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ZARIA JOURNAL OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION INFLUENCE OF REHABILITATION COUNSELLING ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN BENUE-SOUTH SENATORIAL ZONE, BENUE-STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey of research design. The population for this study comprises 3,588 internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State. The sample size of 290 internally displaced persons were selected using Research Advisor (2006) table to determine the sample size. A researcher-designed instrument entitled "Rehabilitation Counselling Scale (RCS) was used for data collection. This scale contained 15 closed items with respondents' responses limited to 4-likert of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) respectively. The questionnaire was faced and content validated by two experts in the department of Guidance and Counselling, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which gave 0.83 and 0.82. The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that there is a significant influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. Consequently, the study recommended that government should make rehabilitation counsellors available in internally displaced camps to assist IDPs with psychological and emotional therapies in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Nigeria.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, Counselling, Psychological adjustment and Displaced persons

INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian crises, such as armed conflicts, are linked to increased levels of psychological distress and higher risk of an array of mental disorders. Complexities further increase when unstable situations result in large-scale displacement and migration, exposing populations to stressful events prior to departure, during transit and after arrival, as they cope with integrating in a new environment or country (Afolayan, 2021). Globally, 172 million people are affected by armed conflict, and at least 240 million children live in countries affected by conflict or fragility (UNHCR, 2021). The mental health consequences of armed conflict are disproportionately experienced by children, who are already undergoing rapid and complex physiological, cognitive and emotional

changes. Exposure to war, conflict and terror interferes with children's natural development and has shown to lead to elevated levels of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression and many behavioural and emotional reactions.

The problem of displaced persons has in recent years become a global concern with its implications. It is recorded that the total number of displaced persons is currently estimated at around fifty million worldwide, with the majority of these people in Africa and Asia. Displacement across the country in Nigeria is as a result of communal violence, internal armed conflicts and natural disasters (Ekanem, 2023). In any conflict situation and particularly those with ethnic or religious underpinnings, the humanitarian needs are immense and the means to satisfy those needs

within the conflict area are severely limited. Internally displaced civilian populations move from one place to another seeking safety and protection inside their own country. Forced population movements resulting in mass exodus constitute by their very nature infringements on international human rights and humanitarian law. In Nigeria, conflicts arising from the activities of Boko Haram and nomads and farmers bandits have resulted in high threats to lives and properties, death of thousands displacements of millions of people. Contrary to the expectation of the world population, the new world order has been characterized by more unstable and turbulent conflict situations, unhealthy power politics, destructive ethnic insurgencies, national rivalries, religious bigotry, government hypocrisy and endemic poverty, manufactured by globalization.

Ekpoh (2018), posed that displaced persons under international law are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obligated to flee or to have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and they must have either remain within their own national borders (as internally displaced persons) or they must have crossed an internationally recognized state border (as refugees), (Ladan, 2018). Hence displaced persons are of two categories: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to Olawale (2016), Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria suffer disproportionately from different problems such as malnutrition, sickness, insecurity in the camps, lack of access to education, idles among others.

The vulnerability of displaced persons is a major reason why sustainable strategies for rehabilitation must be considered and implemented at the shortest possible time. There are a lot of challenges inhibiting effective rehabilitation of IDPs in Nigeria. These rights include the right to life, freedom of movement, association, dignity of human person, personal liberty, right to private and

family life, etc. IDPs usually suffer the worst violation of their fundamental human right (Alobo & Obaji, 2016). However, while one third of IDPs experience various forms of psychosocial issues, only 26% of this figure has sought professional help (Roberts, 2017). This is partly due to the lack of capacity in Nigeria health system. Despite the presence of counsellors and psychiatrists in Nigeria, there are not enough psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers. Furthermore, General Practitioners are not trained to provide mental health consultations and treatment. The mental health care system in Nigeria has been undergoing reforms in recent years, mainly in regard to legislation (CASSON Bill, 2019), the legal status of people who get treatment, budgeting as well as the reorganization of approaches to the provision of rehabilitation by specialized institutions.

Adjustment refers to the behavioural method by which humans and/or animals sustain stability among their various needs despite the condition in their dwelling environments. This adjustment can also be seen as a process which describes and explains the behaviour and means of an individual's adaptation to himself and his environment without reference to the outcome in terms of success or failure or quality of such modification, it is said to be adjustment. Human beings are able to adjust to the social, physical and psychological demands which may arise from having interred reliability with other human being. Adjustment as the psychological process through which human being manage or cope with the challenges and demands of everyday life. People who moved into a new environment, either of their free will or not turn to adjust overtime. For instance, a person thrown to a IDP camps tend to adjust to the life there in the IDP camps overtime, not minding the stress, the dilemma, safety of the environment among others.

Psychosocial adjustment according to Billich (2023) refers to an achievement or outcome as well as a process. As an achievement, psychological adjustment is a phrase used to denote positive mental health of internally displaced persons. The concept of positive

mental health is detailed extensively in Jahoda's classic conceptualization and refers to the disabled state of mind and overall well-being. The process of conceptualization of psychological adjustment reflects whether an individual with disability is able to cope effectively with the needs of the environmental context as well as with the stress created by these needs. Thus, as a process, psychological adjustment reflects the relative adaptation of an internally displaced person to changing environmental conditions (Franklin, 2018). Psychological adjustment is a popular outcome measure in psychological research and often measures such as self-esteem or the absence of distress, anxiety or depression are used as indicators of adjustment. Researchers may also measure an internally displaced person's level of adjustment or well-being in response to some stressful event, such as lack of transportation, or as the absence of vocational needs, such as tailoring training and building skills. Although adjustment is a broad concept as well as an abstract construct by definition, it can generally be broken down into four major dimensions. The major dimensions include psychological adjustment as the absence of psychological symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-concept and self-esteem).

Counselling services are the core of the adjustment programmes and the central hub upon which the entire guidance revolves (Tor-Anyin, 2019). Counselling is a process of helping individuals towards overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, wherever they may be encountered and work for the optimum development of their resources. Some of the aims of counselling according to Egbochukwu (2018) are to offer a professional relationship with person who needs assistance. The relationship focuses on personal meaning of experiences, feelings, behaviours, alternatives, consequences and goals. Rehabilitation counselling refers to the programs to restore the individual to a prior state (Binuomote, 2021). Theoretically, rehabilitation is a special program that focuses on the need of an offender to reunite with society after completion or release from the IDP camps. In definition rehabilitation refers

to efforts geared towards enabling an individual to effectively readapt to society and assume practices which are consistent with societal rule and regulation (Debbie, 2022), the goal of rehabilitation is to reshape the individual and prepare them to enter into the society with a different state of mind and start a new life after their sentence. There is no doubt that rehabilitation counselling may have an effect on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State. This is in their measurement of physical, behavioural, emotional and social adjustment needs (Iorliam & Kwaghga, 2020).

Rehabilitation counselling may affect the emotional well-being of IDPs. Living with a chronic illness or disability (CID), whether congenital, developmental, or acquired, can involve an ongoing process of psychosocial adaptation (Bishop & Doyle, 2024; Smedema et al., 2022). Although psychosocial adaptation is typically discussed in the rehabilitation research literature in the context of acute or critical periods (e.g., the period following the onset of a CID), it also describes the continuous process of responding or adjusting to CID-related changes in health; to psychological, social, identity, and functional changes; and to barriers arising in interactions with physical and social environments. Obiako, (2020) posed that in rehabilitation counselling, adjustment to disability may be the client's primary concern and focus, or it may be an ancillary concern, arising only to the extent that it impacts the client's progress toward other rehabilitation goals. This study therefore seeks to critically examine the influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, with a view to establish the challenges, explanatory factors and the ways forward for an effective management of IDPs emotional well-being, for peace, conflict resolution and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The internally displaced persons are the most vulnerable groups in any population and need the greatest social care. Some of these

challenges might be relatively minor, while others are disastrous on a much larger scale. Challenges faced by the displacement may affect their emotional well-being. There is a significant gap between the expected rehabilitation needs and the provision of those services for internally displaced persons in the rehabilitation centers and IDP Camps in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria which the researcher has observed since 1997. Internally displaced persons may feel dissatisfied with the services rendered to them and when their care is disabled it could lead to psychological maladjustment. There is a quest for satisfaction of needs in the area of giving of care in the IDP camps leading to proper psychosocial adjustment of displaced persons. The number of displaced persons in Benue south senatorial zone Nigeria has been increasing from 5.5% ten years ago to 14.6% today and the prediction is that this will raise to 21.8% in ten years' time. This means that more people will need assistance when they face shock such as insecurity, communal clashes, herdsmen crisis, kidnapping and flood. One of the first coping mechanisms for the internally displaced persons is to seek assistance from the care givers and counsellors. For those concerned about displacement, however, the study area of Benue south senatorial zone, Nigeria is the most appropriate area to consider, as the epicenter of conflict and displacement. A major effort needs to be made to turn the trend of displacement around, from increasing to decreasing numbers. This would require sustained investment in preventing more people from falling into internally displaced persons as well as efforts to help the displaced persons to secure viable livelihoods and research into the concept of displacement which can be achieved through the provision of rehabilitation counseling services and research, hence the need for this study.

Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria.

2. ascertain the influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional well-being of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional well-being of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance

- HO₁: There is no significant influence of rehabilitation counselling on physical adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria
- HO₂: There is no significant influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional well-being of internally displaced persons in Benue State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey of research design. The population for this study comprises 3,588 internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. The sample size of 290 internally displaced persons were selected using Research Advisor (2006) table to determine the sample size. A researcher-designed instrument entitled "Rehabilitation Counselling Scale (RCS) was used for data collection. This scale contained 15 closed items with respondents' responses limited to 4-likert of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) respectively. The questionnaire was faced and content validated by two experts in the department of Guidance and Counselling, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which

gave 0.83 and 0.82. The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Means and standard deviations on the influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons

Variable	n	\bar{x}	std	df
Rehab. counselling	290	2.84	.88	0.09
Psychosocial adjustment.	290	2.95	1.04	

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation on influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons. The result depicts the mean difference of 0.09. the significance of the mean difference was tested in the related hypothesis.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations on the influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons.

Variable	n	\bar{x}	std	Remark
Rehab. counselling	290	2.84	.88	high, positive
Psychosocial adjustment.	290	2.95	1.04	
Criterion mean	290	2.75	0.83	

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation on influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons. The result depicts that with the criterion mean of 2.75 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.83. This means that there is a high, positive influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons.

Table 3: t-test on significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons.'

Variable	n	\bar{x}	std	df	α	t	p.val	Remark
Rehab. counselling	290	2.84	.88	288	.05	48.22	0.000	reject
Psychosocial adjustment.	290	2.95	1.04					

Table 3 showed the one sample t-test on significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State. The result showed a difference with $n=290$, $t= 48.22$, $df = 288$, at $p=.000$ or $p< .05$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected at $p=.000$ or $p<.05$. This means that there is a significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test on significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons.

Variable	n	\bar{x}	std	df	α	t	p.val	Remark
Rehab. counselling	290	2.84	.83	289	.05	53.69	0.000	reject
Emotional Adj.	290	2.66	0.84					

Table 4 showed the one sample t-test on significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. The result shows a difference with $n=290$, $t= 53.69$, $df = 289$, at $p=.000$ or $p< .05$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected at $p=.000$ or $p<.05$. This means that there is significant influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study revealed in Tables 1 and 3 that there is an influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with Goldfield (2021) whose study responded to surveys on leisure time psychological adjustment (PA), depressive symptoms, anxiety, and body image. A dose response effect of intensity of PA and psychological distress was observed whereby those who performed greater bouts of vigorous PA exhibited better psychological adjustment than adolescents engaging in mild to moderate intensity activity (Nwankwo, 2022). The study

also shows that there is a significant difference of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. Tondo and Wali (2018) affirmed that despite the aforementioned challenges, the presence of trained counselors created a support system crucial for rebuilding trust and interpersonal relationship.

The findings from table 2 and 4 showed that there is a high, positive influence of rehabilitation counselling on emotional adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with Martin and Kuboja (2022) who concluded that guidance and counseling services in the studied area are partially done or not done at all. Students can manage their emotional stability if deliberate measures on guidance and counselling are made mandatory. There is a significant and strong positive relationship between Guidance and Counseling services and students' emotional stability. Similarly the study agrees with Osu (2022) whose results revealed that there was no significant effect of rehabilitation on self-esteem and there was a significant effect of rehabilitation on emotional intelligence.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study was drawn based on the findings of this study. It was discovered that there is a significant influence of rehabilitation counselling on psychosocial adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study conclude that rehabilitation counselling (RC) has a significant influence on psychosocial, emotional, behavioural and social adjustment of internally displaced persons in Benue South Senatorial Zone, Benue State, Nigeria. Sec

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Benue state government should make rehabilitation counsellors available in internally displaced camps to assist IDPs with physical and psychological therapies.

2. Benue state government and NGOs should organize psychosocial interventions that would be culturally sensitive and community driven by the presence of counsellors.

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