COUNSELLING NEEDS FOR UN-REMARRIED WIDOWERS' IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Widowers have a lot to battle with because they are usually stigmatized on the grounds of the uncommonness of male widowhood, and this may be a challenge to getting remarried. This study examines the counselling needs for un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State, Nigeria. The influence of variables such as age and highest educational attainment were also examined. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Multi-stage sampling technique which comprises purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques were adopted to draw a total sample of 200 respondents from Kwara State. "Counselling Needs for Un-remarried Widowers' Questionnaire (CNUWQ)" was used to collect relevant data. The instrument was subjected to test re-test reliability method. The correlation co-efficient yielded a score of 0.72. Frequency counts and percentage were used to present the demographic data while the hypotheses tested were analyzed using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the major counselling needs of un-remarried widowers in Kwara State are: how to improve their socio-economic status, deal with stigmatization, isolation, depression and how to maintain positive self-esteem. On the other hand, the hypotheses tested revealed no significant difference in counselling needs for un-remarried widowers in Kwara State based on age and highest educational attainment. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that group counselling should be organized for widowers to provide appropriate solution that could lead them to live a positive life style, marriage counsellors should create an avenue where widowers could meet in order to share their concerns among one another and ways of solving them.

Keywords: Counselling, Counselling Needs, Widow, Widower, Marriage, Non-remarriage.

Introduction

Counselling is an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self-understanding. He further explained that counselling is designed to provide an interactive relationship, where the counsellor attempts to help the counsellee to better understand himself or herself in relating to his present and future decisions and challenges (Akinade, 2004). The cultural and legal way of procreation in life is through marriage. This is the acceptable union of a man and a woman having fulfilled all the cultural and legal processes including agreement between the families of the two people.

(The adjustment of married couples could be affected by death). It is a myth to think that death is just for the old. Death is there from the very beginning (Cassingham, 2004). Death especially that of a very close person is often seen as an ultimate loss, which invariably is accompanied by grief (Oniye, 2000). Widowhood refers to the status of a person whose spouse has died and who has not remarried. Women in this situation are referred to as widows, and men as widowers (Gale Encyclopedia of Public Health, 2014).

Concept of Counselling Needs of Widowers

According to Adamu (2012), counselling is a helping service concerned with skilful and methodical way and manner of helping an individual or a group to have a better and more meaningful perception of his/her problems with a view to self-solving them. The widower needs counselling in order to adjust and cope with the death of his wife. Counselling teaches widowers the coping strategies for the difficult moments and other special times the person shared with the deceased. However, here are some of the needs that widowers can use to cope with bereavement and widowhood. Some of these include the need to:

- prevent depression and fear.
- acquire mind training to cope with widowhood.
- make decision on remarriage.
- deal with stigmatization and isolation.
- solve problem of loneliness.
- be trained on exploration and making best use of their environment.
- be aware of supporting organization in charge of widower's problem.
- maintain positive self-esteem.
- maintain sound health and prevent illness.
- engage in sexual activities that provide satisfaction and aerobic exercise.
- learn to restore the health, social and economic status and improve financial standing.

For the widower, a major of the issue centre on the fact that a partnership is lost. Therefore, the widower will need counselling in the following areas:

- **Loss of social environment:** The surviving partner must adjust to involvement in activities that were previously done as a couple. This involves issues such as which spouse had the closer relationship with certain friends to feelings about being a single person when previously there was a regular partner.
- **Financial dislocation or instability:** A new system for household and financial responsibilities must usually be put in place and the surviving spouse may feel ill prepared, unwilling or unable to perform functions previously handled by the partner who died.
- **Loss of companionship:** A spouse often fulfills a variety of needs that must now be satisfied in other ways through friends or other family members.
- **Loss of dreams and plans for future:** Couples often make plans for their future life that now must be revised in the context of the death.
- **Burden of playing role of two parents.** This is particularly poignant for the widow or widower with young children.
- **Loneliness.** Not only is there an emotional sense of loss and loneliness, but there is also a physical loss of someone's presence in your life.
- **Feeling a part of you has died.** Not only can there be a deep sense of abandonment, but there can be a feeling that the shared parts of your life together have been lost as you feel the responsibility to keep memories alive on your own.

In addition, to deal with these issues surrounding the death of one spouse, the surviving spouse must ultimately deal with the fears about his own death and the issue of future companionship (Robin, 2009).

Problem

The loss of a spouse affects almost every domain of life, and as a consequence it has a significant impact on wellbeing: psychological, social, physical, practical, and economic. Although, the experience of widowhood is more common for women than for men, a man's chance of becoming a widower increases as he ages. Studies were carried out on widows. For instance: Ogunrinola (2007) studied the problems and counselling needs of widows as perceived by civil servants in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The finding of the study revealed that widows have real problems almost in all areas of life, ranging from psychological, social, physical, financial, health and emotional problem

Most of the previous studies did not focus on counselling needs for non-remarriage among widowers therefore; the gap the present study wants to fill is to investigate counselling needs for widowers' non-remarriage in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised based on the problem:

1. What are the counselling needs of widowers' in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference in the counselling needs for widowers' non-remarriage in Kwara State on the basis of age?
3. Is there any difference in the counselling needs for widowers' non-remarriage in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs for widowers' non- remarriage in Kwara State on the basis of age.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs for widowers' non- remarriage in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment.

Methodology

The researchers adopted the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey provides an opportunity for researcher to present information about the characteristics within a particular field of study with the purpose of providing a picture of situations, as they naturally exist (Burns & Grove, 1995). Olayiwola (2007) noted that descriptive research is concerned with the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of describing, evaluating or comparing current event or prevailing practices. The population for this study comprises all widowers in Kwara State. The total population of widower in Kwara State, according to National Population Commission (NPC) (2006) is 4,802. The procedures that were used in selecting samples for this study are purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

The three Senatorial Districts in Kwara State: Kwara Central, Kwara North, and Kwara South were selected so as to have access to the respondents and carry out accurate investigation. To bring about sampling of this particular group of widowers in Kwara State, 200 respondents (widowers) participated in the study. Respondents were selected from different schools, offices, markets, ceremony, men gathering in a meeting, religious and academic institutions purposively. Furthermore, snowball sampling technique was chosen to select respondents from the three Senatorial Districts in Kwara State, namely; Kwara Central, Kwara North, and Kwara South. The term snowball sampling reflects an analogy to a snowball increasing in sizes as it rolls downhill (David, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was designed by the researchers after a careful review of the related literature and it is tagged "Counselling Needs for Un-remarried Widowers' Questionnaire" (CNUWQ). The questionnaire consists of two (2) sections: A and B. Section A focuses on the demographic data of the respondents including information on age and educational attainment.

Section B contains fifteen (15) items on counselling needs. In section B the respondents responded to the items using: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using the test re-test reliability method. The instrument was administered to a group of twenty (20) widowers, who did not form part of the respondents for the study and after an interval of four weeks; the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of people. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula. The correlation co-efficient obtained was 0.72. Based on this, the instrument was adjudged reliable for the study.

The data obtained were analysed using percentages, mean and standard deviation as well as rank order for the descriptive data while t-test and Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) statistical analysis were used to test the null hypotheses generated.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age and Highest Educational Attainment

Variables		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1 Age	25-45 years	63	31.5
	46 years and above	137	68.5
	Total	**200**	**100.0**
2 Highest Educational Attainment			
	Non Formal Education	21	10.5
	Primary Education	37	18.5
	Secondary Education	39	19.5
	Tertiary Education	103	51.5
	Total	**200**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by age and highest educational attainment. The table revealed that 63 (31.5%) of the respondents were between 25-45 years while 137 (68.5%) were 46 years and above. The table equally shows that on the highest educational attainment 21 (10.5%) have non-formal education, 37 (18.5%) have primary education, 39 (19.5%) have secondary education while 103 (51.5%) have tertiary education.

Research Question: *What are the counselling needs for un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State?*

Table 2: Means and Rank Order on Counselling Needs of Widowers in Kwara State, Nigeria

Item No	As far as am concerned, I need counselling on how to:	Mean Score	Rank
13.	improve my socio-economic status.	2.86	1st
5.	deal with stigmatization.	2.74	2nd
1.	prevent depression.	2.74	2nd
10.	maintain positive self-esteem.	2.64	4th
14.	interact freely with friends.	2.58	5th
6.	resolve problem of loneliness.	2.55	6th
15.	handle sleep disorder.	2.54	7th
2.	cope with widowhood.	2.51	8th
4.	make decision with regards to remarriage.	2.47	9th
11.	maintain sound health.	2.45	10th
12.	adjust to cope with sexual desire.	2.43	11th
9.	raise awareness in support of organization in charge of widowers' problem.	2.40	12th
3.	prepare meals.	2.34	13th
7.	make best use of my environment.	2.32	14th
8.	handle spiritual need of my life.	2.28	15th

Table 2 showed the mean and rank order on counselling needs of widowers in Kwara State. The result indicated that items 13(with mean score of 2.86), 5 and 1 (with mean score of 2.74 respectively) were ranked as the top three items that is 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. The items stated that as far as am concerned, I need

counselling on how to improve my socio-economic status, deal with stigmatization and prevent depression. On the other hand, items 3 (with mean score of 2.34), 7 (with mean score of 2.32) and 8 (with mean score of 2.28) were ranked as the least three. The items indicated that as far as am concerned, I need counselling on how to prepare meals, make best use of my environment and handle spiritual needs of my life. Since, the three top ranked items were above the average mean point of 2.50, it can be concluded that the major counselling needs of non-remarried widowers in Kwara State are to improve their socio-economic status, deal with stigmatization and prevent depression.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the counselling needs for un- remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of age.*

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents' on the Counselling Needs of Widowers in Kwara State on the Basis of Age

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
25-45 years	63	40.35	7.25	198	0.64	1.96
46 years and above	137	39.49	8.07			

Table 3 presents the calculated t-value of 0.64 which is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference. Hence, the hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the counselling needs for un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment.*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Comparing Respondents' on Counselling Needs of Widowers in Kwara State on the Basis of Highest Educational Attainment

Sources	df	Sum of Square	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Cal. F-ratio
Between Group	3	297.511	99.170		1.64
				2.60	
Within Group	196	11841.909	60.418		
Total	**199**	**12139.420**			

Table 4 presents the calculated F-ratio of 1.64 which is less than the critical F-ratio of 2.60 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This implies that there is no significant difference. Hence, the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment.

Discussion

The main findings of the study revealed that the major counselling needs of un-remarried widowers in Kwara State are: how to improve their socio-economic status, deal with stigmatization and prevent depression. This finding corroborates the view of (Carr, 2004) that men (widowers) are affected more by widowhood than women because widowhood is less likely to be anticipated by men and men are generally more dependent on their spouse for socio-emotional support. He explained that a person who is dependent on his wife has a greater adjustment to make when widowed than an individual who has other valued roles.

Based on the research hypotheses tested, it was revealed in the first hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of age. Thus, the hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that age has no influence in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State. The finding negates the finding of Bangari and Bangari (2013) who found a difference in age at marriage and age at widowhood to be negatively and non-significantly related with attitude towards widower re-marriage.

The second hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment was not rejected. Since no significant difference was found, the hypothesis was therefore not rejected. In this vein, educational

attainment has no influence in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers. The finding is in contrast with the outcome of the Oniye (2007) study which revealed a significant difference among widows' adjustment strategies on the basis of their educational level.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The study revealed that the major counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State are how to improve their socio-economic status, deal with stigmatization and prevent depression.
2. There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of age.
3. There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of un-remarried widowers' in Kwara State on the basis of highest educational attainment.

Implications for Counselling Practices

Counselling is a helping relationship which is meant to provide for the needs of the clients for them to adjust effectively to the challenges they are facing. Based on the findings of this study, counsellors should help widowers with skills on how to overcome the effects of isolation, depression and low self-esteem.

The marriage counsellor should endeavour to enlighten widowers on how best to cope with loss of a partner. Since death is inevitable, widowers should be able to decide if there will be the need for them to re-marry. Counsellors in training should also be acquitted with bereavement and widowhood counselling. This will assist them to help themselves and provide such to the needs of people around them.

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