

Development of Fear of Fieldwork Counselling Practicum Scale

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Abstract

This scale was borne out of observed and expressed needs of trainee counsellors concerning their being sent out for fieldwork counselling practicum exercise. The exercise induces fears into the trainee counsellors. The fear hinges on how they think they would perform at the end of the exercise. These fears cause them loss of weight. The fear stretches from getting a practicum site, obtaining clients for counselling, applying counselling skills correctly, appropriate use of psychological assessment tools, writing reports to submission of the total counselling report. The scale investigates these areas.

Key words: Fear, Practicum, Fieldwork, Counselling

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BACKGROUND

Counsellor education process in Nigeria is not a moment but a process. Trainee counsellors or counsellors-in-training are usually exposed to the theoretical aspects of counselling in the classroom where they are taught different counselling theories, HEheapproaches, skills,

appropriate use of psychological assessment tools, and a lot more to equip them to be good counsellor both theoretically and in practice. They are usually sent out on fieldwork counselling practicum after being taught the theoretical aspect of the course. In Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, counsellor education is of a three-year duration for first degree programme with holders of Nigerian Certificate in Education diploma as qualification for entry requirement into the counsellor education programme. The trainee counsellors' study other general education courses but do not combine counselling with a teaching course. Some Universities do admit students into first degree counselling programme with O'level certificate or its equivalent. These group study counselling for four years to obtain a bachelor's degree in counselling. The trainee counsellors are exposed to a two-year classroom theoretical training. By the end of the second year of their counsellor training, the trainees are sent out for a six-week fieldwork in counselling to put theories and other things they have learnt into practice. They are posted out to counselling settings usually to schools where they are to practice or put into practice the counselling theories and skills they have learnt. In addition to a two-year classroom theoretical preparation, counsellor education institutions further prepare their students by exposing them to a day orientation on counselling practicum. The orientation is like a ritual, the contents are based on what the members of the institution's counselling practicum committee members deem fit to be the contents of such orientation and not based on need assessment empirically determined.

Furthermore, the mere fact that the trainee counsellors will be posted out on fieldwork counselling practicum generates anxiety in the trainee counsellor (Fan, Goshom, and Gosling, 2023), even in the process of counselling (Hatchett, 2004) especially among those who are going out for the fieldwork counselling practicum exercise for

the first time. They need to manage the anxiety emanating from the exercise as it is bound to be experienced (Shamoon, Lappan, and Blow, 2017) Relating to the above is the fact that they will be assigned to supervisors who will supervise and scored them. The trainee counsellors by extention see it as another examination that may determine their moving forward in the programme (Ekwe and Nwamuo, 1997). It is in view of the above that developing an instrument that will help identify areas of counselling practicum trainee counsellors would need a catch up enrichment lectures with and assistance given to them before proceeding into the field if the contents of the orientation is empirically determined via this instrument. For the purpose of developing this instrument some psychological assessment instruments were reviewed as well as reviewing of related literature.

DESCRIPTION

Fear of Fieldwork Counselling Practicum Scale

This scale inventory will provide counsellor educators evidence of possible areas trainee counsellors are likely to experience challenges when they get into the field to practice. It will provide counsellor educators opportunity to determine the source of fear to trainee- counselors with respect to their going out for field work counselling practicum exercise. The instrument titled “Fear of Fieldwork Counselling Practicum Scale” has two parts, A and B. Part A of the scale requests for the bio-`data of the responding trainee counsellors while part B contains five sub-sections. The first sub-section demands to know the pre-practicum sources of fear and it contains 8 items. The second sub-section seeks to identify sources of fear experienced by trainee counsellors at the beginning of a counselling practicum exercise at practicum site and it contains 6 items. The third sub-section contains counselling skills and seeks to find out which counselling skills trainee counsellors have fears in using correctly in the process of counselling. This section contains 17 items. The appropriate use of psychological assessment tools in counselling and record keeping are the contents of the fourth sub-section and it contains 10 items. The fifth sub-section deals with fear emanating from the evaluation of fieldwork counselling practicum exercise. This contains 7 items. In all, part B contains 48 items. The responding trainee counsellors are required to respond on the 4 point Likert scale representing the degree to which fieldwork counselling practicum exercise generates fear in them. Trainee counsellors are expected to respond to all the items sincerely as it pertains to them or affects them. This instrument is designed to obtain information on sources and extent of fear trainee counsellors may experience because of the possible exposure to fieldwork counselling practicum.

USES OF THE SCALE

This Instrument is designed for individuals undergoing professional counselling training at the tertiary education level from bachelor’s degree to doctorate degree levels. This scale is an instrument designed to identify the challenges or concerns/fears trainee counsellors experience as regards fieldwork counselling practicum exercise. It is designed with a view of assisting trainee counsellors identify their areas of difficulties before embarking on the field work counselling practicum exercise. it can also be used for the following purposes:

Diagnostic purpose

The scale when administered on trainee counsellors who are about to go on fieldwork counselling practicum will assist counsellor educators/counselling practicum supervisors to identify the subsection in the scale where the trainee counselors have predisposing challenging issues in the scale. With such identification the challenges can be retouched and addressed during, may be, the orientation of trainee counsellors in preparation for the fieldwork counselling practicum exercise.

Research purpose:

This scale can be used for research purposes, for instance, it can be used to determine areas trainee counsellors harbour fears that they may not be able to do well in those aspects when they go into the field to practice. With this instrument, it can be administered to trainee counsellors prior to the usual practicum orientation given to them before sending them out into the field and areas that kindles fear in them noted and made the contents of the counselling practicum orientation programme. Thereafter, the scale can be re-administered to them and differences in their responses noted to isolate areas of persistent fear as well as areas they have overcome their fears. The scale can also be administered as a post-test after they may have returned from the fieldwork counselling practicum to note the fears, areas that need further attention. Comparing the responses with a later response after the practicum orientation exercise may reveal changes or possible reduction in the level of fear after the fieldwork counseling practicum exercise.

Predictive purpose:

This scale when administered can be a pointer to trainee counsellors who may not be able to do well in the field because of the high level of fear induced by the fieldwork counselling practicum exercise.

Instructional purpose:

This instrument when administered on any trainee-counsellors can be used for instructional purposes in the event that the instrument is administered to them to find out areas they have challenges as maybe expressed by their fears in their responses to the items on the scale.

The identification of these areas of fears or challenges to the trainee counsellors can be an area of special focus in tidying up of the classroom sessions of the counselling practicum exercise. By so doing the re-teaching and emphasis on the areas of challenges are likely to equip the trainee counsellors better and cause them little or no loss of weight in terms of fear for fieldwork counselling practicum.

DEVELOPMENT OF FEAR OF FIELDWORK COUNSELLING PRACTICUM SCALE (FFCPS)

Trainee counsellors are usually sent out on fieldwork counselling practicum after being taught the theoretical aspect of the course in the classroom. The trainees are exposed to supervised fieldwork counselling practicum. The main fact that they would be posted into the field to put into practice the theoretical skills, knowledge, theories and attitudes they were taught during the classroom components of the practicum course generates fear in them which they usually vocalize amongst themselves (Ugwuegbulam, 1997). This condition occasioned the development of this scale. In developing this instrument some psychological assessment tools were reviewed (Iwuji, 1996; Ekennia, 1991, 2018; Odoemelam and Chima, 2013) as well as reviewing of relevant literature (Akinboye, 1987; Ugwuegbulam and Ajoku, 1997; Ukoha and Ugonna, 2021).

FEAR OF FIELDWORK COUNSELLING PRACTICUM SCALE

Personal Data

- Name:
Sex:
Name of Department and institution:
Year of study:
Fieldwork being undertaking:
1st Fieldwork counselling practicum exercise ()
2nd Fieldwork counselling practicum exercise ()

Direction

This Fear of Fieldwork Counselling Practicum Scale was designed to help identify areas trainee counsellors entertain fears that they may experience some challenges in the course of their fieldwork counselling practicum exercise. You are to respond to the items on the scale sincerely as there are no right or wrong answers. You are therefore enjoined to quietly and carefully read through the items on the scale and respond truthfully. Put a tick () within the column that best describes the level of fear you experience concerning going on fieldwork counselling practicum.

Instruction

Please, read each of the phrases below each section and indicate the extent each of these activities induce fear in you with respect to fieldwork counselling practicum:

Very High Extent (VHE)= 4 points;

High Extent (HE) =3 points; Low Extent (LE)=2 points;

Very Low Extent (VLE) =1 point.

Section one:

VHE HE LE VLE . .

D. SD

Pre- Practicum Sources of Fear

1. Attending lectures on introduction to counselling practicum.

2. Taking part in counselling practicum orientation before being posted out for fieldwork counselling practicum exercise.

3. Securing a counselling practicum site for fieldwork counselling practicum.

4. Thinking of the distance from place of abode to counselling practicum sites

5. Thinking of whether I will be accepted at the counselling practicum site for counselling practice.

6. Thinking of how cooperative the people at the counselling practicum site will be.

7. Thinking of who the institution based supervisor will be.

8. Thinking of how to address the possible clients at the counselling practicum site on arrival.

Total score for section 1 is.....

Section two:

Fear Experienced at the Beginning of a Counselling Session

VHE.HE,LE, VLE

1. Obtaining clients for counselling when on fieldwork counselling practicum,

2. Establishing potent rapport during counselling process.

3. Building structure in a counselling session/ relationship.

4. Overcoming a client's resistance at the beginning of a counselling session.

5. Stating counseling objectives when counselling clients.

6. Encouraging client to talk in the process of counselling.

Section three:

Fear in the Appropriate Use of Counselling Skills

VHE, HE, LE, VLE

1. Listening to client in order to communicate receptiveness.

2. Restating clients' statements appropriately during the counselling process.
3. Clarifying clients' thoughts / ideas in the process of counselling.
4. Reflecting on clients' feelings during counseling.
5. Effectively summarizing the goings on in the counseling relationship or session.
6. Using questioning skills appropriately in the counselling process.
7. Using probing skill at the right time in the counseling process.
8. Confronting clients effectively during counselling process.
9. Using personal sharing skills correctly in the counseling process.
10. Using tone setting skills as at when appropriate in a counseling process.
11. Steering counselling sessions by using moderating skills.
12. Enhancing counselling sessions by using interpretation skills.
13. Using blocking skills appropriately in enhancing counselling sessions .
14. Using supporting skills correctly to develop counselling sessions.
15. Applying silence appropriately in a counselling process.
16. Terminate counselling sessions aptly.
17. Terminate counselling relationships at the appropriate time in the counselling process.

Section four:

Fear From Use of Psychological Assessment and Record Keeping Tools

VHE, HE, LE, VLE

1. Selecting appropriate psychological assessment tools for client's cases during counselling.
2. Administer psychological assessment instruments properly following prescriptions in the manual.
3. Scoring psychological assessment instruments correctly.
4. Interpret psychological assessment results correctly.
5. Communicate psychological assessment results appropriately to clients.
6. Writing psychological assessment reports correctly.
7. Filling counselling intake forms.
8. Write counselling reports had with clients.
9. Filling and submitting required number of counselling report forms for assessments.
10. Filling and submitting required number of psychological assessment reports forms for assessments.

Section five:

Fear of Evaluation of Fieldwork Counselling Practicum Exercise

VHE, HE, LE, VLE.

1. Evaluating how my counselling process was conducted via audio tapes/video recordings.
2. Evaluating the counselling outcomes.
3. Meeting with institution's based supervisor periodically for case conferences.
4. Submitting fieldwork counselling materials for assessment on time.
5. Audibility of recorded counselling tapes during review of counselling practicum materials.
6. Visibility/audibility of recorded video tapes of my counselling sessions.
7. Concerned about the score to be earned from the fieldwork counselling practicum exercise.

STRATEGY

There are multiplicity of research strategies which can be used in developing an assessment tool. These strategies include and not restricted to experimental, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, archival research, narrative inquiry, etc (Saunders, Lewis and Thurstone 2015) and each of these can be used for explanatory, exploratory, descriptive studies (Saunders and Lewis, 2018)

In developing this scale, the archival research strategy was adopted. This strategy involves analyzing records and documents as the principal source of data (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). In developing this instrument the sources of information include psychological assessment instruments, books on counselling practicum etc. The response pattern adopted for the items in part two of the instrument is a four-point Likert response pattern. The interval scale of measurement was adopted because it is suitable for data analysis.

This premise is strengthened by the fact that the units of measurement are constant such that difference in any two on the same point on the scale are equal and almost allowable to the use of statistical procedures like the mean, standard deviation (Hair et al 2011)

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

Validity Of The Scale

The validity of this scale was ensured. Validity of an instrument deals with the capturing of a construct by an instrument for assessment. It also refers to the extent or degree to which a measuring instrument measures accurately what it is designed to measure . For this instrument, both face and content validities were ensured. Face validity in the views of Ogoamaka (1998) refers to the extent to which an assessment instrument subjectively appears to measure the variables that it is supposed to measure, which in this instrument are counsellor trainees'

fear or concerns about going out on fieldwork counselling practicum.

Notably, face validity is not statistical or empirical (Osuala and Ihekweba, 2016). The face validity was ensured by adopting the recommendations of Saunders and Lewis (2018) which includes that:

- a. the title of the measuring instrument should be clear.
- b. the instrument should be printed on large font size implying that it should be readable.
- c. instrument to have brief introductory parts which will explain the topic as well as what the responders are expected to do with the instruments.
- d. items on the instrument should be displayed clearly on each page of the instrument.
- e. instruments should be printed on good quality paper.

In addition, content validity of the instrument was also ensured. Content validity deals with the quality of the items in the instrument with regards to soliciting or asking focus questions on the subject matters that are being assessed or investigated (Iwuji, 1999; Ogoamaka, 2007; Onyeka and Onuekwusi, 2019). In this regard, the purpose of the instrument was given to two professors in counsellor education who also have been counselling practicum committee members for a period of not less than three years as well as two professors it measurement and evaluation. These professors read the contents of the scale with the purpose in view and observed areas of improvement. These area of improvement were noted and suggestions effected.

RELIABILITY OF THE SCALE

The reliability of the scale was also ensured. The reliability of an instrument refers to the consistency of results of an assessment instrument from one period of administration to another (Onyeka and Onuekwusi, 2019). To ensure the reliability of the scale, the authors administer the scale twice to 50 counselling students who were ready, qualified and about to go on fieldwork counselling practicum with a two weeks interval between the first and second administration of the scale before they were exposed to the counselling practicum orientation programme. The results of the first and second administration of the scale were correlated using Spearman rank order correlation formula. The correlation coefficient yielded a value of 0.75 which is deemed high enough for the instrument to be used. By this value, the instrument can be said to have stability or that it is dependable to be used.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCALE.

The scale could be administered to a group of trainee counselors who are about to go out or being sent out for fieldwork counselling practicum exercise. It could also be administered to a counselling student who expresses fear

about going out for fieldwork counselling practicum. In any of the circumstances, the administrator of the scale has to administer the scale in a conducive environment or room that is well lite, free from intruding noise; if administered to a group the students should sit at least four feet apart to distance them from possible collusion. When the students are seated and relaxed, the test administrator should read the instruction on the scale audibly and carefully.

In addition, the test administrator should explain the purpose of the instrument. The testees should be informed that there is no pass or fail components that will arise from their responses. The students should be informed that the purpose of the scale is to identify possible areas of challenges they may be facing during the fieldwork counselling practicum exercise and consequently set the stage for the identified areas of challenges to the address before they go out on the fieldwork counselling practicum. Testees should be informed that they can respond to the scale using either pen or pencil and that there is no time limit but they will not be allowed to spend the whole day responding to the items on the scale. Testees should also be informed that there are no right or wrong answer to the scale.

SCORING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FEAR OF FIELDWORK COUNSELLING PRACTICUM SCALE

A 4 point Likert type of scale was adopted as response pattern for this instrument.

In this instrument,

Very High Extent (VHE) is scored 4 points,

High Extent (HE) is scored 3 points;

Low Extent (LE) is scored 2 points.

while a response of Very Low Extent (VLE) is scored 1 point.

The scoring is done section by section. A respondent's score for each section is added up and the total divided by the number of items in that section to determine the mean score for each of the sections. In any section a respondent has a mean score 2.5 and below, such section is regarded as an area of fear the trainee counsellor has and should be given attention to during the counselling practicum orientation programme.

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