving the way we work and produce.

Studies on time management have been conducted by researchers since 1960s to emphasize importance of this factor. However, most people seem not to be aware of the importance of how they should use their time. Most of the counsellors did not use their time efficiently to keep up with their daily chores. Mannel and Kleiber (2017) pointed out that time management is a behavioural strategy required to overcome the factors that limit the leisure time due to the insufficiency of existing time. Therefore, Goll et al. (2015) stated that using time effectively may be considered as a sign for wisdom.

Based on the reviewed literature, there are indications suggesting a correlation between a counselor's effectiveness and their proficiency in time management and communication skills. Poor time management among counselors may lead to delays in fulfilling obligations, resulting in decreased enthusiasm for client engagement and communication. Conversely, research suggests that possessing effective time management skills can enhance counselor effectiveness, performance, and intervention outcomes (Watson, 2016). However, there is limited research specifically addressing the predictive roles of counselor communication skills and time management in the context of Kwara State. Understanding these factors could benefit psychologists, educators, and other counseling stakeholders by raising awareness of factors influencing effectiveness levels. Thus, this study aims to uncover the predictive roles of communication skills and time management in this context, contributing to existing research.

Statement of the Problem. It's evident that many clients in Nigeria often leave their counselor's office feeling confused or dissatisfied. One reason for this could be counselors using complex language or lacking the ability to effectively communicate with clients of varying educational backgrounds. Building a strong rapport from the outset is crucial for effective communication; without a warm welcome, clients may be reluctant to return for future sessions.

Furthermore, effective time management has become increasingly important in the 21st century, across both public and private organizations globally (Kordestani & Azadi, 2016). Proper time management strategies can enhance counselor efficiency and prevent wasted time and costs in counseling settings. In Nigeria, there's a prevalent attitude of procrastination and laxity towards time, often referred to as "African time." This mindset can negatively impact overall productivity and performance, as noted by Aphu and Cheng (2015). Poor time management practices among counselors can lead to reduced effectiveness in service delivery, particularly in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate communication skill and time management as correlate of effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. Specifically, this study intends to:

- Determine the relationship between communication skill and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.
- Examine the relationship between time management and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.
- Investigate the joint contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.
- Determine the relative contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses

The following null research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between time management and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

HO₃: There is no significant joint contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

HO₄: There is no significant relative contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

2. METHODS

This study is basically a descriptive research design of correlational type as it attempts to find out socio-psychological factors as correlate of effective service delivery counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. The population comprised all counsellors in Kwara State. Simple random sampling procedure was adopted in this study. The participants for this were randomly selected from 10 local government areas in Kwara State. A total of 10 respondents were randomly selected from secondary schools in each Local Government, making total of 100 respondents.

The instruments that used to collect data for this study were adopted questionnaires on communication skills, time management and effective service delivery on counsellors. The instruments were adopted because they are well established and already validated instruments. So, few selected items were used in this study. The scale format, scoring and other questionnaire attributes were similar with the original scales. The questionnaire consisted of four (4) sections: A, B, C and D. Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents; section B contained 10 items on communication skills scale by [Cameron \(2019\)](#) with reliability coefficient of 0.86; section C has ten items on the time management scale by [Barling \(2016\)](#); with reliability coefficient of 0.79; while section D entails items on

counsellors service delivery scale by Kataria (2016) also has ten items with reliability coefficient of 0.81. The five-point rating format of Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; and Strongly Disagree = 1 would be adopted for all scales. Respondents ticked from the alternatives, options that best represent their opinions.

The instruments for this study were personally administered by the researchers on the respondents in the sampled secondary schools in the selected local governments. The completed questionnaire was collected from the respondents in each of the sample local governments by the researchers. Simple percentage was used to analysed the demographic characteristics of the respondents, P.P.M.C was used to test hypotheses one and two, while multiple regression analysis was used to test hypotheses three and four.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents by gender, age and years in service. It showed that 100 respondents participated in the study. The male participants were 41 (41.0%) while 59 (59.0%) were females; 36 (36.0%) were between 21—30 years, 33 (33.0%) were in the age range of 31—40 years while 31 (31.0%) were 41 years and above. 7 (7.0%) of the respondents has between 1—5 years in service, 31 (31.0%) spent between 6—10 years in service while 62 (62.0%) were has spent 11 years and above in service. The implications of this table revealed that larger percentage of the respondents were females. Also, larger percentages of the respondents were in the age range of 31—40 years and larger percentages has spent 11 years and above in service (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	41	41.0
Female	59	59.0
Total	100	100.0
Age		
21-30 Years	36	36.0
31-40 Years	33	33.0
41 Years and Above	31	31.0
Total	100	100.0
Year in Service		
1 – 5 years	7	7.0
6 – 10 years	31	31.0
11 years and above	62	62.0
Total	100	100.0

The **Table 2** below shows that there was significant relationship between communication skills and effective service delivery of counsellors ($r = .939$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that communication skills significantly correlate effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Relationship between Communication Skills and Effective Service Delivery among Counsellors in Public Secondary Schools in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	N	R	P	Remark
Comm. Skills	44.03	17.65	98	100	.939	.000	Significant
Counslr. Serv. Dlv.	40.13	13.23					

The **Table 3** below shows that there was significant relationship between time management and effective service delivery of counsellors ($r = .627$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that time management is significantly correlate effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State (see **Table 3**).

Table 3. Relationship between Time Management and Effective Service Delivery among Counsellors in Public Secondary Schools in Kwara State.

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	N	r	P	Remark
Time Management	21.98	4.44	98	100	.627	.000	Significant
Counsellors Serv. Dlv.	4.18	1.12					

Table 4 below shows that the independent variables (communication skills and time management) as correlate of effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. The value of R (adjusted) = .827 and R² (adjusted) = .680. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 159.46 and was found to be significant at 0.05 levels (see **Table 4**).

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis of Socio-Psychological as Correlate of Effective Service Delivery of Counsellors.

Multiple R(adjusted)=.827				
Multiple R ² (adjusted)=.680				
Standard error of estimate= 5.111				
	Sum of Square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F
Regression	8331.25	2	4165.63	159.46
Residual	3840.25	147	26.12	
Total	12171.50	149		

Table 5 below shows that each of the independent variables (communication skills and time management) made a significant contribution to effective service delivery of counsellors in Kwara State. In term of magnitude of contribution, communication skills made the most significant contribution (Beta= .511; $t = 9.662$; $p < 0.05$) follow by time management (Beta= .450; $t = 8.513$; $p < 0.05$) (see **Table 5**).

Table 5. Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Dependent Variable

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	T	P
Model	B	Standard error	Beta	
Constant	-1.086	1.557		-.697 0.487
Communication Skills	.608	.063	.511	9.662 0.00
Time Management	.529	.062	.450	8.513 0.00

The data presented in **Table 1** shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents using frequency and percentages. **Table 1** showed the distribution of respondents by gender, age and years in service. It showed that 100 respondents participated in the study. The male participants were 41 (41.0%) while 59 (59.0%) were females; 36 (36.0%) were between 21—30 years, 33 (33.0%) were in the age range of 31—40 years while 31 (31.0%) were 41 years and above. 7 (7.0%) of the respondents has between 1—5 years in service, 31 (31.0%) spent between 6—10 years in service while 62 (62.0%) were has spent 11 years and above in service. The implications of this table revealed that larger percentage of the respondents were females. Also, larger percentages of the respondents were in the age range of 31—40 years and larger percentages has spent 11 years and above in service.

Hypotheses Testing

Research Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between communication skills and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. There was significant relationship between communication skills and effective service delivery of counsellors ($r = .939$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that communication skills significantly correlate effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

Research Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant relationship between time management and effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

The **Table 3** above shows that there was significant relationship between time management and effective service delivery of counsellors ($r = .627$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that time management is significantly correlate effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

Research Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant joint contribution of communication skills and time management to effective service delivery among counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State

Table 4 above shows that the independent variables (communication skills and time management) as correlate of effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. The value of R (adjusted) = .827 and R^2 (adjusted) = .680. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F - ratio value of 159.46 and was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

Table 5 above shows that each of the independent variables (communication skills and time management) made a significant contribution to effective service delivery of counsellors in Kwara State. In term of magnitude of contribution, communication skills made the most significant contribution (Beta= .511; $t = 9.662$; $p < 0.05$) follow by time management (Beta= .450; $t = 8.513$; $p < 0.05$).

The first research hypothesis showed that there was significant relationship between communication skills and effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. The implication of this is that communication skills had significant correlation with effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. This is in support with the findings of Udegbe (2022) which examined the impact of client - counsellor communication on counsellors' performance in 17 counselling centres in Nigeria and found that communication generally affects counsellors' performance to a reasonable extent in counselling centres in Nigeria.

More so, the findings showed that there was significant relationship between time management and service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State.

By implication it means that time management had significant correlation with effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. This is in tandem with that of Njagi and Malel (2022), pointing out a positive relationship between time management and organisational performance or effectiveness. Effective time management by counsellors would help reduce stress at work. The counsellor could therefore deliver his/her duty effectively and efficiently leading to improvement in the general organisational effectiveness. Better time management skills and better time usage will make better effectiveness at the organisation level, and positive effect on organisational behaviours especially organisational effectiveness. It can be argued that time management can be very effective factor against stress. In a similar fashion, concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between time management and the effectiveness of organisations. However, while this study unveiled a weak relationship, revealed a strong positive relationship. It was emphasised that the performance of an organisation is liable to increase as time is being managed well and vice versa.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the results of this study is that the socio-psychological factors had significant relationship with effective service delivery of counsellors in public secondary schools in Kwara State. In respect of this, socio-psychological factors independently and jointly correlated with effective service delivery among the respondents. The results offer new scientific proof that supports the associations between socio-psychological factors and the service provided by counselors. They also shed light on the joint relationship between socio-psychological factors and the service provided by counselors. As a result, improved time management and communication skills lead to more effective counseling and, potentially, better service delivery. In the domain of socio-psychological elements for enhancing counselor effectiveness, these studies explain effective counseling techniques.

Recommendations

The counsellors should be exempted from all other distractive duties so that they can be steadfast and have a focus when communicating to students. The location of the counselling unit should be sited in a very quiet environment in order for effective communication to occur.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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