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## SOCIAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION | RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Enhancing Professionalism Through Counselling in Public Universities in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study investigated enhancing professionalism through counselling in public universities in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to find out if professionalism predicts counsellor competencies of prospective counsellor in public Universities in Edo and Delta States. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design adopting the correlational approach was used in this study. The population of the study comprised all Masters Students in public universities in Edo and Delta States in the 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 sessions who had completed practicum counselling course. A sample of 89 prospective counsellors was used for the study. Reliability coefficients of 0.914, 0.630, 0.818, 0.691, 0.607, were obtained for competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics respectively for the Counsellor Personality characteristics questionnaire subscale. 0.810, 0.896, 0.796 were obtained for knowledge, skills and behavioural sub-scales respectively for Counsellor Competency Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and Regression analysis were used for analysis of data and testing of hypothesis respectively. The outcomes of the study revealed the following: The level of counselling competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States is high; The five points professionalism do not significantly predict Counselling Competencies. It was recommended among other that professional counsellors should concentrate on the training programme of the prospective counsellors in order to inculcate in students the techniques and ethics of the profession since it has been proven that the five points professionalism do not predict counselling competencies.

**Keywords:** Professionalism, Professionalisation, Competencies, Prospective counselors, Counselling.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The conventional approach of professionalism involves the development of skills, identities, norms, and values, being reliable, setting your own high standards, culture which becomes a way of life and showing that you care about every aspect of one job associated with becoming part of a professional group. It's about being industrious and organized and holding yourself accountable for your thoughts, words and actions (Nilsson & Hertzberg (2024). Professionalism connotes an enhancement of the status and legal dominion of an occupation, its members and these in the practice to have control over the members bringing about the enhancement of their status in the society (Birden, Glass, Wilson, Harrison, Usherwood & Nass 2013).

Aguilar, Stupans, Scutter and King (2012) agree that professional culture is the collective values and viewpoints which express the quality and character of people's actions within an occupation (Reiter, Helgeson & Lee 2018) and are considered a key feature of professionalism. Opponents of this view (Foronda, Reinholdt & Ousman 2016) argue that such a classification suggests professional culture signifies a uniformity in which all exist in the same way, regardless of social power or minority representatives; a situation exemplified by some ethnic minorities who underplayed their cultural



heritage so as to assimilate into existing culture (Kabir 2017), and homogenise with the values of the dominant workforce.

Makely (2017) stresses the importance of distinguishing professionalism as a third logic, distinctive and different from the market and organizations by implication of its occupational, as opposed to the organizational control. Hence, by third logic, (Makely) implies that workers with specialized knowledge and the ability to provide society with especially important services organize and control their own work without directives from management or the influence of free markets. This from-within approach can lead to substantial returns for employees. (Kabir & Rashid 2017) extrapolates this thinking and postulates that professionalism is delineated by the content of the work carried out and consequently, the skills, knowledge and responsibilities necessary for the profession to function; introducing an attitudinal as opposed to functional interpretation. Whether the relationship between the attitudinal and the functional is unidirectional is questioned by (Sullivan & Thiessen (2015), suggesting instead a consequential relationship where the amalgamation of individuals' professionalism influences and shapes the collective professionalism which, in turn, stimulates or provokes a response in individuals that determines their professionalism orientation (Lauder & Neary 2023). Gough & Neary (2020) divides professionalism into two distinct terms: professionalism and professionalisation. Professionalism describes the internal qualities of employees, their values and attitudes, whereas, professionalization encompasses the status and authority of a profession; a distinction (Makely (2017) attributes to locus of control. Also, (Hooley, Percy & Neary (2023) confirmed that the terminology in relation to this distinction is confusing, however, recent usage distinguishes between professionalisation as the pursuit of status and professionalism as the improvement of skills and hence service. Lauder & Neary (2020) added that professionalisation refers to the process of becoming a recognized profession, while professionalism refers to the behavior and qualities expected of professionals.

Makely does not consider a top-down approach as inevitably signifying professionalism. In organisations, top-down approaches describe executive decision making disseminated to those lower in the authoritative hierarchy (Kabir et al., 2017) and which (Aguilar, et al., 2012) considers a cause of deprofessionalisation. With deprofessionalism, the power inherent in managerialism introduces elitism that reduces workers' professional discretion and autonomy, and thus their capacity to act in the best interests of their client (Makely 2017). According to (Nilsson et al., 2024), such measures are in place to ensure accountability and transparency, meaning professional codes define professional responsibilities with ever greater precision. (Birden, et al., 2013) considers these as unobtainable demands that not only damage a profession's "real work" but also introduce consumer distrust as it is the attainment of professional goals that the public uses as measures of professional success (Sullivan et al., 2015). Conversely, (Reiter, et al., 2018) maintains that an employee has the capacity to define their work by exerting the values they accord their role in keeping with personal ideologies, hence influencing a professional culture (Gough et al., 2020).

Counselling is about touching lives in such a way that the result of the impact is seen while you are alive and after departure from this world. There could be behavioural, attitudinal and developmental changes that could bring a transmogrification of an individual (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. 2013). A pastor/imam/traditional healer equally does this despite the fact they have no professional training in counselling since counselling is seen ignorantly as mere advice giving. Therefore, there could be role conflict between a professional counsellor and a religion leader giving spiritual counselling. This could equally affect the professional status of counselling. Again, no programme for paraprofessional counselling programmes is known in the profession as it is today. This would have taken care of associate counsellors or paraprofessionals. (Makely 2017). Against this back drop the study examines enhancing professionalism through counselling

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Conceptual Framework

Interdisciplinary discourse in academic practice arose from certain factors which include the increasing complexity of life which academic pursuit has ever been in the process of grappling with,

and the quest for excellence in meeting human needs. Makely (2017) while proposing the causes of interdisciplinary discourse state that “the industrialization that followed World War II created an unprecedented demand for knowledge”. This suggests that the time came when “old” knowledge was no longer meeting man's needs, and failure to scout for new information and knowledge would reduce man to a level of life which was not current with the trends of history because the pace of industrialization that followed demanded more scientific knowledge. Also, the economic and technical expansion that attended industrialization and its demand for professional expertise contributed to the development of interdisciplinary scholarship. This trend has continued and hardly is there a tertiary institution in which interdisciplinary research or training does not exist. Some of the advantages of interdisciplinary study include the fact that it enhances exceptional qualities of mind and character and an inquisitive, analytical mind, respect for human diversity and individuality (Lauder et al., 2020), it also induces cognitive and academic development and critical thinking. Interdisciplinary research involves the crossing of existing boundaries, and the associated fact that it involves some degree of linking or mixing as opposed to separation (Hooley, et, al., 2023). No matter how wide an academic discipline might be, as a single discipline, it operates within narrow confines. Thus, Kabir (2017) is of the view that fields are somewhat arbitrary, disciplinary divisions do not necessarily provide the best method of packaging knowledge. Interdisciplinary cooperation is essential for useful understanding. In view of this, interdisciplinary research is integrative, it is not exclusive, it is open, and it is not protective or particularistic.

Literature fits into interdisciplinary study because it addresses the concerns of other disciplines. This is because it “spreads into contiguous areas of moral philosophy, history, social studies, philosophy itself, or psychology. This is partly because though literature was not always formally studied, it was always read and itself formed to some degree the tradition of other studies (Aguilar, et. Al., 2012). This underscores the fact that literature simply has a lot to do with other humanities disciplines, and their most distinguishing preoccupations are intrinsically expressed by literature. Further still, Lauder, et, al., (2020) postulates that literature promotes “interdisciplinary concerns and interests... it addresses the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of the life of the mind”. The mind has a life that is not fixed as in physical life. It is the life of the inner self, the very spring of the essence man. The very place where lies what makes us human and different from and superior to other creatures.

Lauder, et, al., (2023) states that “the mind and the will belong first and foremost to the domain of stories”. This explains why myths are man's earliest of rationalizing existence as man found it. It is because of the multidimensional nature of the mind that stories are all encompassing. Disciplines spring the demands of the mind to comprehend life and handle it, but because literature deals with the totality of the mind simultaneously and not in segmented fashion, it is all encompassing and embraces, in fact, it deals with all disciplines and professions at once. This is why literature is flexible, mobile and ideal for interdisciplinary discourse. This may be the reason why its permeation of the school system is not an aberration. The development of professional acumen through interdisciplinary discourse can be affected through the identification and use of related themes to break common grounds of understanding and the cross-fertilization of ideas.

Literature is a widely studied subject in the academic cycles whether for certificate purposes or as a complementary subject. It is critical to realize that when it is complementary (that is, as an aspect of the general studies course) it is meant to meet a specific purpose. In Nigeria, it is taught to bridge the gap between the scientific and the artistic traditions in the school system. Literature for specific purposes, as an off-shoot of the theory of needs analysis, does not imply a new concept of literature as a subject or phenomenon other than what literature has ever been. Basically, literature for specific purposes is an issue of syllabus design and teaching approach, even as English for special purpose is. In literature for specific purposes, the selection of texts and aspects of literature to be taught should reflect the learners' professional need; that is, those necessary inputs that bring awareness of social responsibility, that excite the development of dexterity and the pursuit of excellence. Literature for specific purposes tries to show that there is a great deal between literature and professional ethics. It is ethics, not professional knowledge alone that makes a profession work because professionals need to be made. For a profession to be efficiently practiced, trainees must be trained not only academically and technically, but also humanely.

This is why literature for specific purposes requires a deliberate and systematic integration into the curriculum for trainees in various professions in order to help in making the professionals proficient because a gap must not exist between professional training and social commitment. This gap is partly created by the absence of the humane values that literature for specific purposes can impart. Unfortunately, however, the current literature syllabus for specialized and technical institutions, especially in Nigeria, does not approximate this capacity due to its circumscription in conventional literary studies. The conventional approach treats literature in terms of its definition, literary theory, criticism, etc.

On the contrary, literature for specific purpose deviates from the conventional mode through textual interpretation that is tailored to address specific issues. The remaining part of this paper will buttress the means through which literature negotiates training that can enhance career practice by highlighting the cognitive and affective dimensions of literature. *The Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Literature*

Having seen how literature can be taught in educational institutions, it is important to examine the means through which literature negotiates training. Literature has cognitive and affective dimensions. The cognitive aspect of literature enhances the recognition of literature and its genres. After all, cognition refers to the mental processes involved in learning, it excites thought, reasoning and memory. It also implies reducing a phenomenon to empirical and factual knowledge. Literature qualifies as a subject because it incorporates a unique mode of thought. Literature enhances cognition because the entire human condition is its subject; it does not deal with segmented facets of the human condition. Most disciplines deal with facets of the human condition, or the understanding of elements of nature and reducing them to the advantage of man. But the human condition is not in segments, it is a whole and literature deals with it as such.

The next area in which literature negotiates training is through its affective component. Affect ordinarily means to exert influence, it is a stimulus strong enough to bring about a reaction or a modification of outlook. In literary terms, affect refers to sensation or feeling aroused at the end of the enjoyment of an artistic experience. In every literary experience, affect is not only a possibility; it is an internally automated condition that is innate to literary experience. This is because the creative process involves the transformation of a fantasy or a group of fantasies into a story, play or poem. These fantasies are related to the stages of human growth, which include the oral, anal, phallic, latency, etc. These fantasies form the base of the literary text, what literature does is to “transform primitive childish fantasies into civilized adult, meaning” (Reiter, et, al., 2018).

The creative process equally brings the writer and his audience/society into a form of discourse because the work of the individual artist expresses both his own creative need and that of his society. This is because “The individual artist is born into a specific culture within a given cultural ideology with its store of scientific knowledge” (Kabir, 2017). This implies several things:

1. The artist only fashions his work from what his society gives him. Even modern literature, with all its 'outrageous' manifestation was “licensed” to take its form and content by the society it represents because it only depicted that society.
2. The society (audience) finds its mind, with its fears and hopes, strengths and weaknesses, joys and sorrows, etc. expressed in creative works, and it identifies with it either by agreeing or disagreeing, by being pulled to it or having refrained from it. The myriads of reactions to a text are best imagined because of their personal nature. However, these responses are adaptive, and through them, literature performs its adaptive function (Johnson et, al., 2015). The universe does not present itself to the human mind as a rigid formation that is conquered by stereotype behaviour. The universe contains contingent possibilities to which man needed to adapt. Sullivan (2015) states that there was not enough time for human heredity to cope with the vastness of new contingent possibilities revealed by high intelligence...The arts filled the gap. These contingent possibilities pose difficulties to the human nature and they agitate the mind. Literature, because its effects are personal, incorporates the emotional aspect of human experience when it ascribes passion and value, through which the audience gets mentally and emotionally involved with the characters and situations presented in texts. This is the reason why a response to a text is not a matter of choice.

Affect involves logic and ethics, it concerns itself with aptness and rightness, it subsumes the cognitive and channels it to the general good of man. Literature affects career practice by its presentation of the right and its benefits, and the wrong and its consequences. This does not imply that once that which is right is known by a professional, then he will automatically do it. What this implies is that doing wrong does not mean ignorance of what is right, it is the deliberate decision to do wrong because doing right contradicts the interest of the individual involved at that moment. When literary pedagogy brings an individual to this point, it has laid a good ground for proficient-career practice (Lauder et al., 2023).

### 2.2. *What is professionalism in counselling?*

The core values of professionalism in counseling include the ability to view a human being from diverse and integrated viewpoints, the ability to form a reliable cooperative relationship with a client, and clinical knowledge and skills to perform counselling

### 2.3. *What is professional conduct in counselling?*

They have a duty of care for clients, and by nature of the profession, counsellors are to act in the best interest of their client, promoting client goals, protecting client rights, maximising good and minimizing harm. Following a code of ethics means acting honestly as a businessperson, as well as a counsellor; Five points of professionalism

- a. Professionalism: Competence and skill expected from a professional.
- b. Communication: Ability to communicate ideas effectively.
- c. Teamwork: Lead and contribute to high-performing groups.
- d. Critical Thinking: Solving complex problems.
- e. Ethics: Tackling ethical issues in technology.

### 2.4. *Concept of professionalism*

Professionalism involves being reliable, setting your own high standards, and showing that you care about every aspect of your job. It's about being industrious and organized, and holding yourself accountable for your thoughts, words and actions. What are the Characteristics of a Profession? A summary of them from various sources are given below

- a. In depth training in an intellectual posture
- b. Its services are important to the society.
- c. Professionals have independence on how to perform their jobs
- d. Those in the practice must be certificated to practice.
- e. They usually have an umbrella body.
- f. There is a self regulation that protects practitioners which supports the disciplinary criteria and steps that are capable of censuring, suspending or even removing those who contradict the code.
- g. There must be an ethical code that regulates its relationship with the public, clients and colleagues.

An appraisal of these characteristics in relation to counselling as it is today. To what extent are these characteristics applied to Nigerian trained counsellors in Nigeria is well trained. They obtained first degrees and higher degrees in educational guidance and counselling in reputable universities in Nigeria. They have a very robust syllabus content that can compete favourably with international standards. Although most of the trained counsellors are only found in the academic environment and others in administrative, paramilitary and banking sectors. There is no doubt that counselling is very important to society. One of the factors for success in life is taking the right decision, it counselling is a psychological tranquilizer, a palliative, through counselling, people are saved, people are helped by helping others. Intensive training in observing non-verbal behaviour analysing motives, handling confrontation and through reflective feelings, differences are made in people's lives. The counsellor assists people out of their problems through his/her professional know-how thereby assisting them to

change voluntarily (Foronda, et, al., 2016). Birden, et, al., (2013) averred that counsellors assist people to clarify their ideas, goals and attitudes towards actualisation.

The counselor plays a preventive, rehabilitative and developmental role in an individual's life. The counselor plans to obtain and derive maximum benefit from educational, vocational and other kinds of experience that will enable these individuals to discover and develop their potential (Aminu, 2017).

As at today, this writer is not aware of any certified and licensed counsellor in Nigeria. This is an integral part of professional ethics. It provides guides and standards for the activities of a profession (Larson, 2018). It spelt out professional practice codes and etiquette for professional counsellors in Nigerians minimum institutional and international standards; Part of the conditions for certification as follows.

#### Purpose of Certification

- a. Promoting quality assurance for the profession in Nigeria
- b. Identity to the Nigerian public certified counsellors in Nigeria
- c. A set standard of professional training and profession of counselling in Nigeria
- d. Monitor counsellor education in Nigeria

#### Maintenance of certified counsellors in Nigeria

- a. Partner with accredited counsellor education departments in institutions on standards.
- b. According to the Same Document, the Following Serves the Purpose of Licenses
- c. Regulate and control standards and qualify in professional counselling practice
- d. Ensure adherence to standard codes and etiquette in professional practice for certified and licensed counsellors
- e. Provide security and protection for professional counsellors
- f. Ensure adherence to oath of induction to professional counselling.

These ideas are lofty and will serve to protect the sanctity of the supposed counselling profession, but it is still a mere mirage. Professions like law, medicine, etc spend appreciable time learning the practical aspects of their chosen field. Lawyers for instance spend extra one year for a professional qualification in a law school, those in medicine spend enough time to acquire practical experience. What about counselling? The ability to put into use the theoretical knowledge is what matters in a professional programme which requires extra time, commitment and dedication (Sullivan & Thiessen 2015). The practical experience in counselling programmes in Nigeria today is not enough to qualify a graduate to become a formidable and full time professional that can stand the test of tanning.

### 2.5. Research Questions

To guide the study the following research questions were raised.

- a. What is the level of professionalism competencies of prospective counsellors in public university in Edo and Delta States
- b. Do five points professionalism (competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics) predict counselling competencies of prospective counselors in public university in Edo and Delta States

### 2.6. Hypotheses

The null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance Professionalism (competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics) do not significantly predict the counselling competencies of prospective counselors in public university in Edo and Delta States

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

The research design for the study is a survey research design adopting the correlational approach. This research design is selected because it is a quantitative method of research that determines the

relationship between two or more groups of variables. The population of this study comprises of master's degree students studying Guidance and Counselling or Counselling Psychology, in public universities in Edo and Delta States for the 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic sessions. The sessions were used because the students have done their practicum. The population comprises 89 respondents. The entire population numbering (89) was used as sample size for the study. Moreover, there was no sampling, hence, the data was obtained through a census.

**Table 1. Population of Master's Students in Public Universities in Edo and Delta States**

S/N	Name of School	Session	Number of students at Masters (M.Ed) level
1	University of Benin	2020/2021	14
		2021/2022	10
		2022/2023	22
2	Delta State University, Abraka	2020/2021	19
		2021/2022	18
		2022/2023	16
	Total		89

The researcher used two research instruments and practicum scores to collect data for this study. The first instrument Prospective Counsellors' Professionalism Characteristics Questionnaire (PCPAQ) from the Five Point Professionalism inventory (FPPI) and Counsellor Professionalism Scale developed by the researcher. The second instrument is Counsellor Competency Scale (CCS), adapted from the core counselling competencies developed by Scotland's professional body of Counselling and Psychotherapy (COSCA, 2014). The Counsellor Competency Questionnaire (CCQ) was modified to suit the purpose of the study.

The instrument is in three sections. Section A of the questionnaire consists of personal data of the prospective Counsellors; this elicited information on prospective counsellors' sex, age and qualifications. Section B consists of the Prospective Counsellors' Professionalism Characteristics Questionnaire (PCPAQ), adapted from the Five-point Professionalism Inventory (FPPI) and Counsellor Personality Scale (CPS). Originally, the Counsellor Professionalism Scale (CPS) comprised of 50 items, measuring 10 Professionalism traits. A shorter version of 30 items was developed by the researcher from the (FPPI) and (CPS). The prospective Counsellors' Professionalism Characteristics Questionnaire (PCPAQ) consisted of thirty (30) items Professionalism traits meant to measure five (5) Professionalism traits that are of great concern to the study. Items 1-6 measured competence and skill, items 7-12 measured communication, items 13-18 measured teamwork, items 19-24 measured critical thinking and items 25-30 measured ethics. The scale used the 4-point ratings format 4= Most like me (MLM), 3=Like me (LM), 2=A bit like me (ABLM) and 1=Not at all like me (NALM). Section C is the Counsellor Competency questionnaire, which is to comprehensively measure the competency of the prospective counsellors, thereby rating the competency of the prospective counsellors. The Counsellor Competence Questionnaire comprised of a 30-item questionnaire, assessing three dimensions of competence; knowledge, skills and behaviour. Items 1-10 measured knowledge, items 11-20 measured skills, while items 21-30 measured behaviour. The scale used a 4-point rating format of 1: Very true (VT), 2: Somewhat True (ST), 3: Somewhat Untrue (SU), 4: Very Untrue (VU).

The researcher went to the various schools, with the permission from the head of the department to administer the questionnaire. The practicum scores were collected from the post graduate coordinator. Experts in the field of Counselling psychology validated the instruments, to ascertain the content validity of the instrument. To establish the reliability of the instrument, twenty (20) copies of Counsellors' Professionalism Characteristics Questionnaire (CPCQ) and Counsellor Competence questionnaire to Masters Students of University of the Benin, from the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology. Completed copies of the questionnaires were retrieved from the students. To establish the reliability of the instrument Cronbach alpha statistics was used.

Reliability coefficients of 0.914, 0.630, 0.818, 0.691, 0.607, were obtained for competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics respectively of the Counsellor Professionalism characteristics questionnaire subscale, 0.810, 0.896, 0.796 were obtained for

knowledge, skills and behavioural sub-scale of the counsellor competence questionnaire, using the Cronbach alpha statistics. This shows that the scales are reliable.

Research question 1 was answered with Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). Hypotheses 1, was tested, using Regression Analysis. The practicum scores from the school were standardized for uniformity of measurement metrics. The calculated mean from practicum scores and the mean from the counsellor competency questionnaire were merged and became the composite score for the counsellor competency.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. Research Question 1

What is the level of professionalism competencies of prospective Counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States?

**Table 2. Descriptive analysis of level of professionalism competencies of prospective Counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States**

Variable	N	Sum	X	SD	Scale Mean	Remarks
Professionalism Competencies	81	10805	133.4	10.23	125	Above Average (High)

Table 2 shows the descriptive data with respect to the level of professionalism competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States. Total respondents (N)=81 the sum of their responses is 10805 and they have a mean of 133.4. The mean value 133.4 is greater than the scale-mean of 125 (Mean of 30 items of four points Likert's scale (75) and mean score of 50 for Practicum Score. This implies that the level of professionalism competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States is above average or high.

##### 4.2. Research Question 2

Do five points professionalism (competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics) predict counselling competencies of prospective counselors in public university in Edo and Delta States Professionalism (competence and skill, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethics) do not significantly predict the counselling competencies of prospective counselors in public university in Edo and Delta States.

**Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of five point's professionalism on Counselling Competencies**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	974.739	5	194.948	1.956	.095b
1 Residual	7474.619	75	99.662		
Total	8449.358	80			

$\alpha=.05$ ; Adjusted R square=.056 R square=.115

Table 3 shows the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of five point's professionalism on Counselling Competencies. From the Table (F=1.956,P-Value=.095). Testing at an alpha level of .05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis which stated "that professionalism does not significantly predict counselling competency of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States" is retained. Consequently, professionalism do not significantly predict counselling competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta states.



**Table 4. beta coefficients of the components of five point's professionalism**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error				
(Constant)	148.489	11.102		13.375	.000	
1	Competence and skill,	.681	.520	.171	1.309	.194
	Communication	-.531	.446	-.157	-1.191	.237
	Teamwork	.404	.443	.116	.913	.364
	Critical thinking	-.473	.498	-.113	-.950	.345
	Ethics	-1.114	.434	-.343	-2.567	.012

From Table 4, competence and skill, communication, and teamwork of the component parts of five points professionalism characteristics were found to be not significant, except Critical thinking." Competence and skill" and "Teamwork", were found to be positively related to Counselling Competencies Communication and Ethics was having negative relationship with the dependent variable.

### 4.3. Discussion of Findings

The results obtained in this study are discussed, based on the research questions and the tested hypothesis. The result from research question one showed that the level of professionalism Competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States is high. Thus, this implies that prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States have the knowledge, skills and the right behaviour, which are the major components of competence; they have the skill and ability to understand and perform the professionalism tasks in a suitable way consistent with the expectations of the training they have received from their professionals. It can be concluded that the prospective counsellors in Edo and Delta States understand the professionalism process, have a clear understanding of the counselling profession, understand the professional ethics, have learnt how to apply professionalism skills optimally, they have developed confidence in relating with clients, and developed the competencies needed to handle emotional issues in professionalism, among others.

Hypothesis two which states ' professionalism characteristics does not significantly predict Counselling Competencies of prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States' is retained. The findings from hypothesis two revealed the P-value of 0.095, this suggests that the relationship is not statistically significant at an alpha level of 0.05, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.056 indicates that professionalism characteristics account for only a small proportion of the variation in counselling competencies. Therefore, professionalism is not a reliable predictor of counselling competencies. However, it is important to note that other variables not included in this study could still influence counselling competencies. This implies that the professionalism of the prospective counsellors does not have to do with their counselling competencies; anyone with the five point's professionalism (Competence and skill, Communication, Teamwork, critical thinking, and Ethics) still cannot become a competent counsellor, except he has the right training. Prospective counsellors in Edo and Delta State are competent after receiving their training and adhere to counselling skills and ethics of the profession. This means that a counsellor who is high or low in competence and skill, Communication, Teamwork, critical thinking, and Ethics can still become competent so long as he/she has got the right training.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In view of the outcome of this study, the researcher concluded that: prospective counsellors in public universities in Edo and Delta States are competent. The five point's professionalism characteristics do not significantly predict Counselling Competencies. This implies that the professionalism of the prospective counsellors has nothing to do with their counselling competencies; anyone with the five point's professionalism (Competence and skill, Communication, Teamwork, critical thinking, and Ethics) still cannot become a competent counsellor, except he has the right

training. Prospective counsellors in Edo State are competent after receiving their training and adhered to counselling skills and ethics of the profession.

It has been established from the study that the five points professionalism do not significantly predict counsellor competence; based on this finding, the researcher recommends that professional counsellors should concentrate on the training programme of the prospective counsellors to inculcate in students the techniques and ethics of the profession. There is a need to intensify research on the competence of prospective counsellors or counsellors' trainee, as it is very important to the future of the profession.

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