

## COUNSELLING STRATEGIES AGAINST TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aimed at investigating the appropriateness of some counselling strategies against terrorism in Akwa Ibom State. A sample of 120 Guidance Counsellors was drawn from Akwa Ibom State Chapter of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. The design of the study was ex-post-facto. Two hypotheses were raised as guide to the study. A structured questionnaire entitled Counselling Terrorism (COT) was designed and used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to various processes of validation. The internal consistency of the instrument was established through pilot testing and it yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.82. Data raised were analyzed using simple percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result showed that parent training in child management is the promising family intervention strategy. It was recommended that there should be training in behaviour modification strategies which include the use of rewards, punishment and communication skills.*

**Keywords:** *Counselling strategies, Terrorism, and child management*

### INTRODUCTION

In Akwa Ibom State today, people are facing the risk of being exterminated as a result of terrorist activities. The trauma caused by terrorism in Akwa Ibom State and the consequences thereof are incalculable. Indeed, terrorism has become a nightmare. Terrorism is a tactic of desperation, which in most cases typifies the relative weakness in the power position of the perpetrators. The purpose of terrorism is to demoralize the target population and to use this to attract national government or any identifiable target to a conflict.

Terrorists use violence to instill fear and uncertainty; of course revenge and the induction of fear are the obvious Leitmotifs (Lodge, 1988). Terrorists are willing to violate international norms much more than states since they have no stake in the system (Goldstein, 2005). The term terrorism is not new in the lexicon. Terrorism antedated the modern age. Etymologically, the term terrorism comes from Latin words *Terrere*, which means to frighten. The French equivalence is *terrorisime* which is associated with the reign of terror in France between 1793 and 1794. The English word "Terrorism" first appeared in English Dictionaries in 1798, meaning systematic use of terror as a policy (Douglas, 2007).

In its modern application, however, terrorism is traceable to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly Israeli defeat of the Arabs in the six-day war of June 1967, which compelled the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), to resort to terrorism as the only means of warfare with Israel (Lodge, 1988). Other factors,

which led to the upsurge of terrorism, include the coalescence of various students' radical groups in Europe and America into terrorist groups with objectives ranging from human rights, Marxism, the Vietnam war, liberation of the oppressed to emancipation of woman- hood and other minor issues. To these, was added the coming to power of the late Libyan Leader, Moammar Gadafi in 1969 and his sponsorship of terrorism, which fueled the upsurge of international terrorism (Momah, 1995).

Terrorism has become a very complex phenomenon due to the growing network of individuals, groups and states that are either directly involved in terrorist activities or indirectly by offering them logistic support, launching bases, training facilities, finance and so on. Terrorism in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria in general has become widespread and frequent in occurrence. Figures have revealed that in 2011 alone, there are sixteen explosions carried out by terrorist groups in Nigeria (The Nation Newspaper, December 8, 2011). Statistics shows that in 2011 February 6, a traditional ruler was abducted by unknown gunmen in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital. Then in 2011, March 3, three people were killed and 21 injured by an explosive device thrown from a car at an election rally near Nigeria's capital, Abuja. On April 7, an explosion hit a polling booth at Unguwar Doki, Maiduguri, Bornu State, injuring more than 10 people. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Office in Suleja, Niger State was bombed on April 8, killing 11 people. On April 9, an explosion hits a polling booth in a neighbourhood of the northeast Nigeria city of Maiduguri during a parliamentary election.

Furthermore, youths riding on a motorcycle on April 15 threw a locally made bomb into the premises of Maiduguri council office of the INEC. Also, on April 16, a police station in the Lami Sula district of Maiduguri, which lies in the remote state of Borno near Nigeria's borders with Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic was bombed. That same April 16, bomb explosion occurred in two separate areas of Kaduna metropolis on the night of the presidential election in the state. Also, on April 21, two suspected bomb-makers died in a blast in Kaduna, while on April 25, three bomb blast ripped through a hotel and a motor park in Maiduguri, killing at least two persons. Others were May 29, thirteen people were confirmed dead and 40 injured in a night blast at mammy market located in Shandawanka Barracks, Bauchi, Bauchi State capital. Also, on May 29, eight victims lose their legs after an explosion occurred at Zuba, a suburb of Kubwa in Abuja and on May 31; there was a bomb explosion on Baga Road in Maiduguri, the Bornu State capital.

Boko Haram (Western Education is a sin) on June 16, carried out massive bomb attack on Force Headquarters (also known as Louis Edet House), Abuja, targeted at the Inspector - General of Police. Officials believed that was the first suicide bombing in Nigeria's history. Boko Haram also bombed the United Nations House, Abuja, on August 26, killing over twenty people; while on November 11; there was an explosion in Bauchi state, which left five people injured. Then on December 7, there was a bomb explosion in Kaduna leaving 12 people dead and several others wounded. Counselling is a helping relationship between the trained

counsellor and the client in which the counsellor assists the client to better understand himself or herself and the world. The help rendered by the counsellor enables the client to attain proper development, functioning and ability to cope with life's problems. Everybody has problems and people who engage in terrorism actually are perceived as having behavioural problems that need to be addressed diagnostically by using some preventive counselling strategies that will instill positive behaviour in people. Lodge (1988) opined that terrorism is a means of securing publicity for a particular cause. According to Momah (1995), the incorporation of ethical and behavioural standards will help prevent terrorism.

The threats of violence faced by indigenes of Akwa Ibom State in recent time are many but that of terrorism appears intractable because of its clandestine, bizarre and the unexpected manner of their operations. Terrorism is capable of paralyzing the foundations of modern governments. Terrorism constitutes the worst form of threat to global peace and stability. In Akwa Ibom State, for instance, terrorists operate secretly and use various lethal weapons such as explosives, bombs, kidnapping, sabotage, hijacking and hostage taking. In view of the fact that effort by government to rid the society of terrorism through the use of amnesty programme, crusades, laws and force have not yielded much positive results. A gap therefore exists in the attempts put up in tackling the problems of terrorism in Nigeria. It is an attempt to fill this gap that this study was carried out to find the perception of guidance counsellors on the use of counselling strategies in curbing terrorism in Nigeria.

The purpose of study is to establish the opinions of Guidance Counsellors' on the acceptability and extent of appropriateness of some proffered counselling strategies against terrorism in Nigeria. Hence, the following propositions were raised in null forms to guide the study:

1. Mean score ratings of perception between male and female Guidance Counsellors on counselling strategies against terrorism do not differ significantly.
2. Perception of Guidance Counsellors on the extent of appropriateness of counselling strategies against terrorism do not differ significantly.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design of this study was ex-post-facto. The population of the study consisted of all Guidance Counsellors in Akwa Ibom State chapter of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 120. This number of respondents was randomly selected from the Akwa Ibom State chapter of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. To ensure equal representation of both genders, 60 males and 60 females Guidance Counsellors were selected. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire entitled "Counselling Terrorism" (COT). The instrument was used in raising data on the perceived opinions of respondents on some listed counselling strategies as well as respondents' perception

of the extent of appropriateness of counselling strategies against terrorism in Nigeria. The structured questionnaire was pilot tested and it yields a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.82. This was a good indication of internal consistency. The researcher ensured variability of item specifications to satisfy content validity of the instrument. A total of 120 copies of the research questionnaire were distributed to respondents during the 2011 conference of Akwa Ibom State chapter of Counselling Association of Nigeria. All the 100% of the questionnaire administered were correctly filled and returned. Data generated for the study were analyzed hypothesis by hypothesis using simple percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Result of Analysis of Variance on Mean Score Ratings of Perception Between Male and Female Guidance Counsellors on Counselling Strategies against Terrorism

Source of Variance	SS	df	Ms	F-cal	Tab-F
Between Groups	21.2509	2	10.6254	.1817	.8341
Within Groups	6841.9158	117	58.4779		

The results on table 1 show that there was no significant difference at an alpha level of 0.05 in the respondents mean score ratings of the perception on counselling strategies against terrorism with F ratio = .1817, degree of freedom (2/117) and mean error of 58.47. The null hypothesis which states that mean score ratings of perception between male and female guidance counsellors on counselling strategies against terrorism do not differ significantly is therefore accepted.

**Table 2:** Result of Analysis of Variance on Respondents' Perception of Extent of Appropriateness of Counselling Strategies against Terrorism

Source of Variance	SS	df	Ms	F-cal	Tab-F
Between Groups	558.8222	2	279.4111	5.4855	.0070
Within Groups	6304.3444	177	53.8833		

The results on table 2 show that there was a significant difference at an alpha level of 0.05 in the respondents' perception of extent of appropriateness of counselling strategies against terrorism with F. ratio of 5.4855, degree of freedom (2/117) and mean error of 53.88. The null hypothesis is thus rejected. The findings from this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the male and female mean score ratings of their perception on counselling strategies against terrorism whereas a significant difference existed in the respondents' perception of the extent of appropriateness of counselling strategies against terrorism.

Result of the first hypothesis implies that counselling strategies proffered are perceived as being acceptable to both male and female guidance counsellors in curbing terrorism in Akwa Ibom State. Major perceived and acceptable counselling strategies for curbing terrorism by both genders include training in behaviour modification strategies which include the use of reward and punishment, communication skills, parents training in child management where parents should learn to recognize and

deal with the signs of delinquent behaviours before their children reach adolescence. Other strategies accepted by the respondents included anti-terrorism campaign by use of jingles, posters and peace education. It is hoped that these strategies if adopted would help re-orientate Nigerians towards peaceful co-existence and tolerance.

This finding is supported by Alimba (2008) who suggested that by inculcating moral values and teaching peace education to the citizens, conflict and violent acts will peacefully be resolved and managed. This, according to Alimba (2008), will guarantee stability and promote durable peace in the society. In collaborating this, Harris (1998) has submitted that the whole essence of peace education is to achieve, through the importation of its values, skills, attitudes and knowledge, peaceful living among people and to create structures that will promote social and political stability for optimal engagement of people in their daily activities in the society.

Moreso, this study has revealed significant difference in the perception of male and female Guidance Counsellors on the extent of appropriateness of counselling strategies against terrorism. 81.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that "counselling seminars and talks by religious organizations will help in reducing ethnic crises in Nigeria with mean score of 14.75 for males and 12.72 for females. This perceived difference could be due to individual differences.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

No nation can attain meaningful level of growth and development if there is no security of lives and property of her citizens. Hence, the need to tackle sustainable global security challenges now is very timely. Therefore, this paper concludes by advocating the use of counselling strategies in curing terrorism that is ravaging Nigeria. Such counselling strategies will help in re-orientating the citizens and inculcate good family values in our youths. By this means, the society will be a better place to live in. Children are said to be leaders of tomorrow. The moral decadence witnessed in the society today is as a result of the collapse of good family upbringing of our youths. Hence to curb terrorism:

1. The Guidance Counsellors should be trained in behaviour modification strategies which include the use of rewards, punishment and communication skills etc. These strategies are more effective with young children whose behaviour problems have not yet developed into violence or delinquency.
2. Parents training in child management is a promising family intervention strategy. It is most effective if parents learn to recognize and deal with the signs of delinquent behaviour before their children reach adolescence (Arumala, 2005).
3. Anti-terrorism campaigns should be mounted by the government by using jingles, posters and peace education. According to Alimba (2008), peace education is capable of reducing conflicts and violence acts in the society .
4. Counsellors should organize workshops and seminars for religious leaders on the need to respect the sanctity of human life.

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