INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING IN PROMOTING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND STABILITY AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS IN NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the Influence of Counselling in Promoting National Integration and Development for Peaceful Co-Existence and Stability among Ethnic Groups in Nasarawa State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was used for study. The sample consisted of 381 respondents from a population of 56,428 people across ethnic groups in Nasarawa State. A self-developed questionnaire titled: Influence of Counselling in Promoting National Integration and Development among Ethnic Group in Nasarawa State for Peaceful Co-Existence and Stability questionnaire (ICPNIDAEDNSPCSQ) was validated by two experts and was administered to respondents. The co-efficient of 0.81 Data collected were analyzed using percentages and one sample T-test. The result showed that counselling has significant influence on Promoting National Integration and Development for Peaceful Coexistence among Ethnic Group in Nasarawa State. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that counsellors should play integrative and unifying role among the ethnic groups in the society, in binding all ethnic groups together in time of crises communal clashes, conflicts and confusion and one of cardinal principle of Counselling should emphasize on the necessity of peace and unity of the individual and group (society). Counsellors should emphasize on the integrating harmonious and peaceful co-existence and the need for healthy social interaction among ethnic group so that together we can fight against eradication of violence and oppression in the state.

Keywords: Counselling, National Integration, Ethnic group and Development.

Introduction

Has the ethnicity problem impacted the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of Nigerian society as a whole? If yes, how has it impeded national integration and progress in the country? Looking back, it's clear that people's illogical beliefs arise from repeated internal monologues such as "I and my ethnic group are good and you and your ethnic group are

bad" (Agbakwuru, 2013). A wide variety of languages and cultures coexist in Nigeria's cosmopolitan society. In the struggle to distribute limited resources among her inhabitants, this multicultural society—which is home to over 250 distinct ethnic groups—often becomes a "do or die" narrative. Without the knowledge or agreement of these ethnic groups, the British united them in 1914 to establish the Nigerian state. To this day, this is still one of the biggest obstacles to national cohesion and development, as well as the construction of a robust nation. So, it's not necessary to beat a dead horse when it comes to the reality that since independence, Nigeria's pursuit of national integration and development has been fraught with peril and difficulty, particularly in light of the fact that political leadership in the country has a tendency to prioritize ethnic allegiance and loyalty in the electoral process. According to Utulu (2013), all parts of Nigerian society have been consumed by political violence, cult activities, and ethno-religious conflict since the return to civilian rule in 1999. There is no denying that the ethnic imbalance in our leadership elections and resource distribution is the root cause of the sectarian violence that plagues the Nigerian state.

A state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual understanding and programs is what Jacob and Tenue (1964) mean when they say national integration. It's a relationship of community among people inside the same political body. Thus, they are alluding to a community of unity whose members are prepared to coexist peacefully, work together, and face a common fate. It has also been defined as: the process through which individuals within a social system form connections that allow the system's boundaries to endure and the boundaries of sub-systems to have less of an impact on behavior as time goes on. Members of the social system go through an increasing cycle of interaction, collaboration, agreement, and community as a result of this process (Diez, 2017). The scope of national integration encompasses a wide range of interpersonal dynamics and mindsets, According to Shamaija and Coser (2017), when people from different social and cultural backgrounds come together to form a single nation, they are engaging in national integration. It takes for granted that we live in a multicultural society where different peoples' languages and other culturally aware traits define them. It further assumes that different groupings can be considered part of a political unit. So, the issue of national integration is how to foster a feeling of territorial nationalism that is more important than or equal to local allegiances. Filling the gap and reducing misunderstanding and conflict that can lead to disintegration requires connecting the government with the governed, leaders with the led, and the led with the led. Integrative behavior, or the ability of individuals in a society to work together toward a common goal, is another issue, as is the minimal worth of economic and political resources, which contributes to the legitimacy of the polity.

Oluwatoyin and Orisa (2011), as a whole, a nation or state develops when its citizens experience progress in all areas of life, including economics, politics, and religion. When a nation or nations are able to provide social amenities like medical care, transportation, clean water, and high-quality schools to their citizens, they are said to have developed nationally. The

counsellor and counselee form an interpersonal bond in Counselling. According to Johnson (2021), Counselling involves a person-to-person or face-to-face interaction between a counselor and a client to address educational, occupational, social, recreational, or moral issues. In Counselling, according to Okeke (2019), the therapist works with the client to help them grow into their full potential by drawing on his or her extensive training and experience in the field. Enhanced capacity to manage daily challenges and do daily tasks. Development and otherwise The role of the counsellors in Nasarawa State is twofold: first, to help the many ethnic groups within the state become more stable, and second, to offer services that can contribute to the development of society as a whole. Positive behavioral change is the ultimate goal of counselling, which strives to assist the client in leading a fulfilling and fruitful life. Achieving adjustment and fulfillment in key life decisions is one of the goals of Counselling. Why? Because in Counselling, the emphasis is on the client's wants and issues, and the therapist teaches the client how to address those needs.

Ethnic groups in Nasarawa State would be able to learn about their issues and how to fix them through Counselling, according to Okeke (2012). The counselor's goal is to help clients develop an awareness of themselves while also assisting them in participating in mutual programs, learning about the world around them, recognizing their place in it, and adapting to socially acceptable behaviors. In light of the difficulties we currently face, the counselor's approach will be to lead clients on a path of self-discovery, encouraging them to question and replace their existing value systems with those of a more inclusive and equitable society. This, in turn, will help clients overcome personal obstacles and fulfill their unique roles within it. According to Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004), national integration and growth for peaceful cohabitation can be achieved through Counselling, which is a helping relationship. During the course of this investigation, the researcher took into account two schools of thought. The first of these was Albert Ellis's (1963) Cognitive Model of Crisis Intervention, which holds that "crises are rooted in faulty thinking about the events or situation that surround the crises" rather than in the events or facts associated with them. To reduce panic and lawlessness, the model's interventionist prescription calls for practitioners (such as social psychologists, counselors, community and political leaders) to collaborate in communicating with those impacted by crises and insecurity in an effort to alter their perspective on the situation. Second, there's the realistic conflict hypothesis, which posits that groups become hostile toward one another when they compete head-on for few but valued resources. Because of this, it's not uncommon for members of certain ethnic groups to experience bias when competing with members of other groups. While certain ethnic groups experience greater success, others feel threatened and react defensively, leading to feelings of frustration and resentment among the former. Wars break out in this setting (Et al. Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

There is a major threat to national unity and development in Nigeria due to the ethnic

group's diversity, according to observations. Strong national integration was anticipated after Nigeria's independence in 1960 to help Nigerians develop a sense of national identity. The apparent cause of the civil war was the consolidation of tribal politics. When Ethiopia (2014) says that ethnic groups in Nigeria are only somewhat loyal to the government, it shows how worried he is about the system's inability to foster peaceful cohabitation and stability. As a result of tribal dominance in Nigerian political parties, there has been an upsurge in intercommunal or ethnic animosity and even open violence, and the persistent grievances of marginalization are indicative of a dwindling feeling of belonging in the land. There was a lack of national integration, which was intended to be striving for a common language that would link all Nigerians, and voting was conducted along tribal lines and interests. Nigerians should have been more culturally and nationally integrative. Some have argued that in order for Nigeria to achieve national integration, ethnic groups Counselling should focus on helping people reorganize themselves socially, psychologically, and emotionally so that they can live peacefully alongside one another. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to analyze how Counselling in Nasarawa State has impacted efforts at national integration and the cultivation of peaceful coexistence among various ethnic groups.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, this study proposes to do the following:

(i)   investigate the impact of Counselling on national integration and development in order to promote peaceful coexistence among the many ethnic groups found in Nasarawa State.

(ii)   Counselling factors that impact national growth and integration

Research Questions

(i)   Is there a correlation between Counselling and improved opportunities for ethnic groups in Nasarawa State to live together in harmony?

(ii)   How can a counselor use certain Counselling variables to impact national integration and development?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study;

Ho$_1$: Counselling has no significant influence on national integration and development in Nasarawa State.

Ho$_2$: Variables used by counsellor have no significant influence in promoting national integration and development.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design for its research. This design, according to Anikweze (2013), involves collecting data from a random sample of the target population within a short period of time. The reason for this is that descriptive surveys need data collected

at a specific time from a large sample in order to describe a population that is representative of the sample at that time. There are 56,428 male and female participants from 5 different ethnic groups in Nasarawa State that make up the population of this study. In this study, a total of 381 participants were chosen for the sample based on the criteria laid out in the Research Advisor (2006) Table for selecting samples from certain populations. The researcher employed a purposive selection technique to choose five ethnic groups from the area—the Gwandara, Eggon, Mada, Alago, and Gbge—to arrive at this sample size. This study used the Nasarawa State Questionnaire on the Impact of Counselling on National Integration and Development for Peaceful Coexistence (IGCNIDAEGPCQ) as its research tool. Section 'A' of the survey asked for participants' personal information. Part B of the survey had three questions with four possible responses: strongly agree, disagree, and very disagree. The alternatives' values were 4, 3, 2, and 1 in that order. The mean score required for admittance was 2.50. We did not accept any item with a score below 2.50. The validity method made sure that the questionnaire was legitimate in both appearance and substance.

The investigator submitted it for content and face validity testing to a psychologist and a guidance and Counselling specialist from Nasarawa State University. Their feedback was useful for both rephrasing and cutting out unnecessary details. With the assistance of research assistants, the researcher personally went to each of the ethnic groups that were sampled and handed out copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. We clarified the unclear purposes of the instrument and the study. Since the material would be utilized exclusively for study purposes, the researcher has made an appeal for cooperation. To answer the study objectives, the data was analyzed using percentages to present frequency tables, mean score, and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested using one sample t-test statistics at a significance level of 0.05. The one-sample t-test was selected for its suitability as a non-parametric inferential statistical tool for the examination of nominal or frequency data. A correlation coefficient of 0.81 was produced by the formula. Given this, the device was deemed very dependable for the investigation. The tables that follow display the outcomes.

Results

The results of the study are therefore, presented as follows:

The distribution of respondents on the basis of gender and ethnic groups

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	47.2%
Female	201	52.8%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that out of 381 people sampled, 180 (47.2%) were males while the (52.5%) were females.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Ethnic Group

Ethnic	Frequency	Percentage
Gwandara	80	210%
Eggon	60	15.7%
Mada	41	10.8%
Alago	120	31.5%
Tiv	80	21%
Total	**381**	**100%**

Table 2 indicates that out of 381 ethnic groups sampled, 150 (30%) were Gwandara, 150 (20%) Eggon, 120 (30%) Alago 20 (30%) Mada (20%) and 80 (30) were Tiv.

Research Question 1: What influence does counselling have on promoting national integration and for peaceful coexistence and stability development among ethnic groups in Nasarawa State?

Table 3: Mean score on influence of counselling on promoting of national integration and development for peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups in Nasarawa State

S/N	Statements	N		Std	Remark
1	Through cooperation people will promote national integration and development	381	3.40	0.76	Accepted
2	Counselling will help promote national integration by encouraging people togetherness.	381	3.45	0.82	Accepted
3	Through counselling spirit, National integration and development will be promoted among ethnic group	381	2.78	0.81	Accepted
4	Ethnic group will strife to internalize through Counselling to integrity	381	3.10	0.81	Accepted

According to Table 3, the average scores were 3.40, 3.45, 2.78, and 3.1.0 with standard deviations of 0.76, 0.82, 81, and 0.81, respectively. Our results demonstrate that the mean sores are higher than the decision cut off point, leading us to believe that Counselling can help Nasarawa state residents become more integrated as a nation and foster growth toward harmonious cohabitation.

Research Question Two: What are counselling variables employed by counsellor to influences national integration and development?

Table 4: Mean score and standard deviation on influence of counselling variables on national integration and development in Nasarawa state

S/N	Statements	N		Std	Remark
5	Group Counselling to people to participate in cultural and fishing festivals encourage national integration and development will be promoted	381	3.20	0.80	Accepted
6	Sports and game festivals will promote national integrations and development	381	3.30	0.84	Accepted
7	When we accept the spirit of togetherness and to be our brother's keeper national integration and development will be promoted	381	2.75	0.90	Accepted

The average scores were 3.20, 3.30, and 2.75 on the scale from 0.80 to 0.90 (standard deviations) in Table 4. Counselling variables cultural fishing, sports, and gaming festivals have an impact on encouraging national unity and growth in Nasarawa state for peaceful coexistence, as the mean sores are over the decision cutoff limit of 2.50.

Hypotheses Analysis One

Group counselling has no significant influence on promoting national integration and development for peaceful coexistence and stability among ethnic groups in Nasarawa State.

Table 5: One sample t-test Statistics on significant Influence of counselling on national integration and development in Nasarawa state.

S/N	Statements	N	Std	t	df	t-cri	Remark
1	Group through cooperation people will promote national integration and development	381					
2	Group counselling will help promote national integration by encouraging people togetherness	381	3.45	0.82	90.3	380	0.81	Significant
3	Through group counselling spirit, National development will be promoted among ethnic group	381					
4	Ethnic group will strife to internalize through Counselling to integrity	381					

In Table 5, we can see that the t.cal value is 90.3 and the t.cri value is 0.081. Accordingly, the null hypothesis, which posits that Counselling does not significantly impact fostering national integration and development in Nasarawa state for peaceful coexistence, is rejected, as

the t.cal value of 90.3>0.000 t.cri value. In conclusion, Counselling plays a crucial role in fostering national integration and fostering progress toward harmonious cohabitation and stability among Nasarawa State's ethnic groupings.

Hypothesis Two

Counselling variables has no significant influence on national integration and development in Nasarawa state.

Table 6: One sample t-test Statistics on significant Influence of counselling variables on national integration and development in Nasarawa state

S/N	Statements	N	Std	t	df	t-cri	Remark
1	Group counselling encourages in cultural and fishing festivals for national integration and development will be promoted.	381					
2	Sports and game festivals will promote national integrations and development.	381	3.30	0.82	74.84	380	0.81	Influence
3	When we accept the spirit of togetherness and to be our brother's keeper national integration and development will be promoted.	381					

In Table 6, we can see that the t.cal value is 74.84 and the t.cri value is 0.000. That the Counselling variables do not significantly impact national integration and development is shown false by the fact that the t.cal value of 74.84>0.000 t.cri value. Cultural, athletic, and gaming festivals are examples of Counselling variables that have a substantial impact on the growth of national integration and the promotion of harmonious cohabitation and stability among the many ethnic groups residing in Nasarawa State.

Discussion of Findings

The first study question and hypothesis states that Counselling can help the ethnic groups in Nasarawa State integrate and evolve as a nation, which in turn can lead to peaceful cohabitation and stability. They probably think that peace is necessary for growth to be possible. We find evidence that supports Johnson's claim that Counselling significantly affects national security and integration (2021). The study's findings that Counselling and good education immediately affect a nation's greatness, unity, and prestige are also ones with which I agree. Nasarawa State Government reports from 2006 cover a wide range of subjects, including ethnic diversity, interethnic disputes, cultural exchange programs, economic growth, and government initiatives. Possible contributors to the outcomes include historical events, cultural norms, economic disparity, government initiatives, and public engagement. According to the

second research question and hypothesis, Counselling variables like cultural, fishing, sports, and gaming festivals greatly affect national integration and development, which in turn promotes peaceful cohabitation and stability among the various ethnic groups living in Nasara State. Our research backs up Miller's (2015) findings that getting more Nigerians to celebrate the national holiday will be good for the country's economy. Festivals bring people together and can empower them to feel pride in their nation and their place in it. On top of that, it could help people learn about and appreciate one another's cultures. The present situation is due to a combination of cultural, social-economic, governmental, and policy factors.

Conclusion

The government places a premium on promoting national unity in a multicultural and diversified nation like Nigeria and Nasarawa State. It is either essential to a nation's development or provides a strong basis for it. Emerging nations share a common thread: the fight for national unity and progress. Involvement from the state might speed things up or slow them down. Her policies, programs, and inactions could lead to discontent, animosity, retaliation, and poor morale among her ethnic community. The government of Nigeria must hasten the country's integration and development.

Recommendations

1.   During times of crisis, community conflicts, disagreements, and misunderstanding, counselors should step up and bring people of various ethnic backgrounds together.

2.   Counselling should include a core component of highlighting the importance of unity and harmony within communities and among individuals. Constructive social engagement between people of diverse ethnic backgrounds is important if we want to remove oppression and violence in our state. The goal of Counselling is to encourage this.

3.   Counselors should stress the significance of tribal and cultural unity and state-wide integration. No other strategy has been found to foster national unity and harmony like this. Progress, harmony, and collaboration were achieved amongst individuals of diverse ethnicities and tribes.

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