



# Perception of Stakeholders on the Impacts of Religious Counselling on National Safety

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## ABSTRAK

*Sebuah negara yang tidak aman tidak dapat berkembang secara efektif, apapun tujuan dan sasaran pembangunannya yang patut dipuji. Aspek yang paling menantang dari masyarakat yang terpecah belah adalah mereka menghadapi hambatan khusus dalam menjaga perdamaian yang disebabkan oleh berbagai faktor, salah satunya adalah agama dan kepercayaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi pemangku kepentingan terhadap dampak penyuluhan keagamaan terhadap keselamatan nasional. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif jenis survei. Besar sampelnya adalah 50 orang responden laki-laki dan perempuan yang terdiri dari 10 orang tokoh agama, 5 orang tenaga penyuluhan, dan 35 orang petugas keamanan. Instrumen pengumpulan datanya adalah Kuesioner Keamanan Nasional Konseling Keagamaan (RCNSQ). Alat statistik Analisis Varians (ANOVA) digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat perbedaan persepsi pemangku kepentingan terhadap dampak penyuluhan agama terhadap keselamatan nasional yang signifikan ( $p > 0,05$ ). Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa para konselor profesional, pemuka agama, dan petugas keamanan memandang bahwa konseling keagamaan mempunyai dampak positif terhadap keselamatan nasional. Berdasarkan kesimpulan tersebut, penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar pemerintah mempekerjakan penasihat agama profesional di sekolah dan lembaga keamanan. Hal ini akan membantu dalam menangani masyarakat yang trauma dengan kejadian negatif yang mengancam keselamatan nasional.*

## ABSTRACT

An insecure country cannot develop effectively, whatever its laudable development goals and objectives. The most challenging aspect of divided societies is that they face special obstacles in maintaining peace caused by various factors, one of which is religion and belief. The study aims to analyze the perception of stakeholders on the impact of religious counselling on national safety. A descriptive research design of survey type was used. The sample size was 50 male and female respondents which consisted of 10 religious leaders, 5 counselling professionals and 35 security personnel. Religious Counselling National Safety Questionnaire (RCNSQ) was the data collection instrument. The analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool was used for testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The finding showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of the stakeholders on the impact of religious counselling on national safety ( $p > 0.05$ ). The study concluded that the professional counsellors, religious leaders and security personnel perceived that religious counselling has positive impacts on national safety. Based on the conclusion, the study recommended that the government should employ professional religious counsellors in schools and security agencies. This would assist in dealing with the people who are traumatized by the negative happenings that are threatening national safety.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a process of assisting an individual or group of individuals to attain their maximum potential to become useful to themselves, their families and be functional members of society at large. The guidance and counselling process remains one of the exclusive ways of sustaining the age-long system of education that has been nurtured to build useful and self-productive citizens that can transfer a nation

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into an acceptable level of economic development with a positive influence on security development of the country (Agbajor & Alordiah, 2014; Lai et al., 2021; Wichmann-Hansen et al., 2015). Counselling involves a wide range of procedures which includes advice-giving support in times of trouble or need, encouragement, information giving and test interpretation (Fotiadou et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2019; OgbodoAdoga, 2019). The professional counsellor employs these procedures to assist clients or citizens to achieve self-understanding, acquisition of skills and knowledge about the environment and appropriate adjustment mechanisms for optimum productive work, social and psychological satisfaction as well as economic growth and security development (Supriyanto et al., 2020; Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021).

The pillar of the counselling relationship is solely on assisting individual or group of individuals to gain insights into their concerns and provide plausible alternatives from which wise decision is made to solve the problem (Biasi et al., 2017; Evans & Nelson, 2021; Supriyanto et al., 2020). Previous study noted that counselling services can curb insecurity in Nigeria (Ogwa, 2021). Other study identified indices of national safety to include military security, political security, economic security, food security and environmental security (Baji & Muhammad, 2020). The safety of any nation is guaranteed when there is good governance in the citizenry. Violence preventive efforts rely on guidance and counselling services through solving disciplinary problems mediating specific incidents of conflicts and deploying appropriate resolution strategies (Nurlia & Suardiman, 2020; OgbodoAdoga, 2022).

There is no gang saying that Nigeria is facing security challenges that almost shake its foundation of her unity. The threats to life and properties are reported daily across the six geopolitical zones arising from the acts of kidnapping, banditry and terrorism. Also, social violence like rapping, armed robbery, thuggery and arson are on the rise (Ordu & Owhonda, 2019; Usman, 2013). An insecure nation cannot develop effectively no matter its laudable developmental goals and objectives. In addition, there are agitations for resource control and ethnic separation such as clamouring for the creation of the Yoruba nation and Biafra all involve actors from the popular religion worshippers who may be either Muslims or Christians, even the traditional worshippers are not left out of this problem. Previous study reported unsound government fiscal policies misplaced priorities, lack of patriotism and nationalism by the political leaders have eroded the fragile unity of the Nation (Ruma, 2009). Other study showed that the most challenging aspects of divided societies are that they face particular obstacles in maintaining peace (Dada, 2015).

Most of the challenges facing the nation usually arose from religious bigotry, unbearable threats to life by disgruntled elements and economic problems and social vices which lead people to develop some psychological and behavioural problems (Izuegbu, 2021; Tajudeen & Adebayo, 2013). Despite these challenges, citizens still have faith and hope that the wrong will be right one day as preached by religious leaders. The effort of these leaders has not yielded any meaningful results due to the lack of training as a counsellor, hence, the task is on the professional religious counsellor to rise to the challenges of helping citizens to resolve issues that may affect national safety (Asadu, 2018; Atoi & Babale, 2021). Previous study observed that the goal of religious counselling is to help people identify their misaligned psychological behaviors with the religion they practice (Weiss et al., 2018). The idea is that once they are behaving in a way that is more based on faith, they will start to feel better and the achievement of national safety is possible. The Nigerian Government has put in different strategies like legislation, amnesty programmes and military exercises to resolve the security challenges that bedevil the country and ensure national safety. However, not much has been achieved in this direction, hence the need for the adoption of religious counselling as an alternative to achieve national safety.

The rise in religious disharmony among dominant faiths in the country has been observed to be a responsible factor threatening the safety of the nation. Individual is protecting his or her religious interest which in most cases result in a breach of peace and harmony in society. It is observed that religious superiority among the practitioners of different faiths in Nigeria is at a high rate and hate speech is noticed in almost all the nuke and craning of the country. Many previous studies have researched the importance of counselling strategies on national healing and management of crises, religion, peace and security in Nigeria (Osaji, 2016; Sa'idu & Abdu, 2019). To the knowledge of the researcher, none of the studies were conducted on religion counselling and national safety in Kwara State. Therefore, the study investigated religious counselling and national safety. The primary purpose of this paper is to analyze the perception of stakeholders on the impacts of religious counselling on national safety.

## 2. METHOD

A descriptive survey research methodology was used to assess the degree of perception of stakeholders on religious counselling and national safety in Kwara State (Bolanakis, 2019). The target population was all police personnel, religious leaders and professional counsellors in Kwara State. 100

male and female respondents were purposively sampled from Ilorin metropolis for the study. This consisted of 45 religious leaders, 20 counselling professionals and 35 security personnel. Researchers developed the Religious Counselling National Safety Questionnaire (RCNSQ) as a collection instrument. The researcher used two trained research assistants for the administration and collection of the instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The demographic information of the respondents was expressed using frequency count and percentage.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool was used for testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The perception of stakeholders was examined by 15 items Religious Counselling and National Safety 5 Likert scale. The items were scored using a Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) scale. The researcher Questionnaire was validated through pilot testing. The split-half method was adopted to divide the instrument into two halves. The scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) statistics. The consistency measures at 0.86. IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 was used.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

In order to find out the difference in the perception of the stakeholders on the impacts of religious counselling on national safety this study used ANOVA. The result of Anova test is show in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** The Difference in the Perception of the Stakeholders on the Impacts of Religious Counselling on National Safety

			Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Religion	Between Groups	(Combined)	0.675	1	0.675	0.295	0.093
Counselling *	Within Groups		41.125	49	2.285		
National Safety							
	<b>Total</b>		<b>41.800</b>	<b>50</b>			

\*difference is significant at  $p. > 0.05$

[Table 1](#) shows that the F. Calculated is 0.295 and the p. value is 0.093. The F. cal.= 0.295 is greater than the p. value 0.593 (F.cal= 0.295 > p.= 0.093). Since the F.cal of 0.295 is greater than the p.value of 0.093, the hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference in the perception of the stakeholders on the impacts of religion counselling on national safety is accepted.

#### Discussion

There is a close relationship between counselling and religion in the sense that, the two concepts are geared towards ensuring that an individual is useful to God and humanity without causing any harm to one another to avoid hatred and causing insecurity in the nation. When the nation is unsafe, there will be chaos and threats to life and properties and citizens will experience hardship, loss and panic. Negative experiences from national events (insecurities issues) like religious violence and subsequent loss may require the need for spiritual or counselling interventions to assist people in adjusting to the present condition ([Bell et al., 2021](#); [Evans & Nelson, 2021](#)). Religious counselling can be an excellent way for people to get help for their mental health. Some people have a strong sense of faith and incorporate that into their mental well-being.

It is in line with previous study that showed there is no gender difference in the opinion of the pre-service counsellor that counselling strategies are effective in achieving national healing ([Sa'idu & Abdu, 2019](#)). Other study indicated that the majority of the respondents showed that religion is very important to their lives and that 53% of them said that religion can answer most or all the problems they are facing today ([Osaji, 2016](#)). There is also study that asserted that religion is, without doubt, a potent force to achieve political stability, peace and security in the land, considering the role it can play in bringing about development in the light of corruption that pervades our society ([Olasupo, 2016](#)). The orientation services which is one of the important counselling services is a tool that keeps members of the society acquainted to develop foresight, independence, social networks, intellectual skills and moral habits that promote good values, norms and moral reasoning which serve as ingredients for love, peace and national safety ([Baji & Muhammad, 2020](#); [Kharaem et al., 2012](#); [Rahim & Hulukati, 2021](#)).

The paper found that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the stakeholders on the impact of religious counselling on national safety. This result indicates that there are differences in the perception of professional counsellors, religious leaders and security personnel regarding the impacts of

religious counselling on national safety. This implies that the divergence in their opinion of the stakeholders may be bothered by individual expertise and experiences. For instance, professional counsellors and religious leaders share the same view that religion and counselling are the two concepts that aim to assist individuals to maintain peace with one another at all times and this may translate to national safety.

This is correlated with the study that found orientation services which is one of the important counselling services, is a tool that keeps members of the society acquainted to develop foresight, independence, social networks, intellectual skills and moral habits that promote good values, norms, and moral reasoning which serve as ingredients for love, peace and national safety (Baji & Muhammad, 2020). Similarly, other study attests to the religious leader's opinion that religion is a potent force to achieve political stability, peace and security in the land (Olasupo, 2016). However, the security personnel have a contrary perception of the role of religious counselling on national safety.

The results of this national research can provide a basis for more effective and sustainable policymaking regarding religious counseling and its impact on security in Nigeria. Governments and related institutions can use these findings to guide the development of programs that support peace and stability. Apart from that, this research can increase public awareness regarding the important role of religious counseling in creating a safe and peaceful social climate. A better understanding of the positive impact of religious counseling can help defuse conflict and increase tolerance among religious groups. However, this research also has limitations, the subjective perceptions of stakeholders can influence the research results. Differences in views between groups or individuals can cause bias in the interpretation of the impact of religious counseling.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the professional counsellors, religious leaders and security personnel perceived that religious counselling has positive impacts on national safety. Based on the conclusion, the study suggests that the government should employ professional religious counsellors in schools and security agencies. This would assist in dealing with the people who are traumatized by the negative happenings that are threatening national safety.

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