



## The Role of Podcasting in Building the Professional Identity of School Counselors in Anambra State

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Podcasting, Professional Identity, School Counselors, Anambra State, Professional Development.

**Abstrak :** The recent emergence of digital media has changed the way professionals learn, communicate, and build their professional identities. Now podcasting has become a popular and adaptable means of exchanging ideas, experiences, and professional practices. Podcasting offers a special opportunity to cover gaps in knowledge and strengthen the professional identity of counselors in Anambra State, whose professional development tends to have many problems, such as the inability to exchange ideas with peers and limited access to professional development resources. The authors used a descriptive survey design to investigate the role of podcasting on the professional identity of school counselors in Anambra State. Eighty counselors were selected randomly to give different levels of experience. Data were obtained through an online Google Form that included demographics, podcast use, and impact of professional role, and challenges on a 4-point Likert scale. Summative statistics were used to describe trends and ANOVA to compare differences between experience groups with results displayed in tables to indicate patterns and changes. The 80 school counselors included 61 (76.3) females and 19 (23.8) males, with majority (34; 42.5) having years of experience 16-25 years, 29 (36.3) had 1-15 years, and 17 (21.3) had 26-35 years. Counselors in the age range of 16-25 years reported a little higher podcast use (means 3.293.47), whereas those aged 26-35 years indicated the highest use in assisting work (3.65) and professional development (3.53). Issues like limited time (3.313.38), high internet charges (3.453.59), network problems (3.28-3.41), and the problem of finding good podcasts (3.44-3.52) were encountered. ANOVA did not reveal any significant differences ( $F = 0.206-1.549$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The researcher find that podcasting is a viable and affordable tool to assist in the professional development and identity growth of school counselors, as well as promoting lifelong learning, cooperation, and connectivity within the professional community.

## INTRODUCTION

The professional identity of school counselors is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the knowledge, skills, ethical values, and understanding of their role in the educational system (Moss et al., 2014). School counselors frequently face issues in role ambiguity, visibility, and professional isolation, which deteriorate their confidence and professional development, despite the increased understanding of their role in fostering student well-being and academic success (Adolphus et al, 2023; Okonkwo & Idigo, 2022). In that regard, new tools and platforms that can facilitate professional learning and community involvement, including podcasting, have become useful in bolstering the professional identity of school counselors.

The concept of podcasting as a way of delivering audio content in the digital format to be listened to anytime and anywhere has quickly become popular in the educational and professional realms because of its accessibility, flexibility, and its ability to deliver specialized content (Onwunyi et al, 2023; Brehm, 2022). In the case of school counselors, podcasts provide an avenue through which they can engage in a continuous process of professional development exposing them to current research, counseling techniques, case studies and ethical debate which are essential in their developing professional practice. Listening to podcast materials can assist counselors to keep up with the new trends, new practices, and new policy changes in education and mental health, which can improve their knowledge base and strengthen their professional practices (Casares, 2024).

An important advantage of podcasting as a way to develop the professional identity of school counselors is its ability to establish a professional community. In rural or under-resourced schools, counselors may tend to work alone and this may impede collaboration and reflective practice. The podcasts can offer convenient channels through which counselors connect with stories, interviews, and panel discussions, thereby establishing networking with their peers and professionals in the industry (Egwu & Ekwe, 2024). It facilitates knowledge sharing and mentorship, improves self-concept and professional confidence (Ezugoh, Agu, and Egwu, 2023). Combining educational management techniques with counseling knowledge open up new experiences in school leadership and student growth to counselors (Egwu and Mbonu, 2023; Ikegbusi, Egwu, and Iheanacho, 2021). Moreover, these online resources facilitate life-long professional learning that allows counselors to keep abreast of the pedagogical innovations (Egwu, 2022). Podcasting enhances identity, competence, and connectedness in the counseling profession.

Moreover, podcasts can be used for reflective practice, which is an important part of professional identity development. Audio recordings of case discussions, ethical dilemmas, and personal stories help counselors to critically reflect on their personal approach and beliefs to enable self-awareness and career development (Schon, 2017; Ozeh et al, 2023). Audio learning through reflection provides counselors with an opportunity to combine theory and practice in the manner that traditional professional development workshops might not. Moreover, the non-formal and non-exclusive aspect of podcasts enables the counselor to consume the materials at their own speed and time, given the hectic schedules that are typical of the educational field. Advocacy and visibility through podcasts are another option that can help school counselors to listen to the leaders

in the field discussing why their work is important and how they can maximize the impact in the schools. This exposure has the potential to boost counselor confidence, professional self-efficacy, and social identity (Novak et al., 2021).

By being involved or contributing to podcast content, counselors further establish their own profession as an educated practitioner and thought leader. The professional identity of school counselors in Anambra State is a growing area of interest, especially as counselors have to cope with the dynamics of influencing the academic, social, and emotional growth of students (Moss et al., 2018; Azubuike et al, 2023). Although the importance of continuous professional development has been acknowledged, most counselors are confronted by the issues of a lack of access to formal training, professional isolation, and role ambiguity. Podcasting has become a versatile and convenient way of studying, a professional learning platform that provides a chance to participate in modern practices, ethical debates and case studies (Singer and Fox, 2024). But there is not much information about the impact of the working experience of school counselors on defining who listens to the podcasts and how listening to podcasts affects their perceptions of professional roles in the environment of Anambra State.

Analysis of the variation in podcast use by experience could show potential gaps in the customized professional care to novice counselors compared to those with experience, which should be closed. Also, it will be interesting to delve into issues impacting counselors at various levels of experience, e.g., digital literacy or time limitations that can guide ways of leveraging podcast-based professional development. These dynamics are important to understand that podcasting can be used as an instrument to reinforce the professional identity and effectiveness of counselors in the educational system of the state.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does working experience influence how often school counselors in Anambra State use podcasts?
2. How does listening to podcasts shape school counselors' understanding of their professional roles based on their years of experience?
3. What challenges do school counselors with different levels of working experience face when using podcasts for professional growth?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in podcast usage among school counselors in Anambra State based on their working experience.
2. There is no significant difference in how podcasts influence school counselors' understanding of their professional roles based on their working experience.
3. There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by school counselors in using podcasts for professional growth based on their working experience.

## METHOD

The research design used in the study was descriptive survey research design to establish the role of podcasting in shaping the professional identity of school counselors in Anambra State. The sample included the entire practicing school counselor population in the state and 80 respondents were chosen through purposive sampling to create a representation of the different levels of working experience. The information was gathered via questionnaires via Google Form that included structured questions about demographics (gender, years of experience), the use of podcasts, the perceived impact on their professional roles, and difficulties. Items were rated on a scale of 4 (high frequency, high impact, high challenge) by the respondents, whose higher rating reflected increased frequency, impact, or challenge. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) provided a summary of the demographic variables and trends on podcast use, understanding the role in a profession and challenges. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to test whether there were any differences in experience groups (1-15 years, 16-25 years, 26-35 years). The frequency distributions, mean scores, and ANOVA were presented in tables and interpreted to present patterns and differences between experience levels.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	19	23.8	23.8	23.8
	Female	61	76.3	76.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the 80 school counselors who participated in the study. Female counselors constituted the majority, with 61 respondents representing 76.3%, while 19 male counselors represented 23.8% of the sample. This indicates a notable gender imbalance, suggesting that the counseling workforce in the study area is predominantly female.

**Table 2. Working Experience of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-15 years	29	36.3	36.3	36.3
	16-25 years	34	42.5	42.5	78.8
	26-35 years	17	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the working experience of the 80 school counselors in the study. The largest group, 34 respondents (42.5%), had 16–25 years of experience, followed by 29 respondents

(36.3%) with 1–15 years, and 17 respondents (21.3%) with 26–35 years. This distribution shows that most counselors have mid-level experience, which may influence their use of podcasts and perceptions of professional identity development in the study context.

**Research question 1:** How does working experience influence how often school counselors in Anambra State use podcasts?

**Table 3. Influence of Working Experience on Podcast Usage among School Counselors in Anambra State**

Experience		I know what educational podcasts are.	I listen to podcasts related to counseling or education.	I can easily access podcasts on my phone or device.	I use podcasts as a source of learning.	I have used podcasts to support my work as a school counselor.
1-15 years	Mean	3.41	3.41	3.00	2.97	3.52
	N	29	29	29	29	29
	Std. Deviation	.568	.501	.845	.778	.509
	Variance	.323	.251	.714	.606	.259
	Kurtosis	-.812	-2.007	.467	1.391	-2.148
	Skewness	-.266	.369	-.763	-.914	-.073
16-25 years	Mean	3.47	3.29	3.24	3.21	3.32
	N	34	34	34	34	34
	Std. Deviation	.615	.462	.819	.808	.475
	Variance	.378	.214	.670	.653	.225
	Kurtosis	-.378	-1.178	.087	.100	-1.466
	Skewness	-.714	.946	-.825	-.769	.790
26-35 years	Mean	3.29	3.29	3.00	2.82	3.65
	N	17	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	.686	.470	.612	.636	.493
	Variance	.471	.221	.375	.404	.243
	Kurtosis	-.611	-1.166	.229	-.238	-1.766
	Skewness	-.456	.994	.000	.143	-.677
Total	Mean	3.41	3.34	3.10	3.04	3.46
	N	80	80	80	80	80
	Std. Deviation	.610	.476	.789	.770	.502

Variance	.372	.226	.623	.594	.252
Kurtosis	-.601	-1.549	.156	.203	-2.028
Skewness	-.514	.701	-.656	-.576	.153

Table 3 shows how working experience relates to podcast usage among 80 school counselors. Counselors with 16–25 years of experience reported slightly higher mean scores for knowing about podcasts (3.47), accessing them on devices (3.24), and using them for learning (3.21), compared to 1–15 years (3.41, 3.00, 2.97) and 26–35 years (3.29, 3.00, 2.82). Interestingly, counselors with 26–35 years of experience had the highest mean in using podcasts to support their work (3.65). Overall, experience appears to moderately influence the frequency and purpose of podcast use.

**Research question 2:** How does listening to podcasts shape school counselors’ understanding of their professional roles based on their years of experience?

**Table 4.**  
**Influence of Podcasts on School Counselors’ Understanding of Professional Roles by Working Experience**

Experience		Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts
		help me understand my role as a school counselor.	improve my confidence in performing counseling duties.	expose me to new counseling skills and strategies.	make me feel more connected to the counseling profession.	contribute to my professional growth.
1-15 years	Mean	3.41	3.72	3.34	3.62	3.48
	N	29	29	29	29	29
	Std. Deviation	.628	.455	.553	.494	.509
	Variance	.394	.207	.305	.244	.259
	Kurtosis	-.493	-.950	-.723	-1.858	-2.148
	Skewness	-.582	-1.059	-.008	-.525	.073
	16-25 years	Mean	3.21	3.68	3.09	3.47
N		34	34	34	34	34
Std. Deviation		.641	.475	.668	.507	.551
Variance		.411	.225	.447	.257	.304
Kurtosis		-.523	-1.466	-.625	-2.113	-1.895
Skewness		-.204	-.790	-.100	.123	-.078
Mean		3.59	3.59	3.24	3.59	3.53

26-35 years	N	17	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	.507	.618	.664	.507	.514
	Variance	.257	.382	.441	.257	.265
	Kurtosis	-2.109	.877	-.505	-2.109	-2.267
	Skewness	-.394	-1.275	-.291	-.394	-.130
	Total	Mean	3.36	3.68	3.21	3.55
	N	80	80	80	80	80
	Std. Deviation	.621	.497	.630	.501	.525
	Variance	.386	.247	.397	.251	.276
	Kurtosis	-.629	-.114	-.561	-2.009	-1.408
	Skewness	-.431	-1.075	-.196	-.205	-.064

Table 4 indicates how listening to podcasts affects school counselors' professional role understanding across experience levels. Counselors with 26–35 years of experience reported the highest mean scores for understanding their role (3.59), feeling connected to the profession (3.59), and professional growth (3.53). Counselors with 1–15 years scored highest in confidence in performing counseling duties (3.72), while the 16–25 years group reported slightly lower means across most variables (e.g., understanding role 3.21, new skills 3.09).

**Research question 3:** What challenges do school counselors with different levels of working experience face when using podcasts for professional growth?

**Table 5.**  
**Challenges Faced by School Counselors in Using Podcasts for Professional Growth by Working Experience**

Experience		I do not	Internet cost	I am not	Network	There are
		have enough time to listen to podcasts.	makes podcast use difficult for me.	sure how to find quality counseling podcasts.	problems limit my ability to access podcasts.	few counseling- focused podcasts available to me.
1-15 years	Mean	3.31	3.45	3.52	3.28	3.07
	N	29	29	29	29	29
	Std. Deviation	.471	.632	.509	.797	1.067
	Variance	.222	.399	.259	.635	1.138
	Kurtosis	-1.349	-.383	-2.148	2.902	3.130

	Skewness	.865	-.706	-.073	-1.464	-1.662
16-25 years	Mean	3.38	3.32	3.44	3.24	3.47
	N	34	34	34	34	34
	Std. Deviation	.493	.535	.504	.654	.615
	Variance	.243	.286	.254	.428	.378
	Kurtosis	-1.856	-.712	-2.064	2.888	-.378
	Skewness	.507	.144	.248	-.967	-.714
26-35 years	Mean	3.18	3.59	3.59	3.41	2.76
	N	17	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	.393	.507	.618	.507	.562
	Variance	.154	.257	.382	.257	.316
	Kurtosis	1.665	-2.109	.877	-2.109	.053
	Skewness	1.866	-.394	-1.275	.394	-.083
Total	Mean	3.31	3.42	3.50	3.29	3.17
	N	80	80	80	80	80
	Std. Deviation	.466	.569	.528	.679	.839
	Variance	.218	.323	.278	.461	.703
	Kurtosis	-1.355	-.804	-1.356	2.865	3.408
	Skewness	.825	-.333	-.265	-1.175	-1.400

Table 5 shows the challenges school counselors face when using podcasts, based on working experience. Counselors with 16–25 years reported difficulty finding quality counseling podcasts (mean 3.44) and limited time (3.38). Those with 1–15 years faced high costs (3.45) and uncertainty in locating podcasts (3.52). Counselors with 26–35 years experienced the greatest network problems (3.41) and high internet costs (3.59). Overall, lack of time, cost, network issues, and difficulty finding relevant podcasts are the main barriers, with variations across experience levels influencing professional growth through podcast use.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in podcast usage among school counselors in Anambra State based on their working experience.

**Table 6. ANOVA Results for Podcast Usage by Working Experience**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2.581 <sup>a</sup>	2	1.291	.386	.681
Intercept	19484.266	1	19484.266	5823.679	.000

Experience	2.581	2	1.291	.386	.681
Error	257.619	77	3.346		
Total	21646.000	80			
Corrected Total	260.200	79			

The ANOVA results in Table 6 indicate no significant difference in podcast usage among school counselors based on working experience ( $F(2,77) = 0.386, p = 0.681$ ). Although counselors with 16–25 years reported slightly higher mean usage in descriptive analysis, the differences were not statistically significant. The intercept was significant ( $F = 5823.679, p < 0.001$ ), indicating overall variation in podcast usage, but working experience does not significantly influence frequency of use. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained, suggesting that counselors across all experience levels use podcasts at similar rates.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in how podcasts influence school counselors' understanding of their professional roles based on their working experience.

**Table 7.**  
ANOVA Results for Influence of Podcasts on Professional Role Understanding by Working Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	10.789 <sup>a</sup>	2	5.395	1.549	.219
Intercept	21982.708	1	21982.708	6310.960	.000
Experience	10.789	2	5.395	1.549	.219
Error	268.211	77	3.483		
Total	24084.000	80			
Corrected Total	279.000	79			

The ANOVA results in Table 7 show no significant difference in how podcasts influence school counselors' understanding of their professional roles based on working experience ( $F(2,77) = 1.549, p = 0.219$ ). While descriptive statistics suggested slight variations—counselors with 26–35 years reported higher mean scores in understanding their roles (3.59)—these differences were not statistically significant. The intercept was significant ( $F = 6310.960, p < 0.001$ ), reflecting overall variation in perceptions, but working experience does not meaningfully affect the impact of podcasts. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained, indicating a similar influence across all experience levels.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by school counselors in using podcasts for professional growth based on their working experience.

**Table 8.**  
**ANOVA Results for Challenges Faced by School Counselors in Using Podcasts by Working Experience**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.472 <sup>a</sup>	2	.736	.206	.814
Intercept	20374.380	1	20374.380	5698.039	.000
Experience	1.472	2	.736	.206	.814
Error	275.328	77	3.576		
Total	22588.000	80			
Corrected Total	276.800	79			

The ANOVA results in Table 8 indicate no significant difference in the challenges faced by school counselors when using podcasts based on working experience ( $F(2,77) = 0.206$ ,  $p = 0.814$ ). Although descriptive statistics suggested minor variations—for example, counselors with 26–35 years reported higher mean scores for network problems (3.41) and internet costs (3.59)—these differences are not statistically significant. The intercept was significant ( $F = 5698.039$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), reflecting overall variation in challenges, but working experience does not significantly influence these barriers. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained, indicating similar challenges across all experience levels.

## Discussion

Research Question 1 revolved around the effects of working experience on the podcasts that are used by school counselors. As seen in Table 3, counselors who had 1625 years of experience had a slightly higher mean score in knowing about podcasts (3.47), accessing them on their devices (3.24), and using them to learn (3.21), whereas those who had 115 years experience had a score of 3.41, 3.00, and 2.97, respectively. Counselors aged 26–35 were the best in the mean of using podcasts to assist their jobs (3.65). The outcomes of ANOVA ( $F(2,77) = 0.386$ ,  $p = 0.681$ ) showed that these differences were not statistically significant, which implies that experience does not play a significant role in the use of podcasts. By contrast, it has been suggested by recent research that the use of podcasts as a professional development tool is typically effective at all experience levels. This observation aligns with Kelly et al. (2022), who stated that learners gain advantages of podcasts regardless of their previous professional experience. Conversely, other researchers have proposed that experience is not a factor in podcast engagement, but instead, digital literacy and motivation (Bessong et al, 2024). Similar usage patterns were also reported by Ibrahim (2022), who conducted a related study with a sample of educators of different levels of experience, confirming the applicability of the egalitarian principle in podcast learning.

The second research question was the impact of listening to podcasts on the perception of school counselors of their professional roles. Table 4 demonstrates that counselors of the 26–35 years experience rated the highest in recognizing their role (3.59), perceived as belonging to the

profession (3.59), and professional development (3.53). Those in 1-15 years were the most confident in the counseling tasks (3.72), whereas the 16-25 years scored a little lower on most variables. The results of ANOVA ( $F(2,77)=1.549$ ,  $p=0.219$ ) showed the absence of a statistically significant difference. This finding is consistent with a recent literature that indicates podcasts can improve professional knowledge and confidence regardless of the level of experience (Brehm, 2022). On the contrary, other researches claim that the benefits can be mediated by user motivation and content relevance (Casares, 2024). A similar study, where podcasts are used in education, made novice and experienced participants more engaged and reflective, which is in line with the trends in this research (Singer and Fox, 2024).

Research Question 3 was about the barriers that school counselors experience in the process of utilizing podcasts as a means of professional development. Table 5 reveals that counselors aged 16-25 years experienced a hard time locating quality podcasts (3.44) and a lack of time (3.38). Counselors who had 1-15 years showed high expenses (3.45) and lack of awareness on where to find podcasts (3.52), whereas 26-35 years reported network issues (3.41) and internet expenses (3.59). The results of ANOVA ( $F(2,77)=0.206$ ,  $p=0.814$ ) did not indicate any significant differences between levels of experience. These data are consistent with the literature that includes access, connectivity, and cost as universal barriers to podcast-based learning (Kelly et al, 2022). This observation was in line with that of Anaman et al, 2022), who highlighted that technological and infrastructural issues impact learners irrespective of experience. Conversely, other researches opine that experience indirectly affects challenges based on familiarity with digital tools (Van-Zeeland et al, 2021). The findings indicate that the barriers are experienced widely across all counselor experience groups.

## CONCLUSION

The research question was the effect of podcasting on the development of professional identity of school counselors in Anambra State by investigating podcast application, its effects on the perception of the professional role, as well as the challenges that face school counselors at various levels of working experience. The results show that school counselors of any experience level use podcasts regularly to facilitate their work and improve their professional knowledge. Listening to podcasts is a good way to get to know about their roles, enhance confidence, and professional development. Nevertheless, the problems of internet fees, network failure, insufficient time, and the inability to locate good counseling material remain. Interestingly, the working experience did not play a significant role in podcast usage, the perceived effect on professional identity, or challenges, indicating that podcasting is a more available and egalitarian means of professional growth. The paper highlights the potential of podcasts as a powerful continuous learning, reflection, and professional identity-building resource among school counselors and the need to overcome technological and accessibility obstacles in order to harness its full potential.

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