COUNSELLING NEEDS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE NORTHEAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The counselling needs of out-of-schoolchildren (OOSC) in Northeast Nigeria are diverse and complex, reflecting the region's unique challenges some of which include psychological and psychosocial support, career development, vocational training and guidance, educational counselling and health and well-being. The educational system in this region is aback as compared to other regions especially in the south due to high rate of poverty, culture, insurgency and terrorism and child labour which has marginally forced millions of students out of school. This paper aimed at investigating the counselling needs of the OOSC with the purpose of instigating counsellors and other educational stakeholders into actions to assist the OOSC in living a better life. By addressing these needs through a comprehensive and context-specific approach, the counselling services can significantly improve the lives of out-of-school children in Northeast Nigeria, providing them with the support they need to thrive despite the challenges they face.

Keywords: *Counselling, Out-of-School Children, Northeast Nigeria*

Introduction

Education in Nigeria has earned a lot of researches, reactions and discussions over the years. It has been seen as a major arm of personal and national development. Adeyinka (2014) opined that education is a basic tool in pulling out an individual from the wells of ignorance into the wealth of ideas, knowledge and imagination. Personal, technological, socio-cultural, political and industrial advancement rely on education. This is the reason many researchers of various disciplines are advancing the concept of education especially in Nigeria to pipe into its potentials for national development. Unfortunately, Nigerian educational system has been plagued with setbacks although it is a global issue as education around the globe faces different issues per country ranging from small scale to large scale. The identified setbacks of Nigerian

139

educational system include poor funding (Eme & Ike 2017; Uko, 2024)inadequate educational facilities (Ojo &Udonu, 2018; Ayoko*et al.*, 2023), lack of adequate professional teachers (Jacob & Josiah 2021), poverty, high cost of education (Birabil & Ogeh, 2020), improper planning and implementation of educational policies (Egugbo& Salami, 2021) as well as insurgency the most recent discovery over the last one and half decade (Mahmood 2014; Stoelinga, 2024).

The impact of these setbacks on the national education system have been immense and beyond imagination although hands are on deck as educational stakeholders are working out to eradicate or minimize the identified setbacks. One of the major impacts of inconsistency Nigerian education is increase in the population of out-of-school children in the nation.

Prior to insurgency and related crisis which has Northern Nigeria as its epicenter, the population of out-of-school children was approximately 10.9 million (UNIESCO and UNICEF, 2011; UNSECO, 2012). From 2009 till date, the population has increased to 18.3 million (Vanguard, 2024), a rate which is almost doubling the initial figure prior insurgency. This development is a function of frequent attacks on educational facilities, staff and students within learning environment as will be discussed later in this article. Further study on the out-of-school children of Nigeria has revealed that there are a number of psychological effects on these children which may result to low productivity and low drive for living potent to hamper the nation's educational and national advancement in the nation if they are not adequately and timely met.

In view of this, the paper aimed at spinning counsellors into immediate and impactful action to see that the psychological needs of the out-of-school children in the Northeast are adequately met. The paper shall cover definition of concept, brief discussion on out-of-school children in Nigeria in relation with some other countries of the world as well as the counsellor's intervention in providing psychological needs.

Definition of Concepts
Counselling

Counselling is a professional assistance rendered in resolving personal or psychological needs of concerned individual(s). According to McLeod (2013) Counselling is a purposeful, private conversation arising from the intention of one person, couple or family to reflect on and resolve a problem in living, and the willingness of another person to assist in that endeavour. American Psychology Association (2018) expressed counselling as a professional assistance in coping with personal problems such as emotional, behavioral, vocational, marital, educational, rehabilitation, and life-stage problems. It is a vast discipline with one common goal which is to psychologically assist a client from an unwanted state to wanted state.

Counselling provides insight, psychological education, self-awareness, systematic and cognitive change, empowerment, social action to mention a few. Some of the ethical essentials needed for effective counselling services include; competence, confidentiality, integrity, trustworthiness, self-esteem, problem-solving, objectivity, tolerance to mention a few (Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 2015; Okumu, 2018; Shivani, 2022; Hector, 2023, Mansaray and Mani, 2024).

Out-of-School Children (OOSC)

Out-of-school Children is a well-known concept that is interpreted as set of children of school-age deprived of the opportunity to attend basic schools. UNESCO (2014) stated that a child can be said to belong to OOSC when such an individual is within the official primary school age range and is not enrolled in either primary or secondary school. WORLDBANK (2024) added that children within official primary-school-age children who never attended school or dropped out is fit to be considered as an Out-of-school children.

[1]OLADEJO, Funke T. Ph.D., [2]AJIBOYE,S. K. Ph.D., [3]OJO, O. J. Ph.D.

Out-of-School Children in Some Selected Countries of the World

Out-of-school children are a significant global issue, affecting millions of young people and their future opportunities. The global community continues to strive towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. However, the degree of adherence and strategies put in place to achieve this differ per country. It is not a surprise to see India, the most populated country in the world battling with issues of out-of-school children just as many other countries of the world. Meanwhile, the surprise lies in how the country superbly reduced the rate of Out-of-School children. In 1971, the number of OOSC was reported to 28,305,500 and ever since the trend has been declining. It reached the minimum value of 2,887,748 in 2013. Though the value increased to 6,545,845 in 2020, it is still nothing compared to how effectively the nation has fought in reducing the OOSC population (Chart 1). The Federal Government set up a partnership with Sarva Shiksha Abhiya and state governments as well as local government to increase additional school infrastructure (human and non-human), short-term educational camps for OOSC, school lunch programme, computer education at elementary level, remedial courses, back to school camps, bridge courses and many other schemes to aid school enrollment which has proven to be more than successfully over the years (Mukherjee, 2011).

**Chart 1: India's record of OOSC from 1971 to 2020**
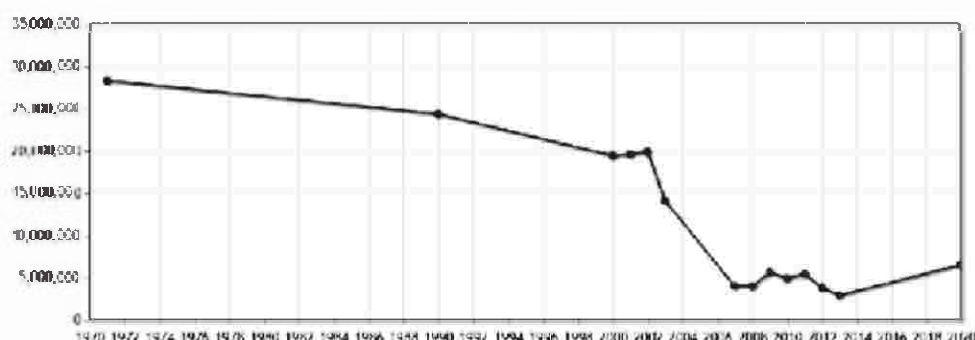
Source: Index Mundi (2024)

The sub-Saharan African countries have high prevalence of OOSC but some of these countries have been successfully immerse in fighting this set back. Concerted efforts such in-service training on child-friendly and gender-sensitive teaching, educational programs designed to reach the rural areas (British High Commission, 2018) and capacity building for teachers (Kwaku, 2022) to mention a few were found effective in reducing Ghana's rate of OOSC. UNICEF and UIS (2015) stated that with the use of classes in mother tongue languages for students from underprivileged areas, Ghana's non-formal education initiative "School for Life" has aided over 120,000 kids to far, with 82% of them making the transitioning to formal school. These efforts were collectively put in place by government and educational stakeholders and it has led to reduction in the population of OOSC(Chart 1).

Chart 1: Out of School Children Trend in Ghana between 2011 and 2021.

141
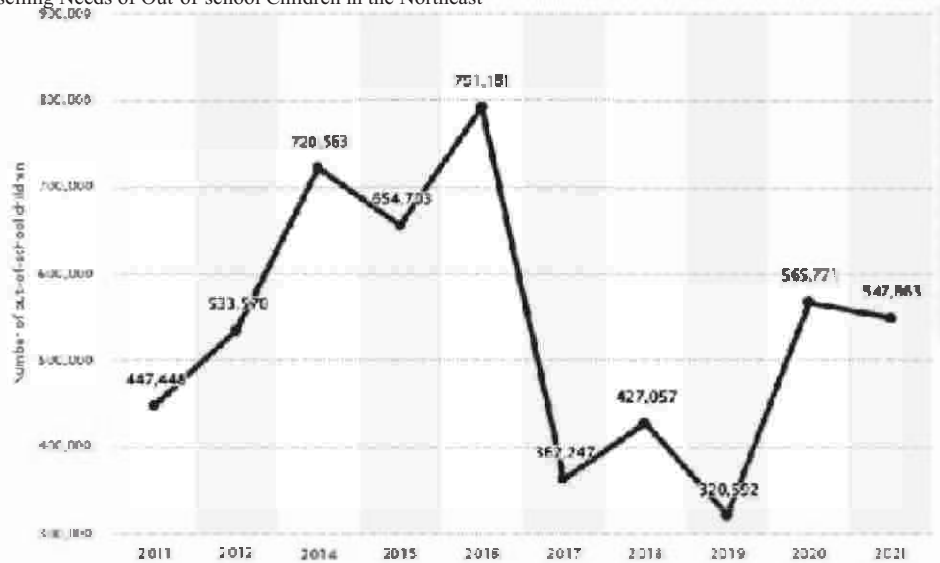
Source: Statista (2024)

Burundi another nation in Africa which has its share of OOSC cases has been providing positive efforts to reduce the population. Burundi has significantly boosted school enrollment and school completion, particularly in the early grades, since instituting free primary education in 2005. Since 2012, elementary education has had gender parity due to a deliberate commitment to guarantee gender parity and encourage females to attend early grades increasing enrollment rate from 68% to 88% (Kabongo*et al.*, 2021).

Brief Overview of Out-of-School Children in Northeast Nigeria

Nigeria holds the record of the highest out-of-school children globally with a population of 20.2 million as estimated by UNICEF (2023). According to Adeleke and Alabede (2022), Nigeria has approximately 41 million children of primary school age and 10.1 million of this population are out of school with concentrations on the northern region (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Geographical Distribution of OOSC in Nigeria**
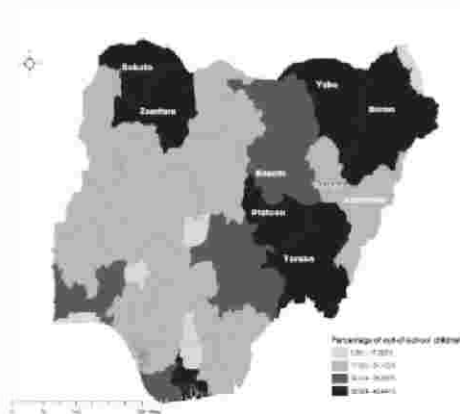
Source: Adeleke and Alabede (2022, modified)

142

[1]OLADEJO, Funke T. Ph.D., [2]AJIBOYE,S. K. Ph.D., [3]OJO, O. J. Ph.D.
Three out of six states (Borno, Yobe and Taraba) of the Northeast are identified as hotspots for OOSC along some other states on the Northwest (Zamfara and Sokoto). Bauch state falls into second category with 24.424 – 28.903% of OOSC in the nation while Adamawa and Gombe the remaining two states in the Northeast are also within significant rate in the ranking of OOSC population with 17.223 – 24.423%.

This agrees with the illiteracy level in the nation. The level of illiteracy in Northeast of Nigeria is found on the high side as compared to other regions as it is only second to Northwest (Chart 2). This is as a result of low enrollmentof school-aged students and insurgency within the territory.

Chart 2: Illiteracy Level of Five of the Six Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria
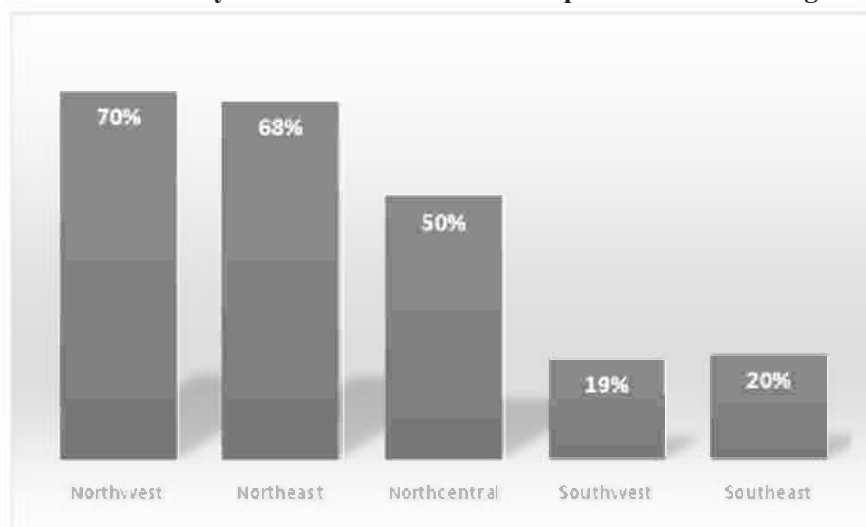
Source: Sankore (2022)

68% of school-age male children were found to be unable to read or write in the Northeast Nigeria. Some identified factors which led to increase in out-of-school children especially in the Northeast Nigeria include:

Child Labour
Like any related phenomena, child labour is a global concern. It is a practice of engaging children with responsibilities or duties that can be injurious and exploitative. Child labor is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development International Labor Organization (ILO, 2019).Amedu and Ossai (2023), child labour is seen as a major obstacle to the realization of universal primary education developing countries. Boutin and Jouvin (2022) weighed the impacts of child labour on education and opined that it negatively influences school attendance, skipping of classes, and long-term school completion. According to United Nations Educational, child labour remains of the main factors to lack of enrollment or drop out-of-school as evident in Sub-Saharan Africa. A total of 24,673,485 children were reported to be engaged in child labour in Nigeria. In Northeast Nigeria, child labour is abruptly pronounced (Chart 2) and seen as a potent drive in the high rate of OOSC within the region.

Chart 2: Child Labour per geopolitical zones in Nigeria

Source: Boutin,D et al (2022) Child Labour Consequences on Education and Health
The Northeast top the polls with 47.5% of the total number of 5-14 children being involved in child labour and are out of school while the region came second with 45.2% of children between age 15-17 engaged in child labour and are out of school. This is extremely on a disadvantage side.
Poverty
Poverty is another major influencer of the worries of out-of-school children. Nigeria drastically numbered among the developing countries of the world is plagued with poverty. About 132.92 million were said to be living below $1.9 (Table 1).

Table 1: Multidimensional Poverty Rate by Zone

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2022)
Northwest is having the highest poverty rate amongst the geopolitical zones of Nigeria with a figure of 45.49 million while Northeast (20.47 million) and North Central (20.19 million) followed in the second and third spot respectively. This according to Ndanusa (2021) is one of the factors that resulted OOSC cases in the Northeast.

Culture
A constructive linkage has been built between education and culture over the years. Culture has its way of impacting education while education also has its way of influencing

144

[1]OLADEJO, Funke T. Ph.D., [2]AJIBOYE,S. K. Ph.D., [3]OJO, O. J. Ph.D.
culture. Nigeria is a nation rich in culture as there are vast and diverse cultures within the nation. In general, as we extend our scope to African countries and some countries of the world, the culture of female education is still under debate and struggling as many adopt that male children should have access to education quite more than the female children. This is still culture well pronounced in Nigeria despite the folds of civilization the country has witnessed.

The Northern culture outright supports early marriage which is the reason behind the 78% of girls in the northern region of Nigeria getting married before the age of 18 (Save the Children International, 2021)leaving girls without proper education. Gladly, government and other notable educational stakeholders have contributed positively to raise the population of girls in schools. With these interventions, 1.5 million girls were enrolled in basic and secondary schools in the Northern Nigeria which increased the attendance rate of girls in primary schools from 43 percent to 70 percent(Onyidinefu, 2022).

Insurgency and Terrorism
The Northeast Nigeria consists of six states which are Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. These states play major hosts to insurgency and terrorism which has since 2009 bedeviled the nation. Seeing the Northeast which is already disadvantaged when it comes to educational rating among contemporary geopolitical zones in the nation due to poor enrollment within this region play host to insurgency is disheartening. Insurgency and terrorism dealt more blow to the hopes of reviving educational activities in the region. The rise of insurgency in this region led to destruction of over 1,500 schools with 2,295 teachers killed (Aluko, 2018). UNICEF (2024) reported that over 1,680 students have abduction in Nigerian schools with the highest population coming from Northeast, the epicenter of Insurgency.

Couselling Needs of the Out-of-School-Children
Counselling has been found to be instrumental in child development. It supports children during their developmental stages to bring about healthy personality and social *development. Kabi, (2022)* opined that timely guidance and counselling aid in modifying social and emotional behaviours of school-aged children. It is inhumane to think or assume that the out-of-school children are in right shape of mind or to accept their imbalance and do nothing to help. OOSC have really suffered different forms of attacks (insurgency) and are victims of child labour and cultural belief which have holistically hampered their education and development. Adeleke and Alabede (2022) opined that OOSC are likely to be very inconsistent in social, cognitive, emotional, and physical skills' development.

Social affective disorders (Dabal*et al.*, 2019), depression (Aransiola and Justus, 2018)have been discovered to be frequent mental issues developed by a victim of child labourwhile Rigutto*et al* (2021) identified anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder as common psychological impacts of insurgency attacks. In addition, Sun (2023) stated that a victim of poverty can also experience anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. The degree of the mental health issue depends on an individual and such individual's access to coping strategies.

Depression
Depression is a common experience to all as sometimes, people can feel low or sad. However, when it extends over a long period of time, it is no longer regarded as a simple experience but as depressive disorder. Depression is an affective disorder characterized by a gloomy mood, lack of interest or pleasure, guilt or low self-worth sentiments, trouble sleeping or eating, low energy, and difficulty concentrating (Bhowmik, *et al.*, 2012). Psychologically, the

145

sight of students going to school is affective to an out-of-school child engaged in child labour or impeded by poverty. As he or she is seeing his or her peers go and return from school meanwhile, he or she does not have access to the same school for because of poverty or child labour, such a child will develop depression thereby affecting his or her social behaviouras well as personal development. Depression on its own can lead to mortality, self-harm and criminal acts when not managed (Fazel*et al.,* 2015; Yu *et al.*, 2017).

If personal and national development alongside crime-free community remain our interest in this nation, it behooves counsellors to rise up to the task of meeting the counselling needs of out-of-school children to bring out the best from them and inspire them to possess self-worth and self-motivation.

Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety is an unsettled feeling that results in fear, heightened awareness, and bodily symptoms like a fast heartbeat. Anxiety disorder is an intense fear which currently affects the cognitive and emotional development of children of different ages, affecting all systems and organs of the body (Mendrano *et al.*, 2020). Swan and Kendall (2016) opined that anxiety disorder is common among school-age students leading to significant impairment in academic, familial, and social functioning. According to Burrillo (2014), anxiety can cause issues with focus, short-term memory, anxiety about the future, and worry about what might happen to other people.

OOSC in the northeast are largely prone to encounter this emotional disorder as a result of fear for the future. It is acceptable to say that OOSC believe poverty and lack of education have collectively shut out their formal and legal chances of having a better future. This generates continuous impulse in their hearts and fix them to live each day in fear of what tomorrow holds. The question of what the future holds for the OOSC should not only be the concerned of the victims but that of the counsellors so as to help them out of the mental stress and make them see a better future thereby erasing anxiety off their minds.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PSTD)

It is a condition that arises certain individuals who have gone through ashocking, frightening, terrible or hazardous experience. According to Koenen *et al.* (2017) Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that develops in some people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident or assault, a terrorist act or military combat, or those who have been threatened with death, sexual violence or injury.

Over a decade and half, the many school-aged children in the Northeast have witnessed suicide bombings, kidnapping, torturing, gun shooting, arson and killings of their loved ones in their schools or around their homes.From this incidents, it is natural to develop PSTD. PSTD when not rightly and timely treated can lead to decreased quality of life, impairment in day-to-day functioning and death (Birhan*et al.*, 2023). According to Nguyen, a UNICEF field officer in Maiduguri, Borno State, the children's exposure to mass trauma and family violence, relocation, social isolation, loss of social standing, and perceived prejudice are stressors that worsen chronic anxiety, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder dread, and even depression in children (Tolu-Kolawole, 2022).

In lieu of this, the counselling needs of OOSC in Northeast must be addressed by deploying adequate counselling services to aid their emotional, social and physical development for the individual, societal and national growth.

[1]OLADEJO, Funke T. Ph.D., [2]AJIBOYE,S. K. Ph.D., [3]OJO, O. J. Ph.D.

Counselling Strategy

To combat the counselling needs of the gross population of OOSC in the Northeast, Nigeria, actionable strategies must be put in place to address the children individually, in group and other concerned areas as discussed below;

1. **One-on-one Counselling**

    This is a form of counselling that encompasses a professional counsellor and a client seeking assistance. It is counselling strategy designed to address an individual based on his or her need(s). One-on-one counselling is giving of expert guidance and support to those going through personal or psychological challenges in the form of one-on-one sessions (Adedajoet al., 2021). For victims who are under extreme social dysfunction, one-on-one counselling is the best to subscribe to. It allows the victims have a heart-to-heart conversations and meetings which can be scheduled to fitted hours. Unlike group counselling, one-on-one counselling does not often experience drop-out from counselling session.

2. **Group Counselling**

    Group counselling has beentested over times to offer viable counselling intervention to reduce PSTD (Sloan *et al.*, 2013). Griffin *et al.* (2023) opined that psychotherapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy as well as cognitive processing therapy have been used in group format to reduce PSTD symptoms in victim. In research conducted on group counselling versus individual counselling for PSTD victims, Imel*et al.* (2013) discovered that victims of PSTD who receive group counselling has 12% recovery rate that victims who subscribed to individual counselling. Victims of anxiety and depression have also been assisted using group counselling. The advantage this format of counselling over individual counselling is that it provides rest on the social group as its standpoint. It harnesses the benefits of the social group as it is conducted in a group (Muldon *et al.*, 2019; Griffin, *et al.*, 2023). Receiving therapy in group allows clients to ease off social stress or dysfunction.

3. **Spiritual Counselling**

    This goes beyond the traditional counselling strategies as it focuses on harnessing the belief in religion or spirituality to provide assistance in targeted area of a client. This form of counselling relies on the spirituality dimension or perceptive of human as an inclusion to biological, psychological and social perspectives (Edunjobi, *et al.*, 2023). Plumb (2011) submitted that greater strength in coping and decision-making, enhanced support and personal coherence as the benefits of spiritual counselling. In the study spirituality in counselling, Hook *et al.* (2010) randomly reviewed 24 clinical trials and found 12-step facilitation for Substance abuse and Christian accommodative behaviour therapy for depression effective. In the same vein, Khan*et al.*, (2022) opined that Islamic foundational teaching is therapeutically potent in treatment of depression. In addition, Moulaei*et al.*, (2023) stated that holy Qur'an recitation and listening has its positive effect in suppressing anxiety, depression and stress.Harnessing the religious beliefs and practices is typically functional for counselling the OOSC because of its benefits. On this note, Edunjobi*et al*(2023) submitted that spirituality counselling can deal with stress by giving a sense of peace, purpose and forgiveness. This counselling approach also suites counselling needs of OOSC.

Conclusion

The needs of OOSC children are vast and can only be met by collective efforts of concerned personalities, administrations and organizations. One of the needs of the OOSC as discussed in this paper is counselling. Psychological growth and development of the OOSC is very paramount to the individual and national development. Issues like depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder are common mental illness associated with OOSC and can appropriately be cured though constructive counselling services. Therefore, it becomes imperative for stakeholders and counsellors to grant OOSC better state of minds.

Recommendations

Rehabilitation of OOSC is a collective work and on such, the author hereby recommended that the following should be expedited into actions in continuation of the ongoing rehabilitation moves in the Northeast;

1. Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON) should set up a specially designed scheme to address the psychological needs of OOSC
2. The Federal Government and other national stakeholders should provide human and non-human resources to aid counselling services in the Northeast
3. OOSC should avail themselves for counselling sections as appointed.
4. Local Government and community rulers should support in providing temporary venues as well as strict attendance measure of the OOSC for their appointed counselling services.

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ROLES OF INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIVERSITY EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Universities worldwide are established with the sole aim of achieving success. The importance of university education to the development of a nation cannot be underestimated. This is because universities as institutions of higher learning are established and managed to achieve the desired learning goals and objectives. The goal of a university cannot be achieved without an effective institutional communication process in place (Ojo, 2020). Hence, the need or effective institutional communication in universities cannot be over-emphasized.

The university consists of human elements (administrators, teaching, non-teaching and the students) who interact to effectively realize the system's goals and objectives. Consequently, for effective interactions to take place among the human elements in the university, communication is highly essential. Thus, communication is germane to the survival of any organization because it is the process by which information about the goals, objectives, plans and philosophies can be communicated to all the members of the organization. It is the medium through which relationships are established, extended, maintained and sustained, through interaction with fellow humans.

Communication is a two-way process that involves two individuals or groups of individuals in an organization with varying degrees of interaction. The inter-relatedness of the school activities makes communication a matter of top priority and a first-line item which serves as a vital tool in the process of linking people to achieve a common purpose in institutions like universities.

Institutional communication can be a *social process that provides contact and information exchange between both departments and units of organization and organization's environment for the operation of organization and accomplishment of the organization's objective*. Institutional communication involves understanding how the context of an organization influences communication processes and how the nature of communication differentiates it from other forms of organizational behaviours (Ojo et al., 2019). It should therefore be noted that communication stands the place of pride as a unifying bond in a bid to accomplish organizational goals. It is based on this background introduction that this conceptual paper was carried out.

Concept of Institutional Communication

Communication is a vast concept and institutional communication is a sub category of communication that perceives how individuals communicate in an organization. The concept of institutional communication is defined by different authors. For instance, Bovee and Thill (2000) attributed institutional communication to th*e* exchange of knowledge and opinions in the organization. Argenti (2003) opined that it is the process of creating a positive atmosphere for all employees of organization. Kalla (2005) viewed it as all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organization.Orsini (2000) described it as the full range of ways that people communicate with each other within the organization.

152

Institutional communication is basically about developing relationship between individuals and groups, working at different levels in different areas of specialization within an organization. Therefore, institutional communication is said to be a process that integrates different roles, to develop and embrace collectively all sorts f relationships between individuals, groups and organizations (Durgun, 2006). Effective IC in an organization allows the employees to recognize the roles and functions that are expected from them.

Concept of Effectiveness

The literature pertaining to school effectiveness has developed into a rapidly emerging body of research and related literature. From the early seventies to the present, much of the research on school effectiveness has been on the characteristics of school effectiveness (Durosaro, 2003). Peretomode (2003) pointed out that the effectiveness of any school administrator should be measured objectively by his performance, which is the maximum output. He also asserted that the standard in measuring teachers' effectiveness is student performance in various attainment tests and examinations. Similarly, an effective administrator should be measured by his goals attainment and objectives.

Administrative effectiveness could be conceptualized as the relationship between the organizational and external environment from the internal functioning of the organization (Sofoluwe, 2003). Peretomode (2003) pointed out that researchers are faced with the problem of deciding the criteria to be used in measuring administrative effectiveness

Figure 1:
Conceptual Framework on Institutional Communication and University Effectiveness
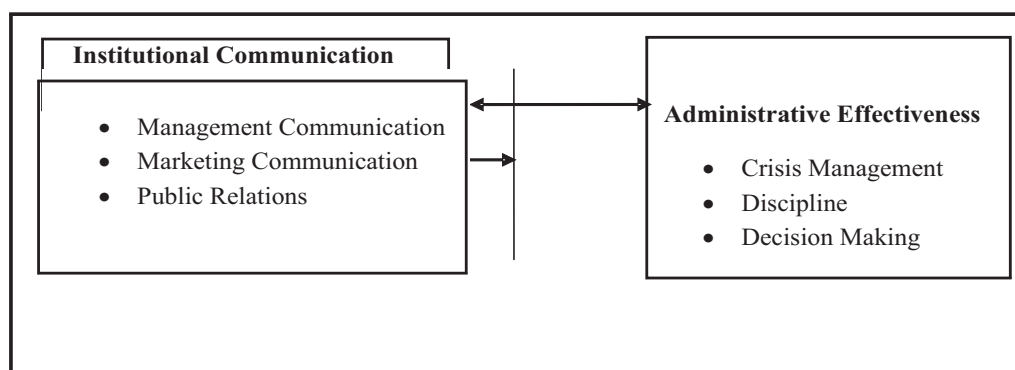
Source: Researchers' Design (2017)

The conceptual frameworkas shown in Figure 1 focused on the role of IC in the achievement of university effectiveness. The institutional communication has 3 dimensions which are management, marketing and public relations communications which of course should have an impact on the effectiveness of the university. Hence the following sub-section deals with the dimensions of IC:

Institutional Management Communication in Universities

For university institution's operations, effective management communication is the key. Research shows that management communication in universities has a direct relation with several institutional outcomes i.e. teaching and non-teaching staff commitment, performance,

social responsibility behaviors and satisfaction. There are three formal types of management communication in relation to a university; they are top-down communication, bottom-up communication and horizontal communication. Top-down communication is related to the decisions and procedures that are communicated from the university administrators to the lecturers and students. On the other hand, bottom-up communication entails information and outcomes that are communicated to the university'sadministrators by the lecturers and students. Hence, horizontal communication permits synchronization and information sharing between different departments within the university (Adler & Elmhorst, 1996).

Bell and Martin (2008) termed management communication as a fundamental aspect of organization as *horizontal, vertical, below or above information exchange and meaning transfer through official and non-official channels to reach managers' objectives.* Organizational researchers and administrators agree that communication is an essential part of organization's success (Paulraj, Lado & Chen, 2008).Management communication entails providing facts and figures to workers regarding organization's official rules and regulations, monetary outcomes, individual and group triumphs and consumers' criticism. Administratively, management can disseminate information regarding organizations through methods like control, group conferences, pamphlets and circulars, assignment pronouncement and website(Argenti, 1998).

Institutional Marketing Communication in Universities in Nigeria

Institutional Marketing Communication contributes to the effectiveness of administrators. IMC is the process by which universities develop and implement various forms of persuasive communication programs with parents, students and other prospective customers (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). Institutional Marketing Communication (IMC) regards communication as the focal point of relationships with all university customers because it creates brand value in the form of sales, profits, and brand equity. IMC adopts an outside-in logic: it starts with the analysis of the relational needs of customers in order to develop suitable products and services and to align communication activities. All moments of contact between the university and the clients are valuable since every communication that emanates from the university contributes to developing customer loyalty and organizational reputation (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003).

Marketing communication can be divided into four areasi. e. marketing communication addressed to customers; institutional communication dealing with all stakeholders including customers, opinion leaders, politicians, citizens, activist groups, and so on; management communication targeted to all roles that contribute to the value chain of the company including employees, suppliers, industrial partners, and retailers; and financial communication addressed to investors including shareholders, stockholders, and banks. Each area has specific targets, content and aims.

Nowadays marketing is becoming more oriented to creating and maintaining positive relationships with all stakeholders in order to balance the company's need to make a profit with customer satisfaction and the public interest (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). For this reason, both product and corporate communication activities are important in achieving marketing objectives. They refer to the integration of communication at both single brand and company level and encompass all communication initiatives carried out by the company directed toward its stakeholders, from a coordinated and synergetic management perspective.

Institutional Public Relations in Universities

Universities around the world have public relations offices that are created to propagate their missions. Quite often, the public relations office is charged with the responsibility of

advancing the objectives of the university to enhance its corporate image.**public relation companies c**an build their meaningful PR in different ways. For example, "the typical public relations measurement focuses on counting clipping, circulation figures, and doing some message analysis. Given the high proportion of public relations activities that are still focused on media relations and publicity, media content analysis is one methodology or tool for evaluating public relations. Media content analysis can provide valuable insights into what is likely to be on the public agenda in the future (Kyung-ran Kim, 2007).

PR is a necessary tool for corporate organizations as well as tertiary institutions all over the world. To prove that, public relation (PR), the predecessor to the corporate communication (CorpComn) function, grew out of necessity. Although corporations had no specific strategy for communications, they often had to respond to external constituencies whether they wanted to or not (Argenti, 2003). The goal of PR is to influence the behaviours of groups of people to each other (Tench &Yeomans, 2009).

The communication manager develops communication strategies and policies with a long-term horizon. The managerial role implies extending the skills of public relations practitioners to financial and economic analysis, decision-making and project management. Mastering managerial skills can legitimize public relations professionals within the executive management board of the company.

Core Objectives of Effective Institutional Communication in Universities

According to Spitzer and Swider (2003), the following are the core objectives of IC in universities:

(1) the information communicated to the employee audience, must be fully comprehended and accepted in terms of its content, intent, significance and quality message;

(2) the aim of the communication in terms of encouraging, guiding, updating, or gaining participation among the employee's audience, must be attained by the majority of the employees;

(3) the outcomes of effective internal communication must result in enhancing one or more of the key success factors i.e. quality of the product, sales, productivity, employee performance and contentment, and finally customer satisfaction.

Roles of Institutional Communication in the Achievement of University Effectiveness in Nigeria

The fundamental role that institutional communication plays in a university is enormous because it serves as the backbone for achieving institutional success and effectiveness. Hence, the following are the major roles of IC in universities:

i. To *build and nourish employee relations:* Institutional communication fosters relationships with stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community.

ii. *Establish trust:* Institutional communication helps to build trust, loyalty, and support among the stakeholders in the university environment.

iii. *Providing timely and reliable information and thereby contributing to general motivation, particularly in times of change and stress* (Dolphin, 2005).

iv. Information Dissemination: Institutional communication ensures that accurate and timely information is shared with stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community.

v. Branding and Reputation Management: Institutional communication helps shape the

155

university's brand and reputation by promoting its mission, values, and achievements.

vi. Crisis Communication: Institutional communication plays a critical role in managing crises, such as emergencies, controversies, or reputational threats, by providing timely and transparent information.

vii. Marketing and Recruitment: Institutional communication supports marketing and recruitment efforts by promoting the university's programs, services, and achievements to prospective students, faculty, and staff.

viii. Media Relations: Institutional communication manages relationships with media outlets to secure coverage of university news, research, and achievements.

Conclusion

Without effective institutional communication, there is no way efficiency can be achieved in the university. The overall aim of institutional communication is to foster the university's effectiveness through harmonious cordial relationships among all the human elements in the university. Furthermore, IC is necessary because it helps to enhance collaborations between individuals functioning in different departments in the same organization. Consequently, IC helps in fostering job satisfaction, maintaining operations of organization and achieving organizations core aims and objectives.

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