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African Culture and Counselling: A Critic of Psychological Counselling Used in Africa

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Abstract:
African has history of civil war and other problems that require psychological counselling. Trauma and disease from wars are the emerging issues among many challenges in African society. There are fewer efforts from the international community and immediate country to remove the trauma and psychological effect. The paper advocates for other psychological counselling including traditional methods to assist as remedy to this problems. The research uses a desk review to critic other research done about Africa. The findings indicated African has had problems in counselling based on social conflict, political conflicts and economic challenges that need psychological counselling. Most of the countries in African lack proper framework in counselling and workforce that can sustain the challenges. The research concluded other forms of counselling. Training counselors are required and program and proper framework is necessary.

Keywords: Psychological counselling, psychology, desk review, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

1. Introduction

Maunganidze and Chigwedere (2000) defined counseling as a process used to help people achieve greater levels of self-awareness and to actualize latent potential. It is also a process employed to relieve symptoms of emotional or behavioral dysfunction or distress.

The profession of counselling has been viewed in the eyes of Western practices. This is resulting from the pioneering work of Freud's psychoanalytic approach counselling. It has always existed in Africa albeit not in the Western sense but in various forms of African culture (Richards, 2000). In Zimbabwe, counsellors were often found in every village being an elderly man or woman who has gathered wisdom over the years of his or her life. Among the Shona speaking, a counsellor was known as chipangamazano (the one who gives advice, ideas and solutions). Chakuchichi and Zvaiva (2010) pointed out that it was then possible for people with problems to visit such counsellors and tell them their problems. Parents used to send their adolescent children to such counsellors or advisers to be given information about growing up and marriage practices and expectations.

Group counselling was done by a group of elders for both women and men in many tribes in Southern and Eastern Africa especially during the performance of rites of passage as the children's transition from childhood to manhood or womanhood. Chakuchichi and Zvaiva (2010) argued that children and youths ready for this practice would be taken out of the village to a temporary shelter where they were given adequate knowledge including growing up and sex knowledge. This type of counselling was often undertaken as a ritual with certain acts such as circumcision for males to mark the transition into adulthood.

Sommer and Sandtrock (2005) asserted that in the African cultures, rites of passage are the avenue by which youth gain access to sacred adult practices, responsibilities, knowledge and sexuality. In the Africa context, counselling and advisement were not taken as a paid service but a contribution towards the development of upright citizens of society (Chakuchichi and Zvaiva, 2010). The onus was upon the person who received the wise counsel to offer a token of appreciation, especially when he/she had overcome the problem, anxiety or task. It therefore means that the type of counselling today is pro-western and runs contrary to the African counselling perspective, practice and or expectations.

2. Literature on African Narrative and Psychological Counseling

Most people go through psychological challenges in life resulting from life experiences in developing countries especially in Africa. In 2004, political scientists counted more than 42 ongoing wars and armed conflicts worldwide, almost all of them in developing countries (Schreiber, 2005). In addition, many low-income countries continue to suffer the consequences of recent armed conflicts. Observers of current wars have noted that the main target of the warring parties is the civilian population and that systematic atrocities including massacres and bombings are often carried out as rational

strategies (Kaldor, 1999). As a result high and sustained levels of traumatic stress affect both the mental health of individuals and the functioning of whole communities. One of the most prevailing consequences of traumatic events is posttraumatic stress disorder. This is caused by traumatic events like sexual violence, car accidents, criminal attacks, and so forth. It can be well treated through psychotherapy (Bradley, Greene, Russ, Dutra& Western, 2005).

Trauma –focused approaches are currently considered to be the most effective methods for the treatment of PTSD and are recommended over symptom-oriented psychotherapy or pharmacological treatment (National Institute for Clinical Excellence, 2005).Trauma-focused psychotherapy encompasses a variety of approaches including cognitive-behavioral methods that directly target the traumatic event in psychotherapy. In general, measures include encouraging the patient to talk about the traumatic event in detail and to relive the experience in a safe environment.

Narrative exposure therapy (NET) as a standardized short-term approach that is based on the principles of cognitive-behavioral exposure therapy by adapting the classical form of exposure therapy to meet the needs of traumatized survivors of war and torture (Neuner, Schauer, Elbert, & Roth, (2002) and Schauer, Neuner, & Elbert, 2005). Instead of defining a single event as a target in therapy, the patient constructs a narration about his whole life from birth up to the present situation while focusing on the detailed exploration of the traumatic experiences. As with the tradition of testimony therapy (Cienfugos & Monelli, 1983), the resulting written documents can be used for human rights purposes in a randomized controlled trial (Neuner, Schauer, Klashchick, Karunakara& Elbert, 2004).It could be shown that NET applied by professional western therapists was well accepted by Sudanese refugees living in a Ugandan refugee settlement and that four sessions of NET had a significant and lasting impact on the reduction of PSTD symptoms.

In most African countries, guidance began as advice giving (Taylor and Buku, 2006).Guidance and counselling are ideas that have existed for a very long time in the African society. From time immemorial, people have sought self-understanding and the understanding of other people in many ways and especially in the Ghanaian society where people, mostly the younger generation, have always had other people(usually elderly people) direct them in all of their endeavours. In other words, the elderly people in one way or another steer or counsel the younger people so that they continue to live useful and fulfilling lives. Guidance in itself has always been deeply rooted in the Ghanaian culture in such a way that it is a part of people's life style. Most things a typical African child does either advertently or inadvertently is as a result of some form of received Guidance and counselling through his or her nuclear and extended family, and the society at large. From cradle to grave, everyone needs guidance (Bedu-Addo, 2014) and counselling on one's life. In most African societies, there is, and has always been, a deeply embedded fervour that under appropriate conditions, people could help others with their problems. Some people help others find ways of dealing with, solving, or transcending problems and the people who often offer this sort of guidance and counselling were authorities in the traditional societies. For instance, there are authorities like supreme God and other minor gods who offered guidance and counselling through traditional priests and priestess/prophets and prophetess, chiefs, elders of the society, grandparents, uncles and aunties, elder siblings and cousins and the elderly members of the society

2.1. Why Counselling Psychology in Traditional African Society

The history and core values of the field of counselling psychology are consistent with our conceptualization of social justice work. From its inception, counselling psychology as a specialization of psychology has emphasized the role of environmental factors in shaping individuals' well-being (AmericanPsychological Association, 1999; McWhirter, 1998). In the early part of this century, Frank Parsons's work in vocational psychology and his commitment to issues of justice and fairness provided early models of socially responsible counselling (Davis, 1969; Hartung & Blustein, 2002).

Feminist and multicultural counselling psychology grew out of a sense of dissatisfaction with the way in which traditional theories of psychology incorporated the lived experiences of women and people of colour. The early feminist and multicultural writers mounted well-documented critiques of the ethnocentric nature of most of this scholarship, arguing that traditional theorists ignored the roles that oppression and culture play in psychological development and functioning (Espin, 1992).

 By contrast, both feminist and multicultural counselling psychology;
- Emphasize the ways in which social oppression (e.g., racism, classism, ethnocentrism, and/or sexism) contributes to the mental health problems that clients present (Brown, 1994; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Helms & Cook, 1999),
- Argue that survival responses under oppressive conditions are often mistaken for pathology (Brown, 1994; Gunnings &Lipscomb, 1986; Worell & Remer, 1992), and
- Provide ways to help clients directly address various oppressive conditions in their lives (Brabeck, 2000; Brown, 1994, 2000). As a result, many students graduate from counselling programs equipped to understand the social and institutional hurdles faced by women, people of colour, low-income families, disabled persons, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, among others, as well as the strengths individuals derive from culture, family, and community (Atkinson &Hackett, 1995; Comas Dias&Greene, 1994; Ivey,D'Andrea, Bradford Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2002).It should be noted that feminist scholars have been criticized for ignoring White women's advantaged position in a power structure that derives from racial privilege (Dill, 1983).

Nevertheless, the discourse on White privilege that characterized White feminism in the 1970s (Chambless, 1976)has been revived in the "multiracial feminism" of the 1990s, which "stresses the importance of race [and Whiteness] as a power system that interacts with other structured inequalities" (Zajicek, 2002, p. 157).

On a similar note, Helms (1994) objected to the generic use of the adjective *multicultural* because such usage shifts the focus of scholarship and practice away from systemic structures that create a racial hierarchy to more nebulous euphemisms such as culture and context. Consequently, she contends that racial inequities are often invisible in multicultural counselling psychology.

Counselling psychologists have adapted multicultural and feminist counselling theories for use in the psychotherapy context. At best, therefore, they have practiced social justice at the micro level rather than engaging in systemic change efforts more directly (Vera & Speight, 2003). Although alleviating individual suffering and promoting individual strengths are worthy goals, many counselling psychologists have joined critical, community, and liberation psychologists(such as Rappaport, 2000; Prilleltensky, 2001; Moane, 2003; Maton, 2000; Fox, 2003; Martin-Baro, 1994; Freire, 1970/1990; and Sarason, 1996) inthe view that these endeavours are insufficient as ends in and of themselves.

Unless fundamental change occurs within our neighbourhoods, schools, media, culture, and religious, political, and social institutions, our work with individuals is destined to be, at best, only partially successful (Brabeck, Walsh, & Latta, 2003; Frankenberg, 1993; Steiner-Adair, 1994; Vera &Speight, 2003). As Prilleltensky (1999) wrote, Psychological problems do not exist on their own, nor do they come out of thin air; they are connected to people's social support, employment status, housing conditions, history of discrimination, and overall personal and political power.

Thus, the target of intervention in social justice work is the social context in addition to or instead of the individual. Of course, the social context is not some abstract set of disembodied structures. Individuals comprise a social context and shape policies, cultural practices, and social norms. The point there is that social justice–oriented psychologists locate the source of individual suffering in these social conditions and then work to change them.

The obvious challenge is moving from theoretical understanding to practice and action. As a group, applied psychologists are much more adept at diagnosing environmental influences on individual well-being than at redressing those very systems and structures from which individual and community difficulties originate. Put differently, counselling psychologists have not yet developed skills in working at the systemic level—or as Albee (1986, 1996) put it, "with the causes of the causes." In the next section, we describe how principles useful in the practice of feminist and culturally competent individual psychotherapy can be extended to help guide counselling psychologists 'work with and for communities.

The components of traditional guidance and counselling implies what constitutes traditional practice of guidance and counselling or what makes up guidance and counselling in the traditional setting and how it is practised. Below are the components of traditional guidance and counselling practiced by traditional African leaders:

2.1.1. Advice giving

Advice giving has been and still is the commonest way of providing help to people among the African people. The advice given is considered helpful for people to consider their future. Among the African Traditional Societies, the extended family is the main source of advice for girls and boys. There is usually no lack of people willing to share their wisdom. For example, among the Akans when the elderly observe that a child is developing recalcitrant attitude, they call him/her and advise him/her against that attitude; the advice usually takes the form of proverbs. Usually, after giving advice, the elderly/advisor encourages the individual to depend on the advice given

2.1.2. Re-enforcements

Re-enforcement is probably the commonest constituent of traditional guidance and counselling that passes unnoticed. Re-enforcements have been used from time immemorial by most traditional societies in Ghana to encourage desired behaviours and discourage undesired behaviours in the society. Re-enforcement as properly explained in operant conditioning theory which was opined by B.F Skinner vividly explains human behaviour in relation to anticipation of a stimulus (Ntim, 2010). Operant conditioning occurs because of what happens after a certain quality of behaviour has been exhibited (Hanson et al., 1986 cited in Kankam and Onivehu, 2000). The operant conditioning theory has it that the behaviour of an individual is shaped by the consequences of the environmental activities that follow it. In the Akan traditional society, positive reinforcements are used to encourage a desired behaviour and increase its occurrences. For Example: when a child obediently fetches water for an elderly person, a simple praise or reward may encourage that behaviour. An example of such praise is "Akwesi has done well, let's all give him big-ups" and usually the people around will all respond "big-ups, Akwesi".

Negative re-enforcement, on the other hand, is used to discourage undesirable behaviours.

2.1.3. Prophesies

Prophesies have always been the most effective form of Guidance among the African people. In the Kalenjin society, people dared not to disobey the "*Koitalel Arap Samoei*" since he was a prophet and they believed that he was a messenger sent to endure the sicknesses, drought and other calamities. He used to give prophecies concerning events such as a disaster to befall a community and how they should behave so that they can evade it.

2.1.4. Prescriptions

Prescription is when someone gives an instruction of what someone else must do. Prescriptions are given by professionals. For example, in most contemporary societies, doctors give prescriptions. Among the people of Akan, prescriptions are given as a form of direction to help individuals to understand themselves better and to follow a procedure or live in a certain way that will yield healthy or good life. The authority that usually directs the people of Akan community through prescription is the herbalist or a priest or priestess of a particular shrine. Individuals visit herbalists or shrines when they are encountering problematic situations with the hope that they would get a better interpretation of what they are facing or going through and a solution to their problems. Many people among the Akans often start seeking advice from the elderly in the society when they are facing certain difficult situations. However, if the elderly realise that they would not be to prescribe any solution to them, they refer them to people who have the professional training and skill to deal with such situations. This often happens when the problem requires a medicinal approach or magic to solve it. Herbalists are Traditional healers who use herbs to treat the sick. There is the belief among the Akans that the knowledge herbalists acquire is as a result of the weeks of training and education that is given to them by "*amotia*" (dwarfs) after they have been chosen. Priests and priestesses, for example, are people who use magic to heal the sick. They often relay prescriptions from the "*abosom*" (gods) of what people should do and how they should do it in order to come out of their undesirable situations.

2.2. Theoretical Review

A theory is a set of related assumptions from which a deductive reasoning and testable hypothesis can be drawn (Fiest and Fiest, 1998 cited in Taylor and Buku, 2006). This definition insinuates that a theory is a set of deductive assumptions that explains a phenomenon. Here, assumptions underlying the basis of traditional guidance and counselling are drawn to establish a theoretical underpinning of the practice. The writers are sure that there have been many arguments among scholars regarding the issue of the theoretical basis of traditional guidance and counselling in the Ghanaian context although they are yet to come across such literature. However, for an empiricist, it is an underlying fact that for every thing that exists, there is proof or evidence of its existence. For instance, if there is claim of the existence of a tree, the questions that come to mind are: what is the colour of the tree? Can it be touched? Where is it located? And how tall is it? From the researchers' observation and the literature reviewed, it is quite clear that indeed there is such a thing as traditional
Affum's model of traditional guidance and counselling. Below is a *working model* that gives a pictorial representation of the underpinnings of traditional guidance and counselling.
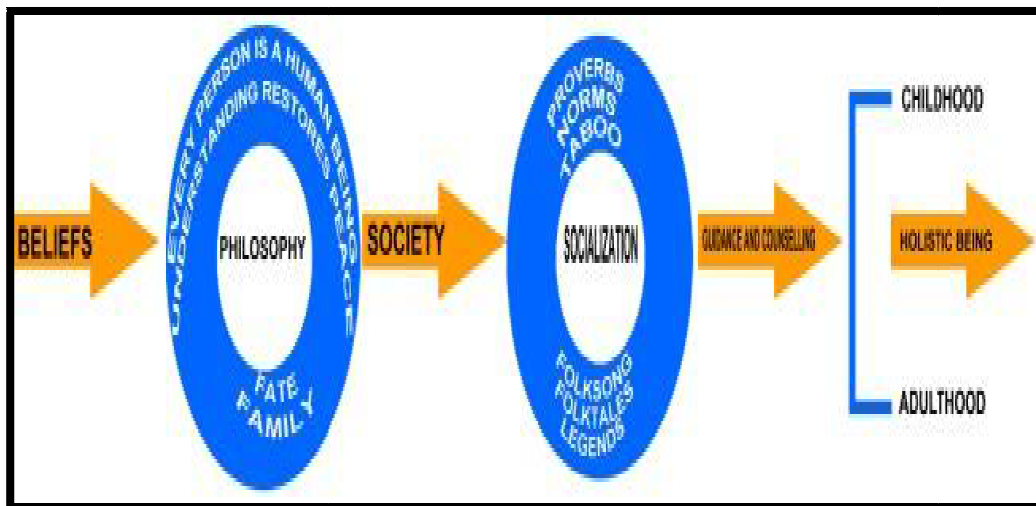

Figure 1

2.3. Rationale Emotive Behaviour Theory

2.3.1. History of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

Albert Ellis, the founder and developer of REBT, was born in Pittsburgh in 1913and moved to New York City 4 years later. He grew up in New York, did all his schooling there, founded a training institute there, the Institute for Rational Living (later the Albert Ellis Institute) in 1959, and lived and worked there until his death in 2007 at the age of 93. During his childhood, Albert, the oldest of three children, was often sick and was hospitalized nine times, mainly for problems related to kidney disease. As a result, Ellis developed a pattern of taking care of himself and being self-responsible. Making his breakfast and lunch and getting to school by himself are early indicators of the self-sufficiency that was to be a trademark of Ellis's approach to education and professional life. His father, a businessman, was often away from home, and Ellis described his mother as neglectful of her family (Weiner, 1988, p. 41). In looking back at his childhood, Ellis stated: "I invented rational

emotive behaviour therapy naturally, beginning evenback then, because it was my tendency" (Weiner, 1988, p. 42). But during his adolescence, Ellis was quite shy with girls. Using a method that foreshadows REBT, he made himself talk to 100 girls at the Bronx Botanical Gardens during a1-month period. Although he was not successful in getting a date, this method helped Ellis decrease his fear of rejection. Also shy about speaking in front of groups, Ellis used a similar approach to overcome this fear, so much so that he later came to enjoy public speaking. Ellis received his undergraduate degree at the City College of New York in1934. Between graduation from college and entering graduate school at the age of 28, he wrote novels and worked as a personnel manager in a small business.

After obtaining his Ph.D. in 1947 at Columbia University, he started work at a New Jersey mental hygiene clinic while receiving analysis from Richard Hulbeck, a psychiatrist, who was later to supervise Ellis in his early psychoanalytic work. While practicing psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy between 1947and 1953, Ellis became increasingly dissatisfied with it. He felt that although some clients felt better, they rarely improved in a way that would help them be symptom free and more in control of their lives. Having been interested in philosophy since the age of 16, Ellis returned to philosophy to determine ways to help individuals change their philosophical point of view and combat self-defeating behaviour (Ellis, 2005b). In 1956, at the American Psychological Association annual convention, Ellis gave his first paper on rational therapy, his term then for REBT (Ellis, 1999b). He later regretted using the term rational therapy, because many psychologists misinterpreted it as meaning therapy without emotion.

That was not Ellis's intention, and he spent time trying to clarify and explain his position. Although other psychologists were developing other direct methods of dealing with clients at about the same time, none made such consistent and pronounced efforts in explicating their point of view as did Ellis.

2.3.2. Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory of Personality

Ellis's theory of personality is based not only on psychological, biological, and sociological data but also on philosophy. His philosophical approach features responsible hedonism and humanism, which, combined with a belief in rationality, influenced his personality theory.

Ellis was interested in biological, social, and psychological factors that make individuals vulnerable to psychological disturbances that are cognitive, behavioural, and emotional in nature. It is particularly the cognitive factors that Ellis emphasizes, attending to the irrational beliefs that help create disturbances in individuals' lives. By understanding how Ellis views irrational beliefs, it is easier to understand his therapeutic interventions.

2.3.3. Philosophical Viewpoints

As a high school student, Ellis enjoyed the study of philosophy. He was interested particularly in the Stoic philosophers and was influenced by Epictetus, a Roman philosopher who said, "People are disturbed not by things, but by their view of things" (Dryden, 1990, p. 1). He was also affected by European philosophers who dealt with the issues of happiness and rationality, such as Baruch Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Immanuel Kant, as well as Arthur Schopenhauer's concept of "the world as will and idea" (Ellis, 1987b, p. 160).

2.3.4. Responsible hedonism

Although hedonism refers to the concept of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, responsible hedonism concerns maintaining pleasure over the long term by avoiding short-term pleasures that lead to pain, such as drug abuse and alcohol addiction. Ellis believes that people are often extremely hedonistic but need to focus on long-range rather than short-range hedonism (Dryden & Ellis, 2001).

Although REBT does not tell people what to enjoy, its practitioners believe that enjoyment is a major goal in life. This point of view does not lead to irresponsible behaviour because individuals with a responsible attitude toward hedonism think through the consequences of their behaviour on others as well as on themselves. Manipulating and exploiting others is not in the long-range interest of individuals. An example of Ellis's attention to hedonism is his work directed at irrational beliefs that people have regarding sexuality that interfere with their experience of sexual pleasure. His many books on the subject are a way of promoting responsible hedonism.

2.3.5. Humanism

Practitioners of REBT view human beings as holistic, goal-directed organisms who are important because they are alive (Dryden, 1990, p. 4). This position is consistent with that of ethical humanism, which emphasizes human interests over the interests of a deity, leading to misinterpretations that Ellis is against religion. He has stated, "It is not religion, but religiosity, that is a cause of psychopathology. Religiosity is an absolutistic faith that is not based on fact"(Ellis, 1986a, p. 3).

2.3.6. Rationality

Rationality refers to people using efficient, flexible, logical, and scientific ways of attempting to achieve their values and goals (Dryden & Neenan, 2004), not to the absence of feelings or emotions. Therapy with REBT shows individuals how they can get more of what they want from life by being rational (efficient, logical, and flexible). This means that they may re-

examine early parental or religious teachings or beliefs they had previously accepted. As this is done, they develop a new philosophy of life that leads to increased long-range happiness (responsible hedonism).

These philosophies, which have been abbreviated here, are communicated to clients to help them not only alleviate current problems but also develop a philosophy of life that will help them deal with problems as they present themselves.

2.4. Factors Basic to the Rational Emotive Behaviour

2.4.1. Theory of Personality
Ellis has recognized a number of factors that contribute to an individual's personality development and personality disturbances, including strong biological and social aspects that present a challenge to the therapist to help change. Depending on biological and social factors, individuals are varyingly vulnerable to emotional disturbance, which is explained by Ellis's A-B-C theory of personality described in the next section.

2.4.2. Biological Factors
        Impressed by the power of biological factors in determining human personality, Ellis has said, "I am still haunted by the reality, however,
that humans … have a strong biological tendency to needlessly and severely disturb themselves, and that, to make matters much worse, they also are powerfully predisposed to unconsciously and habitually prolong their mental dysfunction and to fight like hell against giving it up" (Ellis, 1987a, p. 365). Writing that individuals have powerful innate tendencies to hurt themselves or to think in irrational ways, Ellis (1976) believes that individuals have inborn tendencies to Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

2.4.3. Social Factors
        Interpersonal relationships in families, peer groups, schools, and other social groups have an impact on the expectations that individuals have of themselves and others (Ellis, 2003e). They are likely to define themselves as good or worthwhile, depending on how they see others reacting to them. If they feel accepted by others, they are likely to feel good about themselves. Individuals receiving criticism from parents, teachers, or peers are likely to view themselves as bad or worthless or in other negative ways. From a rational emotive behaviour perspective, individuals who feel worthless or bad about themselves are often caring too much about the views and values of others. According to Ellis, social institutions such as schools and religions are likely to promote absolutist values that suggest the proper ways of relating to others in terms of manners, customs, sexuality, and family relationships (Ellis, 1962, 1985a, 2001c; Ellis & Dryden,1997; Ellis & Harper, 1997). Individuals often are faced with dealing with the "musts" and "should" they have incorporated from their interactions with others. For example, if an individual believes she absolutely must pray twice a day, that belief has been partly learned through religious training. Ellis does not say that this value of praying is inappropriate; rather, he encourages individuals to question their absolutist "musts" and "should."

2.4.4. Vulnerability to Disturbance
        Depending on social and biological factors, individuals vary as to how vulnerable they are to psychological disturbance. They often have goals to enjoy themselves when alone or in social groups, to enjoy an intimate sexual relationship with another, to enjoy productive work, and to enjoy a variety of recreational activities (Dryden & Ellis, 2001, 2003). Opposing these desires are dysfunctional beliefs that thwart their ability to meet or enjoy these goals. Ellis (1987a, pp. 371–373) gives several examples of irrational beliefs that are indicators of individuals who are disturbed or disrupted in meeting their goals:
These represent just a few examples of irrational beliefs. According to Ellis, the more frequently these beliefs occur, the more an individual may be vulnerable to psychological disturbance. Whether these beliefs come from biological or social factors is immaterial; they are disruptive to the individual who would lead a happy life. How such beliefs are established within an individual's system of thinking is the subject of the next section.

3. Research Objective
        To determine how African narratives was used for psychological counselling Traditional African Society and who it can be adopted on the modern social setup in solving emerging social issues and problems. The paper reviews on the tradition and modern psychological counselling to established traces of African narratives in guidance and counselling.

4. Research Methodology
        The research employed desk review study design, an inquiry procedure, to help to show the different narrative approaches used in various studies at the same time highlight the most used.
The empirical and theoretical review of these models and concept provide concrete evidence of the trend of Psychological counselling.

5. Findings and Discussion

Professional counseling faces many challenges in Africa, and these include the challenge for it to be viewed as authentic and systematic. Many African countries do not have professional counseling boards, and as a result, counseling services are being offered in fits and starts. The absence of recognized professional counselling boards means that, this profession is still in its infancy, as compared to the Western world. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the Zimbabwe Association of Family Therapist and Professional Counsellors (ZAFTPC) is struggling to have its board registered as a professional counseling board with the Health Council of Zimbabwe, and up to now, the struggle is still ongoing.

One of the stumbling blocks in the professionalization of counselling in Africa is the competition it faces against religious counselling. African communities are extremely religious. Some believe in traditional religious, while many others are Christians and also Muslims. In the Christian religion, every pastor or Christian culture should believe the following:

- That God is the source of all truth and wisdom needed in counselling.
- The pastor is dependent on God, the Holy Spirit as his/her counsellor for guidance, wisdom, discernment and directions.
- God's word contains all the truth and wisdom which is needed by the pastor as counsellor
- Counselling is seeking to reach the right conclusion and solution according to God's perspective

Many African people, especially among the shone people would rather go to see their pastor, rather than visiting a professional counsellor. This kind of a scenario operates against the professionalization of counselling in Africa.

The visibility of professional counsellors in Africa is very limited, if not non-existent in most African countries. In Zimbabwe, for example, counselling is incorporated in hospitals, but does not stand on its own as a private practice, and this also provides another dimension why professional counselling is facing many challenges. The public services commission is even refusing to recognize counselling degrees in schools, despite the fact that it is mandatory to provide guidance and counselling in both primary and secondary schools. This kind of attitudes and negative perceptions by some government boards also work against the professionalization of counselling in Africa.

Professional counselling in Africa is relatively new in the case of Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe Open University is the only university offering counselling as a degree programme and is one of the few handful education centres which offer counselling as a programme of study. Other education centres only offer counselling as one of the courses offered in various social sciences oriented programmes of study.

It will not be easy for counselling psychologists to move toward a more systematic approach to doing social justice work, even if they have become persuaded of its importance. Indeed, a wide range of obstacles must be addressed as we struggle to incorporate such work into our curricula, research, and practice. In what follows, we describe briefly some of the obstacles that counselling psychologists (particularly students and faculty)face most immediately when they attempt social justice work and provide some recommendations for addressing those obstacles.

Perhaps the most powerful roadblock in doing social justice work is simply its emotional costs (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). For students (and often faculty as well), a tremendous amount of time and energy is spent on activities that often go unnoticed and unrewarded. They hit many brick walls put up by suspicious community members, unresponsive social institutions, or the absence of resources necessary to make a difference on an issue. Many, if not most, go through periods of feeling as if the work is not making a difference, which systems are unchangeable, or that no one is listening. They often feel despair about the relatively small effects of their work relative to the over whelming nature of the problems they are addressing, or a sense that they are just not doing enough (Wade, 2000). And many have asked at one time or another whether the costs outweigh the rewards.

Although perhaps obvious, it is important to note that at least in our experience, the rewards are greater than the costs. Faculty and students in BC's Counselling Psychology Program have learned a lot, formed fascinating and productive collaborations with community members, and enriched our thinking about counselling psychology immeasurably. We have had the privilege of participating in interesting, complex, challenging, meaningful, and valuable work that embodies values about which we care deeply. We have developed skills and knowledge that allow us to address problems in clients' lives that psychotherapy can never fix. And, most important, we are doing work that we believe can make a difference in the social and political structures that shape people's well-being. As Kiselica and Robinson (2001) noted, "Although social activism can be taxing work, counsellors who are successful advocates report a high degree of personal satisfaction and personal growth" (p. 396). Still, it is critical to acknowledge the emotional toll that social justice work can take and to develop methods for dealing with it.

In addition to emotional obstacles, there are structural obstacles to engaging in social justice work. First, researchers and practitioners trained in traditional methods may lack the skills required to mobilize community involvement (Serrano-Garcia, 1990). Second, faculty members and other counselling psychologists may find that engaging in such work has professional costs. The planning, process, and reporting of social justice–oriented research and practice is certainly more time and resource intensive than traditional methods (Serrano-Garcia, 1990). Community service is not generally weighed heavily when a faculty member is being considered for tenure or promotion (McCroskey, 2003). Promotion and tenure standards often fail to recognize the longer time period required to do research in and with members of the larger community, and only some universities give the same credit to rigorous qualitative research as they do to quantitative investigations. Moreover,

research that stays true to feminist and multicultural psychology values may not be competitive for funding (Grossman et al., 1997; Helms, 2003).

Granting agencies are far more likely to fund large-scale quantitative, epidemiological research on the "deficits" of marginalized people than to fund research that empowers communities or examines political and economic policies responsible for specific vulnerabilities (Shin & Weitzman, 1990).

Third, licensing and accreditation requirements compel counselling psychology programs to focus course work on traditional, individual psycho therapy models for the most part. And given the plethora of these course and practical requirements, students have little opportunity for electives (much less required courses) in community organizing, program development, policy analysis, and other social justice–oriented curricula. Even when programs integrate these models into their curricula, they are generally add-ons to existing curricula rather than central elements of the program. Moreover, cross-departmental collaborations to create and support programs such as JRAP are often prohibited or made extremely difficult by university bureaucracies (McCroskey, 2003). These obstacles make it challenging and time consuming to integrate social justice–oriented components into counselling Psychology training.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Counselling as a profession in Africa is destined for an enviable status. What is only required is that counselling stakeholders such as professionally trained counsellors, institutions which offer counselling programmes and counselling educationists get their acts together to establish vibrant counselling bodies. Ultimately counselling bodies must form fruitful partnerships in order to market professional at a continental level so that counselling is recognized for the unique contribution it makes to an individual's total wellbeing and the potential role it may play in industry. Through licensure, certification, continuing education and more importantly, pressuring for the recognition of counselling as an important professional practice, professional counselling bodies in Africa would be able to provide professional identity to counselling in the continent. This would go a long way in facilitating the growth of professional counselling in Africa.

There is need for professionally trained counsellors, institutions which offer counselling programmes and counselling educationists to establish vibrant counselling associations which accredit counselling graduates as professional counsellors. Professional counselling bodies in various African countries should come together and form regional consortiums that govern regional counselling practices to ensure uniform standards of professional practice across the continent.

Various counselling stakeholders such as professionally trained counsellors, institutions which offer counselling programmes and counselling educationists should make concerted efforts to lobby governments, employers such as the public service commission and the private sector to recognise professional counselling and recruit counselling graduates.

Counselling stakeholders should market vigorously counselling as a professional discipline and in addition counselling associations should strive be affiliated to international counselling associations and be active members of such associations.

Counsellor education programmes in Africa are at times too generalized and lacking in focus in terms of specialization; it is a known fact that counselling is a very wide field (Aluede et al, 2005). In spite of the diverse field of counselling, all aspects are lumped together in the process of training counsellors. Today, in the US, one can earn specialized degrees like Masters in School Counselling, Masters in Mental Health Counselling, and Masters in Rehabilitation Counselling and so on.

Counselling Bodies should narrow their focus to specific counselling fields to give professional counselling industrial appeal thereby enhancing professional counselling in Africa.

Counselling bodies should host international conferences and workshops to ensure that their members are kept abreast of the new trends since counselling is a highly dynamic discipline and that members share experiences and best practices thereby deepening professional counselling in Africa.

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