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COUNSELLING NEEDS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AS PERCEIVED BY COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGISTS IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Internally Displaced Women (IDW) in Nigeria have been grappling with a plethora of challenges which often affect their mental and social development. As a consequence, the role of Counselling Psychologists in ameliorating problems of IDWs cannot be overemphasized particularly when the counselling needs have been identified. This study therefore investigated the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women (IDW) as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 130 respondents that participated in the research exercise. A self-designed instrument titled "Counselling Needs of Internally Displaced Women Questionnaire (CNIDWQ)" was used to collect required information. The instrument possessed a reliability coefficient of 0.67 after being subjected to the test retest and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical method. The results showed that the Counselling Psychologists perceived counselling need on how to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as the most prominent counselling need of Internally Displaced Women. Respondents were not different in their perception on counselling needs of internally displaced women on the basis of gender, length of years in profession and educational qualification. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that while addressing problems of internally displaced women in Nigeria, counseling psychologists should place emphasis on how to deal with post traumatic stress, assist IDW on how to develop high self esteem, enhance social integration, deal with depression and prevent sexual exploitation.

Keywords: *Internally Displaced Women, Counselling Psychologists, Counselling Needs, Perception*

Introduction

Globally, the unprecedented increase in the rate of tribal conflicts, rifts, political upheavals and religious clashes has been one of the most devastating occurrences of humankind in the 21st century (Durosaro & Ajiboye, 2011). In sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, it is no longer news that the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) including women who have been forced to migrate from their homes or places of habitual residence to other places to seek refuge has continued to increase in leaps and bounds. For instance, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) established by the Norwegian Refugee Council reported that as of December, 2014 the number of IDPs in Nigeria was at least 1,075, 300 (IDMC, 2015). In addition, it was reported by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), that about 997, 300 IDPs were

identified in the north-eastern region of Nigeria as of the end of 2014, among which women and children constituted the majority (NEMA, 2015).

By definition, internally displaced persons share some basic characteristics with refugees. However, to shed more light on the difference between refugees and internally displaced persons, OCHA (2003) defined IDPs as persons or groups of persons who because of armed conflict, systematic violations of human rights, internal strife, or natural or man-made disasters have been necessitated to migrate from their homes or places of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly, to another location but have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. As an addendum, it is pertinent to point out that IDPs have no institutional or legal mechanism for receiving international assistance often rendered to refugees (UNICEF, 1998).

Given that women comprise a sizeable percentage of IDPs in Nigeria, it goes without saying that internal displacement poses daunting challenges that are peculiar to the women folk. On the whole, the detrimental effects of internal displacement on the optimal development and sustainable livelihood of women could be broadly categorized into three based on the criterion of duration of effect. First, the short term effects of displacement on women include family separation, exposure to gender based violence, psychological trauma, impaired health, and loss of personal valuables. Second, all the aforementioned short term effects of displacement could precipitate depression, anxiety, insomnia, physical deterioration and post-traumatic stress in the medium term. Thirdly, in the long term, women may experience colossal loss of social and cultural ties, termination of career and regular employment, divorce and so on due to the experience of internal displacement (UNICEF, 1998; Enwereji, 2009)

Based on the foregoing, it could be adduced that the plight of Internally Displaced Women (IDWs) in a developing country such as Nigeria is a multidimensional daunting challenge that requires a multifaceted approach. Thus, the relevance of social workers, medical personnel, religious organizations, government officials, non-governmental organizations and most especially Counselling Psychologists in identifying the challenges of Internally Displaced Women in Nigeria remains imperative. Counselling Psychologists by their professional training are equipped with the required skills to enhance the all-round development of IDWs physically, psychologically, socially and economically. By the same token, counsellors are poised to engender gender-fair professional practice that is culturally sensitive to the unique and diverse needs of IDWs.

Perception is the interpretation of what is sensed (Santrock, 2011). In the same vein, Wortman, Loftus and Weaver (2009) defined perception as the process through which the brain interprets sensations, giving them order and meaning. In sum, perceptions are the product of an interaction between the particular sensory systems possessed by an individual and the individual's beliefs and expectations about the world. Thus, in view of the role of counsellors in the wholistic management and maximal development of IDWs, it is pertinent to gain an insight into how counsellors interpret the various sensations which they have gathered from various sources on the counselling needs of IDWs in Nigeria. It is against this concern, therefore, that this present study considered it germane to investigate the counselling needs of IDWs as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Statement of the Problem

The pervasiveness of internal displacement in recent times is increasingly becoming worrisome for all concerned stakeholders globally. In the African setting, IDMC (2015) reported that there are at least 3,100,000 IDPs in Sudan, 1,498,200 IDPs in South Sudan and 2,756,600 IDPS in Congo DRC. Further, it was reported that as of 2015, there was at least 1.5 million IDPs across eight West African countries: Cameroon, Cote d'voire, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Of all these eight states, Nigeria was specifically reported to have at least a million IDPs (IDMC, 2015). This suggests that Nigeria accounts for over 66% of IDPs in West Africa. On the whole, the statistics of IDMC (2015) indicates that women and children constitute the largest proportion of IDPs. Consequently, it is pertinent to point out that IDWs in the Nigerian setting have been grappling with a plethora of challenges which include changes in gender roles, gender violence, breakup of families and loss of social and cultural ties and a host of others (Ajiboye, 2013).

Thus, the livelihood of IDPs in Nigeria has been under research lights in recent times. For instance, Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) investigated the problems and coping strategies of internally displaced persons in Jos Metropolis and the results showed that educational and emotional problems are the most problems among internally displaced adolescents. Ajiboye (2013) studied the challenges, counselling needs and sources of support of internally displaced persons in Nigeria and concluded that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was a common challenge for IDPs in Nigeria. Enwereji (2009) assessed interventions available to internally displaced persons in Abia State and concluded that none of the organizations, including government institutions, provided social services or assistance in the prevention of HIV/AIDS to internally displaced persons. In view of the indispensable role of Counselling Psychologists in the total rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Women in Nigeria, it is pertinent to investigate the perception of Counselling Psychologists on the counselling needs of internally displaced women. On this note, the problem of this study, therefore, is to investigate the counselling needs of internally displaced women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State.

Research Questions

It is a *sine qua non* that research endeavour provides answers to certain prime questions. To this end, the following research questions were attended to in this study:

1. What are the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of gender?
3. Is there any difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of years of professional experience?
4. Is there any difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification?

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Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of length of years in profession.
3. There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification.

Scope of the Study

This study was an investigation of the counselling needs of internally displaced women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State. The research is limited to Ilorin Metropolis where there are professional counsellors in institutions of learning. The study covered some learning institutions where Counselling Psychologists practice at different levels of education (elementary, secondary school and tertiary institutions). Thus, respondents were selected across the variables of gender, years of professional experience and educational qualifications.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. This was considered because it allows researchers to obtain information from a representative sample of the entire target population and describes situations as they exist (Daramola, 2006). Since the study could not therefore cover every counsellor in Kwara State, the descriptive survey method was adjudged as being appropriate.

The study adopted purposive sampling technique to select 130 respondents that participated in the study. This is in agreement with the viewpoint of Daramola (2006) who posited that purposive sampling technique is a sampling procedure in which a researcher purposively selects certain groups as samples because of their relevance to the investigation under consideration. The researchers selected counsellors who are already practicing particularly in schools. Thus, the respondents were selected across learning institutions in Ilorin Metropolis.

The main instrument that was used for collecting the required information for the study was a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Counselling Needs of Internally Displaced Women Questionnaire (CNIDWQ)". Section A sought personal information of the respondents while B focused on the counselling needs of internally displaced women. Section B was patterned in Four Point Likert scale format of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4points, Agree (A) = 3points, Disagree (D) = 2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

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The content validity of the instrument used in this study was established through five experts in the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin. The experts did the necessary corrections which were used to produce the final version used for the study.

Reliability is an indication of the degree of the consistency, accuracy and stability of a measuring instrument Abiri (2007). The internal consistency of the instrument (CNIDWQ) was established by applying the test retest method. Thus, the reliability of 0.67 was established after subjecting the set of scores to Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula.

The data obtained was analyzed using different statistical measures. The independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the null hypotheses. The t-test is a parametric measure used to compare the mean of two groups while the ANOVA is an inferential statistics used to compare the means of three or more groups (Adana, 1996).

Results

Demographic Data

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Gender, Length of years in profession and Educational Qualification

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	48	36.9
Female	82	63. 1
Total	**130**	**100.0**
Length of Years in Profession		
0-5 years	63	48.5
6-10 years	31	23.8
11 years and above	36	27.7
Total	**130**	**100.0**
Highest Educational Qualification		
First Degree	27	20.8
Masters	82	63. 0
Ph.D	21	16.2
Total	**130**	**100.0**

Result in table 1 reveals that 48 (36.9%) of the respondents were male and 82(63.1%) were female respectively. Table 1 also shows that 63 (48.5%) of the counsellors had 0-5 years professional experience, 31(23.8%) had 6-10 years of professional experience and 36 (27.7%) had 11 years and above professional experience. In relation to the highest educational qualification of the respondents, table 1 shows that 27 (20.8%) had first degree, 82 (63.0%) had masters degree while 21 (16.2%) had doctorate degree respectively.

Research Question One: What are the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as expressed by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State?

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Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of the Perceived Counselling Needs of Internally Displaced Women

S/N	In my opinion, internally displaced women need counselling to:	Mean	Rank
1	deal with post traumatic stress disorder	3.67	1
2	develop positive self-esteem	3.60	2
3	enhance their social integration	3.57	3
4	deal with depression	3.57	3
5	prevent sexual exploitation	3.49	5
6	acquire entrepreneurial skills	3.47	6
7	cope with the loss of valuable properties	3.44	7
8	prevent sexually transmitted diseases	3.38	8
9	manage stresstul situation in camps	3.36	9
10	cope with family separation in camp	3.31	10
11	prevent domestic violence in IDP camps	3.31	10
12	develop their assertive communication skills	3.29	12
13	access micro-credit opportunities for small scale businesses	3.29	12
14	cope with family planning	3.27	14
15	access allocated aids such as food and clothing	3.22	15
16	become better involved in the decision making process in IDP Camps	3.22	15
17	secure gainful employment after the displacement	3.20	17
18	deal with language differences of other IDPs	3.20	17
19	deal with religious differences of other IDPs	3.16	19
20	relate with the leadership structure of IDP camps	3.04	20

Table 2 revealed that the least mean ranking on the Table is 3.04, which is statistically higher than 2.50; the cut-off mean for the Four-Point Likert scale used for the study (4+3+2+1÷ 4)= 2.5. Nevertheless, Table 2 revealed that the item with the highest mean (3.67) stated that internally displaced women need counselling to deal with post traumatic stress disorder. It could be inferred that the respondents perceived all the items as being counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as expressed by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of gender.*

Table 3: t-test analysis on the Counselling needs of internally displaced women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists on the basis of gender

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal t-val	P-val	Decision
Male	48	87. 500	11.22498				
Female	82	86.179	29.86818	128	.1402	.168	**Accepted**

As shown on Table 3, the t-test calculated value is .1402 with a P-value .168. At alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis one is therefore accepted because the calculated P-value is greater than 0.05 alpha level (.168 > 0.05). This implies that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of internally displaced women as perceived by counsellors on the basis of gender.

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Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as expressed by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of years in profession.*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Counselling Needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists based on years in profession

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	86.852	2	43.426	.601	.553	Accepted
Within Groups	3035.060	127	72.263			
Total	3121.911	129				

The result in table 4 above shows the significant level to be 0.553 which is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis two was accepted. This means that the number of years in profession of the respondents did not influence their perception of counselling needs of internally displaced women.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as expressed by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational qualification.*

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists based on highest educational qualification

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	358.260	2	179.130	2.72	.077	Accepted
Within Groups	2763.651	127	01 65.8			
Total	3121.911	129				

The result in table 5 above shows the significant level to be 0.77 which was greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis three was accepted. This means that the educational qualification of the respondents does not influence their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to determine the counselling needs of internally displaced women as perceived by Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State. It could be inferred from the results that the respondents perceived counseling needs on how to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as the most important counselling needs of internally displaced women. This finding concretizes the findings of Ajiboye (2013) which revealed that IDPs, particularly women and children have some physiological disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The reason could be that women are not naturally resilient like men and thus may likely need counselling on how to cope with trauma than the male. Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) earlier identified sources of PTSD to include the gravity of the events that precipitate displacement, length of displacement

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and absurd experience in IDP camps.

Gender, number of years in profession and highest educational of the respondents did not influence their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women. The findings means that regardless of the gender, professional experience and highest educational qualification of the respondents, there was no difference in their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women. The findings of this study corroborate the earlier findings of Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) where the adolescents expressed similar challenges based on gender and educational qualifications. Although both the previous and present studies used different group of respondents, the similarity in the results could be due to the fact that irrespective of gender or other variables, problems and counselling needs relating to IDP's are often viewed in the same perspectives.

Conclusion of the Findings

1. Counselling Psychologists in Kwara State perceived counselling needs of internally displaced women on how to deal with post traumatic stress, develop their self esteem, enhance their social integration, deal with depression and on how to prevent sexual exploitation to be very essential.
2. Gender of the respondents did not influence their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women.
3. Professional experience of the respondents did not influence their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women.
4. Educational qualification of the respondents did not influence their perception of the counselling needs of internally displaced women.

Recommendations

The major finding of this study revealed that counsellors in Kwara State perceived the counselling needs of internally displaced women to be very high. With this finding:

1. Counselling Psychologists, through theCounselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should continuously organize counsellor preparation programmes, professional development seminars, annual meetings, online webinars and workshop to equip professional counsellors and prospective counsellors with required knowledge, skills and resources in order to meet the counselling needs of internally displaced women in Nigeria.
2. Women who are professional counsellors should be implored and mandated to tailor their professional counselling practice to the gender-specific counselling needs of internally displaced women such as gender based violence. This is pertinent, especially, in view of the fact that some internally displaced women may not feel free to engage in a client-counsellor relationship with counsellors of the opposite sex due to religious or cultural values.
3. Counsellors should be encouraged to work with other stakeholders to address the

counselling needs of Internally Displaced Women in Nigeria.

While addressing problems of internally displaced women in Nigeria, emphasis should be placed on giving counselling to them on how to deal with post traumatic stress, develop self esteem, enhance social integration, deal with depression and on how to prevent sexual exploitation.

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