COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND RELIGIOS-ETHNIC TOLERANCE IN THE SOKOTO EAST SENATORIAL ZONE OF SOKOTO STATE

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Abstract

The paper focused on community counselling and religious-ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state, It discussed the concept of culture, religion and community counselling, descriptive survey research design were used in the study, the population consist of all traditional rulers, religious leaders, councilors and staff of social welfare departments across eight (8) local government areas in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto. A sample of 200 participants were purposively selected thus comprised 25 participants from each local government, which comprises of 5 traditional rulers, 5 religious leaders, 10 councilors and 5 social welfare departments staffs. A researchers' designed instrument was used for the study. Frequency, percentage and chi-square statistics were used in analyzing the data generated for the study. After the analysis the result indicated that; there are community counsellors and counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone, there is significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone and there is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.Finally, conclusion and recommendations were made which include; there is need for the sustenance and improvement of community counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state. Religious leaders need to intensify effort in mobilizing, sensitizing and training people on the importance of religious tolerance.

Keywords: *Religion, ethnic, tolerance and Community Counselling.*

Introduction

Community is defined as a population, a neighborhood, a city or town, a clan, local government, a state or nation at large. It is an area being served by the school. It possess the following characteristics; membership, status/image, unity of interacting relationship among members, norms, rules and codes of behaviour (Denga, 2011). Community counselling is therefore a process in which a specialist counsellor undertakes to assist another person in a person to person/ group of people or face to face encounter in the community. The assistance may take many forms which includes educational, vocational, social, recreational, emotional and or moral, and this could be organized in groups or individually in the community to address issues that affect the community and its members.

Egbo (2009) asserts that guidance programmes should help clients in reaching rather, two opposite goals: adjustment to society, and freedom to act as unique individuals. Guidance is also defined as a programme of service to individuals based on the needs of each individual; an understanding of his immediate environment and the influences of the factors on the learner and unique features of the school. This is why guidance assists each pupil to understand himself, accept himself and live effectively in his society in addition to having learning experiences about his world of work. Pupils' right from school start preparation for the world of work and should be properly guided in educational, personal –social and vocational spheres of life in order to make right choices. Egbo also upholds that guidance in everyday language has always carried the connotation of help given to an individual or group of individuals in areas like personal, social, educational and vocational which are designed to ensure meaningful adjustment in their existence.

Counselling is a relationship characterized by mutual respect, effective communication, genuine and complete acceptances of the client

by the counsellor and concentration on the needs, problems and feelings of the clients. It is also relationship that facilitates growth and changes in the client to become more freely and fully functional. It is a major service that is incorporated in guidance which is an interactive process between a counsellor and the client, meant to enhance proper self-understanding for the client to have better behavioural changes. There are several components of community counselling as perceived by Morris (2006) which include Provide advice and consultation to a community's caregivers to increase access to mental health care. Identify high-risk populations. Reduce the incidence of mental disorders at an individual level. Develop preventive services to reduce relapses. Recognize the value of the community and its ability to buster positive mental health and develop effective programs.

Broadly, social heritage of a group (organized community or society), it is a pattern of responses discovered, developed, or invented during the group's history of handling problems which arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment. These responses are considered the correct way to perceive, feel, think, and act, and are passed on to the new members through immersion and teaching. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It encompasses all learned and shared, explicit or tacit assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, norms, and values, as well as attitudes, behavior, dress, and language.

Egbule (2009) opined that Community counselling is a service established on humanitarian ground. It deals with understanding of the nature of the community with respect to educational, vocational and socio-personal guidance of the individuals in the community. Community counselling is relevant to Nigerian context today because of the following reasons; it provides educational guidance to individual members of the community, helps members to develop skills in reading and other vocations, it provides parents with current and up to date information about their children, it provides vocational guidance to both students and other members of the community as well as personal social

services (Egbule, 2009). He further stated that to establish community counselling, the following procedure should be followed; publicized the counselling to the people, cooperative planning between community heads and counsellor, focus on the interest and objective of the community, community leaders should be involved in the organization of the programme, adequate materials should be provided, competent personnel should include as well as community members should be involved in the counselling programme.

Community counselling is attributed to many challenges in Nigeria which include: shortage of trained counselling personnel, lack of awareness on the importance of counselling outside the school system, poor attitude of some counselling personnel, inability of practicing counsellors to incorporate adequate services in the centres, poor technical know-how as well as lack of therapeutic skills on the part of counsellors, lack of school training programme for community counselling and lack of counsellors initiative and administrative skills in the area.ToEgbule (2009) Major aspects of community counselling include; individual counselling consultations, organization of paid conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums, training programmes in skill acquisition for various members of the community, consultancy services in educational, social, business management, recreational, vocational, friendship, associations and research aspect.

Many people find their religious faith to be a source of comfort and solace. They may find that believing in a higher power gives their life meaning and provides them with a set of standards or moral code to live by. Religious faith may make it easier for some to cope with challenges in life and practice compassion toward others. However, some religions may deviate from their outlined doctrine, operate under principles that can be harmful to mental or physical well-being, or discourage individuals from expressing certain aspects of their nature. When this is the case, a person may begin to question or doubt aspects of faith, which can lead to emotional and mental distress (Behere, Das, Yadav&Behere, 2013).

Religion is regarded as an organized system of beliefs that typically relates to one's faith and trusts in a higher power, is a defining characteristic of the way many people live and make decisions. A person may base a number of life choices on religious views, but when aspects of a person's life conflict with religious ideals, it may be difficult to reconcile the two, and doubt and distress may result. Religious tolerance as a means for peace can also be achieved through the activities of religious organizations in the country. The various religious leaders through their sermons, preaching and exhortations can promote religious tolerance. Example abound, in 2002 Nasrul-Lahi-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) sponsored a peace initiative to promote religious harmony and unity in the country. The Mountain of Fire Ministries (MFM) and the Deeper Life Bible Church welcomed and participated in this peace initiative (Oso, in Liman &Dange, 2019). These are some of the examples by which the various religious groups in the country contribute and promote religious tolerance.

Religion can have a significant impact on the way a person lives and experiences life. A person who is religious may find a number of areas in life to be at least somewhat influenced by their beliefs (Cooper-White in Liman &Dange, 2019). A person may develop faith in accordance with childhood beliefs or as a result of personal searching. Some individuals may experience persecution or discrimination as a result of their belief system. Others might have certain beliefs imposed upon them by family, friends, or intimate partners and feel obligated to uphold these beliefs, even when they differ from personal views. Individuals may choose an intimate partner through their church, or make the decision to marry and have a family based on their religious beliefs and views. A person's friendships or relationships with family members may also be impacted, positively or negatively, by their belief system. When a person is challenged by religious beliefs, finds that they lead to uncharacteristic actions, or experiences mental distress as a result of internal doubt or external persecution, the support of a therapist or other mental health professional may be recommended.

Kersting (2003) observed that many people find their religious faith to be a source of comfort and solace. They may find that believing in a higher power gives their life meaning and provides them with a set of standards or moral code to live by. Religious faith may make it easier for some to cope with challenges in life and practice compassion toward others. However, some religions may deviate from their outlined doctrine, operate under principles that can be harmful to mental or physical well-being, or discourage individuals from expressing certain aspects of their nature. When this is the case, a person may begin to question or doubt aspects of faith, which can lead to emotional and mental distress. Adeniyi (1993) defines religion as the consciousness of one's dependence on transcendent being and the tendency to worship Him. To him religion is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being. Peter (1988) sees it as a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seems uniquely realistic.

Religious Tolerance: Religious tolerance the inverse of religious intolerance, it is the quality of tolerating or enduring others peoples' religious beliefs different from one's own. It could also means the ability to endure or accommodate peoples from other religious beliefs different from one's religion. In essence, there is religious tolerance when a particular group accepts or accommodates the views, opinions of other opposing religious adherents. According to Maishanu (2007), religious tolerance is mostly developed as a result of mutual respect.

The causes of religious intolerance, according to Fan, Jerry and Nnaraonye (2014) include: religious bigotry, religious indoctrination, factionalism within a religious group, power tussles, ignorance and misunderstanding of the central teaching and practices of the different religions as well as Government interference in religious matters. A religious conflict can be brought about by religious intolerance. That is, when one religious group is unable to accept the beliefs, values and practices of another religious group, it breeds acts of intolerance and subsequently conflict.

To improve religious tolerance in Nigeria, Okediji (1982) calls for the establishment of a more humane social order. To him, this can be achieved through increased utilization of the intellectual resources of the land by encouraging social research and using the results for solving social problems, which of course include those relating to inter-group relations. Similarly, there is the need to mobilize Nigerians who are divided along religious diversities in the task of national development Ethnic tolerance can be define as a positive act of individual or group citizens to put up their differences with respect to the cultural and tradition practices, history and values, and physic-biological aspects for a greater political aims. However, often research are pertains to immigrants than native ethnic groups (Cote & Erickson, 2009).

A group of individuals with a shared culture can be classified as an ethnic group. Ethnicity is a classification given when people identify themselves as being a part of an ethnic group, establishing their cultural and ethnic identity. Cultural identity is a construct that encompasses a person's "cultural practices, values, and identifications" (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, &Szapocznik, 2010). A component of cultural identity, ethnic identity can be defined as "an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that membership" and is influenced by the experience of acculturation.Various conflict, wars, or issues are basically due to the absence of tolerance attitude, for example, the conflict between white and non-white, majority-minority conflict in most part of the world, or war that occurred between nations, or religious differentiation. AsFuredi (2012) noted, because the world has change, so do tolerance, but it is not for a better. This is merely due to misleading model of tolerance in the western world as acknowledge by Kymlicka (2012). As quoted on American philosopher, Michael Walzer (1997) "toleration makes difference possible; difference makes toleration necessary".

Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state consists of eight (8) local governments; namely Sabonbirni, Isah, Gwadabawa, Gada, Illela, Goyonyo, Rabah and Wurno which have so many ethnic and religious groups such as Gobirawa, Fulani, Sullubawa, Kabawa, Buzaye, Wangarawa and Bare-Bari among others. Although Islam is the major religion of the people, there are traditional religion and small number of Christian followers are the major religious group in the zone, even though among Islamic religion, different sects exist such as Izala, Dariqa, Qadiriyya, Shi'a, Qur'aniyyun among others and so religious and ethnic intolerance exist, hence the need for community counselling so as to poster religious and ethnic tolerance among the people living in the zone.Counseling discipline has recently begun to take culture (religion and ethnicity) into consideration when assessing and treating the individual and the field continues to search for a theoretical model that will provide a culturally sensitive methodology. Based on these fact, the main thrust of the study is to investigate the community counselling and religious-ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to find out;

1. If there are community counsellors and counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
2. Influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
3. Influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Research questions

1. Is there community counsellors and counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
2. What is the influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
3. What is the influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Hypotheses

To guide thefollowing hypotheses were postulated

1. There is no significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

2. There is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Methodology

The researchers employed a descriptive survey research design, with traditional rulers, religious leaders, councilors and staff of social welfare departments across eight (8) local government areas in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state as population. A sample of 200 participants were purposively selected thus comprised 25 participants from each local government, which comprises of 5 traditional rulers, 5 religious leaders, 10 councilors and 5 social welfare departments staffs.A researchers' designed questionnaire was used in collecting the data for this study, titled "community counselling, religious and ethnic tolerance questionnaire" (CCREQ), which consists of four (4) parts, part A Bio-data of the respondents, part B with five (5) items about availability of community counsellors and counselling services, part C with Ten (10) items about culture community counselling, part D with five (5) items about religious tolerance and part E with five (5) items about ethnic tolerance,the questionnaires was translated into Hausa language for easy

understanding of the items by the participant. The Questionnaire assumed the four-point modified likert scales of Most applicable, Applicable, not applicable and none at all with four (4), three (3), two (2) and one (1) as the score value of the likert scale.

The content validity of the instrument was obtained after scrutiny and correction of the test items by some experts at faculty of education, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and some lecturers in the school of arts and social sciences, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto and adjudged the instrument to have content validity. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using split-half method by administering the instrument to fifty (50) selected people at Gudu Local government and splitting the test scores into even and odd numbers and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient that yielded 0.72 reliability index. The data was collected with the help of eight research assistants using direct delivery techniques in administration and collection of the completed questionnaires. Frequency, Percentages and chi-square statistics were used in analyzing the data generated for the study.

Results

Research question:- are there community counsellors and counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of community counsellors and counselling services

Community counsellors	Yes	No	%	%
1. Religious counsellors	140	60	86.3%	13.7%
2. Ethnic counsellors	111	89	75.9%	24.1%
3. Business counsellors	115	85	41.4%	58.6%
4. Health counsellors	104	96	37.4%	62.6%
5. Marriage counsellors	146	54	35.3%	64.7%
Community Counselling services				
6. Orientation	80	120	40%	60%
7. Mobilization	85	115	42.5%	57.5%
8. Advice given	146	54	73%	27%
9. Awareness	125	75	62.5%	37.5%
10. Sensitization	148	52	74%	26%

Table 1: above on the Frequency and Percentage of community counsellors and counselling services, the result for community counsellors indicated that,Religious counsellors accounted for 140 respondents for yes and 60 respondents for no representing 70.0% for yes respondents and 30.0% for no respondents, Ethnic counsellors accounted for 111 respondents for yes and 89 respondents for no representing 55.5% for yes respondents and 44.5% for no respondents, business counsellors accounted for 115 respondents for yes and 85 respondents for no representing 57.% for yes respondents and 42.5% for no respondents, health counsellors accounted for 104 respondents for yes

and 96 respondents for no representing 52.0% for yes respondents and 48.0% for no respondents and marriage counsellors accounted for 146 respondents for yes and 54 respondents for no representing 73.0% for yes respondents and 27.0% for no respondents respectively.

The result for community counselling services indicated that, community orientation counselling service accounted for 80 respondents for yes and 120 respondents for no representing 40.0% for yes respondents and 60.0% for no respondents, community mobilization counselling service accounted for 85 respondents for yes and 115 respondents for no representing 42.5% for yes respondents and 57.5% for no respondents, community advice given counselling service accounted for 146 respondents for yes and 54 respondents for no representing 73.0% for yes respondents and 27.0% for no respondents, community awareness counselling service accounted for 125 respondents for yes and 75 respondents for no representing 62.5% for yes respondents and 37.5% for no respondents and community sensitization counselling service accounted for 148 respondents for yes and 52 respondents for no representing 74.0% for yes respondents and 26.0% for no respondents, this results confirmed that there are community counsellors and community counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Table 2:   Influence of community counselling on religious tolerance

Variable	N	df	chi-cal	p-value	decision
Community counselling	200				
		199	0.236	.431	rejected
Religious tolerance	200				

In Table 2 which is on the influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone, the result indicated that calculated chi-square chi-cal = .236, p = .431 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone is rejected, because the chi-value is less than p-value at .05 level of significance. Therefore, there is significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Table 3:   Influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance

Variable	N	df	chi-cal	p-value	decision
Community counselling	200				
		199	0.321	.000	accepted
Ethnic tolerance	200				

Table 3 on the influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone, the result indicated that calculated chi-square chi-cal = .321, p = .000 at 0.05 level of significant. This indicates that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone is accepted, because the chi-value is greater than p-value at .05 level of significance. Therefore, there is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Summary of major findings

1. There are community counsellors and counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
2. There is significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.
3. There is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.

Discussion

From the analysis of the data generated in the study the result confirmed that, all the five aspects of community counselors i.e religious, ethnic, business, health and marriage indicated availability while two community counselling services that are orientation and mobilization indicated low availability and three i.e advice given, awareness and sensitization indicated very high acceptance on the availability of the services in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state. This finding agrees with existing findings for example; Liman and Dange (2019) opined that; Community counselling is therefore a process in which a specialist counsellor undertakes to assist another person in a person to person/ group of people or face to face encounter in the community. The assistance may take many forms which includes educational, vocational, social, recreational, emotional and or moral, and this could be organized in groups or individually in the community to address issues that affect the community and its members.

With regard to the influence of community counselling on religious tolerance the result indicated that calculated chi-square chi-cal = .236, $p = .431$ at 0.05 level of significant. This indicates that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone is rejected, because the chi-value is less than p-value at .05 level of significance. Therefore, there is significant influence of community counselling on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone.This finding agrees with previously existing findings for example; Maishanu (2007), religious tolerance is mostly developed as a result of mutual respect,it is the quality of tolerating or enduring others peoples' religious

beliefs different from one's own. It could also means the ability to endure or accommodate peoples from other religious beliefs different from one's religion. In essence, there is religious tolerance when a particular group accepts or accommodates the views, opinions of other opposing religious adherents.

With regard to theinfluence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance the result indicated that calculated chi-square chi-cal = .321, $p = .000$ at 0.05 level of significant. This indicates that the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone is accepted, because the chi-value is greater than p-value at .05 level of significance. Therefore, there is no significant influence of community counselling on ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone. This finding disagreed with previously existing findings for example; Cote and Erickson, (2009) opined that; Ethnic tolerance can be define as a positive act of individual or group citizens to put up their differences with respect to the cultural and tradition practices, history and values, and physic-biological aspects for a greater political aims. However, often research are pertains to immigrants than native ethnic groups.

Conclusion

Conclusion drawn from the study indicated that, there are community counsellors and community counselling services in the Sokoto east senatorial zone as all the five aspects of community counsellors i.e religious, ethnic, business, health and marriage indicated availability while two community counselling services that are orientation and mobilization indicated low availability and three i.e advice given, awareness and sensitization indicated very high acceptance on the availability of the services in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state. It also concluded that community counselling has significant influence on religious tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone and also community counselling does not significantly influence ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made;

1. There is need for the sustenance and improvement of community counselling services in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state. Religious leaders need to intensify effort in mobilizing, sensitizing and training people on the importance of religious tolerance.
2. Traditional and religious leaders in the zone should partner with government agencies, NGO's as well as CASSON in the provision of community counselling services in the zone. Government should also partner with CASSON in training of community Para-counsellors among religious and community leaders in Sokoto state.
3. There is also the need for collaboration among all the stakeholders in the provision and sustenance of community counselling service for religious and ethnic tolerance in Sokoto east senatorial zone of Sokoto state.

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