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Socio-Cultural Problems and Maladaptive Behaviours of Post-Adolescents across Culture in Nigeria: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

Through survey research design, this study investigated the socio-cultural problems and maladaptive behaviours of post-adolescents in Nigeria. Out of 379 National Youth Service Corps (N. Y. S. C.) members drawn from various parts of Nigeria for the 2010/2011 service year, deployed to Abakaliki, Ebonyi and Izzi Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State, 180 formed the sample size. Information from the respondents was obtained in line with the research questions that guided the study using Post-Adolescent Behaviour Problem Inventory (PBPI). Using descriptive statistics for data analysis, it was discovered that armed robbery, examination fraud, poor attitude to work, addiction to substances and living above income are witnessed across culture in Nigeria. Specifically, kidnapping is a major problem in the South East and South-South geopolitical zones while political thuggery, and wanton destruction of lives and property are common in the South West and Northern Nigeria. Besides, religious intolerance and tribalism feature more in the north than any other place in Nigeria. These problems are mainly due

to poor leadership and youth unemployment. The paper recommended behaviour modification, mentoring, cognitive restructuring and assertive training among others as contemporary counselling strategies that can checkmate post-adolescent problems and maladaptive behaviours across culture in Nigeria.

Keywords: socio-cultural, maladaptive, post-adolescents and counselling.

Introduction

Nigeria is a multinational country that is bedeviled with varying problems of development, identity and belongingness where the citizenry are mostly concerned with their places of ethnic origin. According to Ogbu, Ukwueze and Mazi (2000), there are over 300 of such ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, each demonstrating or representing her unique cultural background. Through this ethnic attachment, the populace display varying behavioural problems that demonstrate their close affinity. Virtually all aspects of human development experience uniquely packaged problems or crises and maladaptive dispositions that cut across several ethnic and cultural boundaries throughout the world. Stenberg (1999) is of the opinion that from socio-cultural perspective, individuals are found in all gender, ethnic and racial groups that mean different things to different societal or cultural groups. Ikeotuonye (2009) asserts that culture is the totality of a people's way of life which includes child rearing practices, economic activities, interactions with peoples outside their culture, religion, values, norms and morality which differ across culture.

As a matter of fact, individuals encounter different problems and display several behaviours according to their cultural background. Udoh and Ajala in Ozoh (2009) state that what is abnormal and unreasonable in one society may be considered normal and reasonable in another society. Bello and Abdullahi (2010) believe that psychosocial and emotional environments to which an individual was exposed to in his process of growing up influence his mental health. Societal problems and maladaptive behaviours are therefore relative and peculiar to specific environment and culture. Adegoke (2011) opines that all behaviours are learned and displayed in a cultural context and since peoples' values, attitudes, and life goals are dictated by the environments of different culture, cultural differences will continue to be important in the helping professions. He maintains that to understand human behaviour, it must be studied in its socio-cultural context where the counsellor demonstrates high regard for the multidimensional cultural bias of his clients.

The story is not and cannot be different in Nigeria as what may constitute appropriate behaviours in the south west geopolitical zone may be seen as a progress towards ill mental health and bastardization of culture and people in northern or other parts of the country and vice versa. Besides, adjustment problems may be heightened by personality inputs and societal conformity of the citizens of a particular geopolitical zone where misconceived or conduct disorders result to antisocial behaviours or maladaptive problems. Ironically, the perpetuation of societal norms and evils always rest in the hands of people in their prime ages that belong to the post-adolescent group of human development that are often referred to as pillars of the society.

The post-adolescent period is described by Ukwueze (2009) as a middle-age stage of emotional crisis and a time of critical self assessment involving active social relationship, establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living, loss or achievement of the fantasy hopes of youth life and physiological stresses due to changes in lifestyle, interpersonal relationships and dynamic vocational aspirations. Okorodudu, Ossai and Ferire (2007) see people here as those who are below or a little above 30 years of age who are vibrant, energetic, naïve, and often used by ethnic and class ideologists to foment troubles. Cleary (1992) sees post-adolescence (mid-life stage) as a major transition period for a man when he learns what it means to be a man and spends a lot of energy proving he is one.

Post-adolescence in this paper is conceptualized as a stage of human development when an individual is between the age bracket of eighteen and thirty years with a unique culture of life which is a carryover from adolescence. An individual here re-evaluates those images of life he encountered as a teenager and discovers that something is missing. He finds himself in a tertiary institution where he tries to develop a healthy relationship with others and accepts others as human beings with feelings. According to Denga in Abdullahi and Bello (2009), there is increase in self-confidence; effective budgeting of money; problem of boy/girl relationship (and marriage); and improvement in the ability to make personal decisions at this stage of life. A post-adolescent is a young adult with sense of inferiority, family and social conflicts like religious and ethnic conflicts, lack of emotional adjustment, loneliness, depression, financial constraints, examination fraud, cultism, and addiction to substances including habitual behaviours and will be used interchangeably as youth in this paper. Osakinle and Bada (2008) see the adjustment problems of post-adolescents especially freshmen in the universities as anxiety, tension, rigid behaviour, distress,

poor concentration, poor study habit, absenteeism, and problem of direction of life worth which came about as a result of personal crises and emotional problems. Unfortunately, the post-adolescents seek counselling to solve both psychological and psychosocial problems from parents and lecturers/ teachers and not from experts (Abdullahi and Bello, 2009).

Across the frontiers of different cultural segments in Nigeria, Okorodudu, Ossai and Ferire (2007) opine that the post-adolescents (youths) are used to perpetrate acts of tribalism, corruption, election rigging and religious riots which threaten national integration. They are particular about poor leadership, neglect and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria where security of life and property has been a nightmare over the years. In the same vein, Omabe (2009) observes religious intolerance as a cause of social instability often perpetrated by youths who usually criticize each other and cause conflicts and violence that have claimed several lives and property in places like Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Jos religious and ethnic conflicts as well as kidnapping in the South East and South-South regions.

Saidu (2009) opines that every geopolitical zone in Nigeria is characterized by entrenched structure of violence with the youths as the principal driving infrastructure that ignite the flames on violent conflict. According to him, in the oil rich South-South, resource control and environmental conflict waged by ethnic militias of the Niger Delta holds sway while in the South West, the youths are the principal executors of ethnic and communal violence like in the three geopolitical zones of northern Nigeria where there is incessant outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts and disputes relating to land rights, indigenization and anti-Sharia protests engineered and masterminded by the youths. In the South East too, there are often organized crime and political turbulence by vigilante groups made up of vibrant youths in their twenties and early thirties.

Abdullahi and Bello (2009) opine that young adults lack basic services and facilities and also encounter lack of emotional adjustment, problem of drug abuse and misuse, financial constraints and youth unemployment which account for youth restiveness in Kaduna and Kano States. In the same vein, Ukwueze (2011) is of the opinion that the sporadic confusion and riots often occasioned by religious intolerance in northern Nigeria are primarily due to ignorance about religious faith, lack of love for persons outside ones ethnic domain, poor style of leadership and election rigging. He noted that the incessant bomb attacks and explosions on innocent citizens in Borno, Bauchi,

Kano, Kaduna, Niger and Yobe States by a religious sect called *Boko Haram*; kidnapping and hostage taking in the South East and South-South geopolitical zones; and gang rape, political rascality and wanton destruction of lives and property in the South West at any slightest provocation even by labour leaders suggest that youth problems in Nigeria are culture based.

From the literature as given above, emphasis has been on the conduct disorders that often accompany agitations for economic empowerment in Nigeria. None of the studies attempted to determine the peculiarities of socio-cultural problems and maladaptive behaviours of post-adolescents across culture in Nigeria. Those who attempted to do so (Abdullahi and Bello, 2009; Omabe, 2009; and Saidu 2009) only cited some instances of breakdown of law and order in some parts of the country without actually juxtaposing the main issues of socio-cultural problems and misconducts of people in their mid-life stage in order to ascertain the counselling challenges of the identified regional problems that are threatening the co-operate existence of Nigeria. This study is therefore capitalizing on this gap to assess the socio-cultural problems and maladaptive behaviours in post-adolescence across culture in Nigeria with a view to providing professional counselling strategies that are culture oriented, specific, strategic and digital which can arrest youth restiveness in the country and ensure appropriate transition from young adult stage to successful stage of old age.

Research questions

1. What are the post-adolescent problems across culture in Nigeria?

2. What is the level of spread of post-adolescent maladaptive behaviours in the geopolitical zones of Nigeria?

3. What are responsible for post-adolescent maladaptive behaviours across culture in Nigeria?

Research methodology

This study employed the survey research design to ascertain the opinions of the respondents on key issues like the problems, maladaptive behaviours and their causes among post-adolescents across culture in Nigeria. A population of 379 National Youth Service Corps (N. Y. S. C.) members serving in Abakaliki, Ebonyi, and Izzi Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State, Southeast Nigeria was used. Out of this, a sample size of 180 corps members with an average age of 26 years, selected through simple random sampling

technique constituted the study group. These corps members were drawn from different parts of the country and resident at Nkwagu Military Cantonment, Abakaliki. They were made up of Batch A, B and C of 2010/2011 service year deployed to Abakaliki, Ebonyi and Izzi Local Government Headquarters; Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki; Nigerian Army Records Office, Abakaliki; Cantonment Military Hospital; Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation (Radio and Television Stations); Command Secondary School, Abakaliki; Army Day Secondary School, Abakaliki; and a host of other public and private schools.

An instrument called Post-Adolescent Behaviour Problem Inventory (PBPI) was developed and used for data collection. The instrument covered personal data of the respondents, problem areas, and post-adolescent maladaptive behaviours and their causes. It was constructed with four response categories: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) to elicit information from the respondents. The test items were originally seventy five in number but later pruned to fifty nine with nineteen items covering post-adolescent problems, twenty other items on maladaptive behaviours and another set of twenty items on the causes of post-adolescent maladaptive behaviours after test validation by two experts in counselling psychology. The final version of the instrument was subjected to test re-test exercise on two occasions (after an interval of two weeks) as administered on thirty youths resident in the cantonment who were not meant for the study. The correlation coefficient of the trial tests was computed as 0.72 to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

Data collection

The instrument (PBPI) was administered to the respondents through the Corpers Liaison Officers (CLOs) of the affected units or areas. Thereafter, copies of the instrument were collected from the CLOs and scores were extracted and weighted for use. Out of 200 copies distributed, 180 of them were appropriately filled according to instructions and used for the study.

Data analysis and results

The data obtained were grouped into four zones in a modified form of the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria as South East (SE), South-South (SS), South West (SW) and North-North (NN). The North-North comprises the three geopolitical zones in northern Nigeria which include North Central, North East and North West for the purpose of this study. The reason for merging

the three zones together as North-North is based on the fact that the entire north is believed to be more homogenous in character than the southern parts of Nigeria. According to Akinwumi (2005), the northern zone represents the northern emirates inhabited by the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group that extends southwards beyond rivers Niger and Benue. The Hausa is the Nigeria's largest cultural group with Hausa language as the lingua franca for the former northern region (Okpokunu, 1977). The data thus obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics in line with the research questions of the study. A mean score of 2.5 and above was considered to imply an acceptance of a statement as a problem, maladaptive behaviour or cause of maladaptive behaviours in the geopolitical zones.

Table 1: Responses on post-adolescent problems on regional basis

S/N	STATEMENT	SE(26)		SS(52)		SW(39)		NN(63)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Unemployment is a major youth problem.	3.0	0.7	3.1	0.7	3.4	0.5	2.9	0.9
2	Fear of death destabilizes youths.	3.5	0.5	2.4	0.6	3.2	0.8	2.3	0.5
3	Many youths suffer from depression.	3.2	0.7	3.1	0.7	3.0	0.6	3.0	0.9
4	Youths face a lot of frustration.	3.1	0.8	3.1	0.6	3.0	0.6	3.2	0.6
5	A lot of youths are poor.	3.4	0.6	3.1	0.7	3.4	0.8	3.2	0.4
6	Many youths are spiritually poor.	2.7	0.7	3.4	0.6	3.8	0.4	3.7	0.5
7	Youths are engrossed in self-conflict.	2.2	0.6	3.1	0.5	3.0	0.6	2.9	0.3
8	Youths lack competence in their jobs.	2.0	0.7	3.1	0.9	3.0	0.6	3.8	0.4
9	Many youths suffer discrimination.	3.3	0.4	2.7	0.7	2.8	0.4	2.3	0.6
10	Indecision is a major youth problem.	3.0	0.7	2.9	0.9	2.6	0.5	2.8	1.1
11	Youths often have entangled love relationships.	3.2	0.6	3.1	0.6	2.8	0.8	3.0	0.9
12	Youths have poor self perceptions.	3.1	0.8	2.4	0.6	3.0	0.6	2.6	0.9
13	Youths lack specific direction in life.	2.0	0.7	2.6	0.9	2.4	0.8	2.3	0.8
14	Youths criticize issues a lot.	3.2	0.6	3.3	0.6	2.6	0.5	3.2	0.6
15	Career choice is a problem among youths.	3.0	0.9	2.1	0.9	1.8	0.8	2.0	0.9
16	Emotional outburst is a youth problem.	3.1	0.8	3.3	0.8	2.9	0.4	3.6	0.7
17	Marital confusion is a serious youth issue.	2.4	0.5	2.9	0.9	2.4	0.5	2.2	0.6
18	Youths are easily lured into wrong doing.	3.6	0.5	3.1	0.6	3.4	0.5	3.0	0.5
19	The policy of quota system angers youths.	3.4	0.6	2.9	0.9	2.4	0.8	2.0	0.7

The data on Table 1 indicate that fear of death is not a problem among the youths in South-South (SS) and North-North (NN) regions of Nigeria while unemployment is a universal problem that cuts across culture in Nigeria. The youths in the South East do not believe that youths lack competence in their jobs while others believe so. In the same vein, while only the youths in the South East suffer from self conflict, youths in other zones except South-South have positive self perception. Career choice is a problem in the South East unlike other places while there is marital confusion among youths in the

South-South only. In the north, the youths do not believe that quota system is a problem unlike in the other regions. As indicated, youths are easily lured into wrong doing across culture in Nigeria. Likewise, they are very critical about issues in all the regions. In addition, frustration, depression, spiritual poverty, indecision, love relationship and poverty cut across all the regions in Nigeria among the post-adolescents.

Table 2: Responses on the spread of maladaptive behaviours on regional basis

S/N	STATEMENT	SE(26)		SS(52)		SW(39)		NN(63)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Youths engage in exam malpractices.	3.4	0.5	3.4	0.7	3.4	0.3	2.7	0.8
2	Sexual immorality is a way of life.	3.6	0.5	3.3	0.7	3.6	0.5	2.3	0.9
3	Cultism ranks high among youths.	3.1	0.6	3.5	0.7	3.3	0.6	2.9	0.8
4	Indecent dressing is very common.	2.9	0.8	3.4	0.6	3.6	0.5	1.5	0.5
5	Youths have poor reading culture.	3.2	0.7	3.4	0.5	3.4	0.7	3.3	0.6
6	Youths have poor attitude to work.	3.1	0.9	3.5	0.6	3.2	0.6	3.2	0.6
7	Youths live utopian life style.	2.4	0.7	3.4	0.6	2.6	0.7	2.6	0.7
8	Militancy is a feature of youth life.	2.9	0.6	3.6	0.5	3.8	1.9	3.4	0.6
9	Religious intolerance is very common.	2.0	0.9	2.4	0.5	2.0	0.9	3.3	0.6
10	Kidnapping is a way of life.	3.6	0.5	3.5	0.7	1.7	0.8	2.4	0.9
11	Economic fraud is a common problem.	2.6	0.7	2.5	0.5	3.6	0.7	1.6	0.6
12	Armed robbery is an alternative trade.	3.2	0.7	3.6	0.6	3.4	0.5	3.6	0.5
13	Youths engage in certificate forgery.	3.5	0.6	3.3	0.6	2.1	0.8	3.1	0.5
14	Youths are addicted to substances.	3.0	0.6	3.3	0.8	2.9	0.9	3.1	0.7
15	Presence of ethnic hooliganism.	2.2	0.9	2.3	0.8	2.4	0.6	3.6	0.5
16	Political thuggery is very common.	3.3	0.5	2.3	0.7	3.5	0.5	2.9	0.7
17	Many youths are potential vandals.	2.1	0.8	3.6	0.5	3.5	0.5	3.3	0.8
18	Youths lack enduring leadership traits.	3.2	0.6	3.3	0.6	2.6	0.5	3.2	0.7
19	Opposition to government policies.	2.3	0.4	2.5	0.9	3.6	0.4	2.2	0.6
20	Pursuance of material self-interest.	2.9	0.9	2.7	0.6	3.2	0.6	2.1	0.6

The data on Table 2 show that sexual immorality and indecent dressing are not major maladaptive behaviours among the youths in northern Nigeria unlike in other regions of the country. Only the youths in the South East don't live utopian life and often not engage in acts of vandalism while the rest do so. Religious intolerance and ethnic hooliganism are features of youth life in the northern part of the country while kidnapping is a common feature among the youths in the South East and South-South regions. Economic fraud is not common among the youths in the North-North while it is a common feature of youth life in the South East, South West and South-South geopolitical zones of the country. Certificate forgery is not common in the

South West but very rampant in other regions especially in the South East. In the same vein, political thuggery is not common in the South-South but an entrenched cultural trait of people in the South West in particular and other geopolitical zones. Also, the youths in the South West always oppose government policies while pursuance of material self-interest cuts across culture except in northern Nigeria as indicated on the table.

Table 3: Responses on causes of post-adolescent maladaptive behaviours

S/N	STATEMENT	SE(26)		SS(52)		SW(39)		NN(63)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Unemployment.	3.6	0.5	3.4	0.6	3.4	0.5	3.0	0.8
2	Poverty.	2.3	0.8	3.1	0.7	2.5	0.5	3.6	0.5
3	Resource control.	1.9	0.8	3.6	0.5	2.7	0.9	1.9	0.8
4	Quest for political leadership.	1.5	0.5	2.3	0.6	3.4	0.5	3.3	0.7
5	Discrimination.	3.5	0.5	3.3	0.5	3.4	0.6	2.9	0.9
6	Spirit of religious intolerance.	1.7	0.7	1.8	0.6	2.3	0.9	3.4	0.6
7	Illiteracy.	2.7	0.8	3.5	0.5	1.7	0.6	3.8	0.4
8	Difficulty in coping with life challenges.	3.0	0.9	3.4	0.6	3.0	0.6	3.5	0.5
9	Poor leadership.	3.1	0.7	3.3	0.6	3.5	0.7	2.3	0.8
10	Lack of information.	3.2	0.8	3.5	0.5	3.6	0.5	3.4	0.6
11	Underemployment.	2.3	0.9	3.2	0.9	3.1	0.7	1.8	0.6
12	Lack of basic infrastructure.	3.3	0.6	3.7	0.5	2.0	0.7	1.7	0.7
13	Economic mismanagement.	2.2	0.7	2.3	0.9	3.6	0.5	2.1	0.9
14	Ethnic chauvinism.	2.0	0.8	2.5	0.9	3.1	0.7	3.3	0.8
15	Environmental degradation.	3.0	0.7	3.7	0.5	1.9	0.8	2.2	0.8
16	Material self-interest.	3.2	0.9	2.4	0.3	2.8	0.6	2.0	0.4
17	Unfulfilled promises and aspirations.	2.5	0.6	3.1	0.9	3.2	0.7	2.9	0.9
18	Peer group influence.	3.2	0.8	3.5	0.5	3.6	0.7	3.4	0.7
19	Family history of vice and crime.	2.4	0.9	2.6	0.9	3.2	0.8	2.1	0.4
20.	Disorganized homes.	2.8	0.4	2.8	0.8	3.1	0.4	3.5	0.6

The data on Table 3 show that poverty and ethnicity cause maladaptive behaviours among youths in other parts of the country except in the South East geopolitical zone. Also, resource control and underemployment do not result to maladaptive behaviour in the South East and the North-North regions while environmental degradation and lack of basic infrastructure cause youth restiveness in the South East and South-South but not in South West and northern Nigeria. Illiteracy and poor leadership are not causes of maladaptive behaviours in the South West and North-North respectively while economic mismanagement and religious intolerance do not result to inappropriate behaviour among youths in all the zones except the South West and the North-North respectively. It is also shown that unemployment;

disorganized home; peer influence; unfulfilled promises and aspirations (frustration); discrimination; and lack of information are factors of maladaptive behaviours among youths in all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

Discussion

The study discovered that post-adolescent problems differ significantly across culture in Nigeria as some problems are peculiar to some geopolitical zones of the country while some are universally experienced in all the zones irrespective of cultural or ethnic differences. Common problems of post-adolescents in Nigeria are unemployment, frustration, unhealthy love relationship, emotional outburst and vulnerability to wrong doing (Table 1). This discovery is in line with the position of Osakinle and Bada (2008) and Saidu (2009) that majority of young Nigerians are not only unemployed but frustrated and vulnerable to unacceptable behaviours.

The study also revealed that examination malpractices, cultism, negative attitude to work, armed robbery and substance abuse and addiction are all common features of post-adolescents across culture in Nigeria. Another common maladaptive behaviour is poor reading culture. These are in agreement with the observations and assertions of Abdullahi and Bello (2009) who classified the problems as psychosocial and psychological all over the country. The youths also lack specific direction in life which invariably calls for well articulated counselling programmes individually and in groups. Ethnic hooliganism and religious intolerance are peculiar maladaptive problems of the people in northern Nigeria while kidnapping, militancy, and sexual immorality are common in Southern Nigeria (Table 2). This discovery concurs with the studies of Omabe (2009) and Ozoh (2009) which reveal that many societies can be identified with their unique systems, values and problems. Vandalization of both private and public property is in all cultures across the country except in Igbo culture (South East region). This discovery is not a surprise one since people in the South East are known to be a hardworking group that acquire their property with or without the government and therefore cherish and guard their hard earned possessions jealously.

There is a unanimous opinion about the potency of unemployment, discrimination, disorganized home, peer group influence, unfulfilled promises and aspirations, frustration and lack of information as causal factors of maladaptive behaviours among post-adolescents across culture in Nigeria

(Table 3). This discovery is in line with the position of Saidu (2009) that inappropriate behaviours like violent conflicts among the youths across the country is a function of the above variables among others. The study also revealed that lack of basic infrastructure does not account for maladaptive behaviours in the South West and northern Nigeria except in the South East and South-South regions. Equally, post-adolescents in the South East and South-South are less concerned about political leadership while in the South West and northern Nigeria, it is a serious factor of youth restiveness. In addition, it is only in the North-North zone that religious intolerance leads to maladaptive behaviours among post-adolescents. These discoveries and differences are in accordance with the observations of Omabe (2009), Abdullahi (2009), and Ukwueze (2011) which show that behaviours are learned and displayed in a cultural context and people's personality traits are continually dictated by the environments of different cultures (Adegoke, 2011).

Implications for contemporary counselling practices

Contemporary counselling practices are modern strategies that involve proactive measures to assist clients in solving their numerous problems that are occasioned by challenges of modernization and scientific adventures. Such practices are required to give accurate information to clients through various modes like internet services, television, radio, computers and other electronic devices that can allow e-counselling. Electronic-counselling is a contemporary practice described as an electronic version of counselling through an internet medium (Myers, 2012). According to her, the counsellor does not need to see his clients but reaches them through downloaded programmes such as Skype, a shared, private communication space such as PBwiki, Real Time Chat and even through E-mail correspondence. Several youths have access to varying types of electronic gadgets that could be utilized to reach them. E-counselling is a good approach to handle post-adolescent problems since many youths often have social phobia or difficulty speaking their problems aloud when face-to-face with another person (Myers, 2012). The significance of information at this level cannot be overemphasized as such information is needed by the youths who might be locked into themselves or trapped by financial responsibilities, fear of death, loss of sleep at night, tiredness, lack of relaxation or taking cover under booze conditions. They can simplify their life style, change their career when the need arises, remove work related stress and fear of going into marriage among others.

Counselling at the post-adolescent stage of life is equally needed to enable the beneficiaries realize that their isolation, loneliness and lack of intimacy can drive them to do things that they would not ordinarily do. They will also understand that they are just emotional beings who need assistance to cope with the multitude of confusing situations that can arise during mid-life crises. On the whole, post-adolescent problems in Nigeria are regionalized as revealed in this study and require appropriate modern counselling strategies based on ecologies and local peculiarities that can encourage good leadership, religious tolerance, respect for the right of all, equal right to governance and employment. This clarion call hinges on the fact that as Ikeotuonye (2009) puts it, behaviours are culture specific and require that counselling too must be culture specific right from setting up objectives, gathering information, analysis, synthesis, diagnosis and prognosis to treatment. Through this, Nigerian youths will realize themselves; become aware of the peculiarities of their problems; live fulfilled life; and contribute meaningfully towards peace, unity and progress of Nigeria.

Conclusion and recommendations

There are numerous corresponding problems and conduct disorders among post-adolescents in Nigeria based on existing multi-ethnic nationalities. Sadly, armed robbery, cultism, poor reading culture, substance abuse and examination fraud are common maladaptive behaviours across culture in Nigeria while some inappropriate behaviour like kidnapping, vandalization, political thuggery and religious intolerance are culture based. The problems as identified are caused by poor leadership, unemployment and personality or psychosocial disorders which can only be handled through culture-specific counselling using contemporary strategies. In view of these discoveries, this paper recommends that:

1. In the South West region, counselling, modelling, cognitive restructuring, values reorientation and mentoring should be the counselling strategies that counsellors should apply in handling youth problems.

2. In the South East and South-South regions, post-adolescents need environmental education, behaviour modification, assertive training, career information, counselling, mentoring, modelling, self-evaluation, explanation, reassurance and acceptance in order to change.

3. In the north, there is the need for basic information; leadership training; education; behaviour modification; moral and religious instruction; and cognitive restructuring to ensure that religious tolerance, right of others to live and participate in governance and good neighbourliness are imbibed.

4. Counsellors should liaise with religious and community leaders, teachers, politicians and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to reach their clients using churches/mosques, village halls, markets and civic centres.

5. Efforts should be intensified by governments at various levels to engage the youths in gainful employment.

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