

## COUNSELING NIGERIAN RETIREES FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

**Dr. MALAMI UMAR TAMBAWAL**

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Department of Education,  
Faculty of Education and Extension Services,  
Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto

### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses counseling Nigerian retirees for political participation. As one disengages from active public service he needs something to occupy his time so that he does not fall into psychological problems of retirement such as disbelief or denial, anxiety disorder, anger, depression and substance abuse. For those that chose political participation, certain counseling strategies need to be put in place for them to make a smooth transition from the work place to the political arena, which is completely a new field in ones life. Behaviour modification theories, individual theory of Alfred Alder and Erickson personality theories were proffered as possible approaches by counselors while counseling retirees for political participation.*

### Introduction

Nigeria as a country has deemed it fit to accept democracy as a way of governance to join the international community in that respect. The journey so far has not been easy one with ethnic, religious biases, political intimidation of opponents and even political assassinations everywhere. The issue of political education and political maturity could be questioned in a situation where people jump into politics for material benefits that is attached to the office not the unity of the country, not in the interest of the voters and not the interest of ones' particular state, local government or community are considered. The actors in the game are either self-employed, serving civil servants to leave service and join politics or retired civil servants who have retired from active civil service. For a retired civil servant to join politics, there is need for proper counseling because he/she is a person used to the bureaucracy of the office or an organized system of administration coming out to join issues with people from all works of life within the various communities, a group that his life perception of issues could entirely be different but he has to come down to the level of such people in order to succeed.

Counseling has come to be recognized by authorities as that interaction between a counselor and a person in perceived temporary state of indecision, confusion, malfunction, habit, disorder, distress, disrepair, Nwoye (1990). While a retiree is someone who has disengaged from working full-time and devote at least the largest portion of his or her financial support from public or private pension payments. Thus retirement is seen by Akinde (1993) as a final stage of life when one leaves an occupation which one has been involved in for a considerable length of one's working life ". In the same vein, Ode (2005) describe a retired person as any person who performs no gainful employment during a given year, the individual who is receiving a retirement pension benefit.

Since counseling is recognized as helping profession of people of all ages and with personal – social problems, the retiree due to the situation he finds himself, disengaging from the hustle and the bustle of work place and contacts, meetings and journeys, need to be counseled in order to be successfully partake in politics if that is what he decides to do, to successfully adjust within his community.

### **Why Counselling Nigerian Retirees?**

Osborne (2005) opines that retirement results in major loss of "courage to be part of". The core anxiety of human existence (death, fate and meaninglessness" are moderated to some extent by being part of some group or collective. Within this community people find meaning and security that relieves them to the anxiety they might feel if leaving without community shared interest. The loss of membership in a workplace, community, removes the security and meaning the worker formerly enjoyed. This loss can leave worker more exposed to anxieties. Many retirees have already increased awareness of their mortality, but they don't know how much longer they will live and how they will die. This twin anxieties are consolidated by the loss of the meaning that were part of the work community and their particular role in it. They are no longer able to find some security from the threat of these anxieties by being a part of large whole. They are now left to stand alone as individuals. It is surprising that some retirees experience an onrush of anxiety and can descend into depression. Being part of other communities' interest beyond the work place may provide alternative protection from the anxieties that are unavoidable aspect of human existence, thus political participation could be a solace.

In some cases the satisfaction gained from the fulfillment of retirement myths and fantasy's is short-lived. Although we may be free from work, we are also loosing the challenges, success, failures and meaning that went with our jobs. Well we might think of the problems and tensions we are endured while working we tend to overlook the ways in

which these same experiences energized our lives and provided us with challenges and important life lessons. We are no longer in a context where we are forced to face the various problems that arise within the work-world. Our release from employment can leave us free in ways that resemble exile. We stand alone, stripped of most of the social and psychological contexts that provide us with so much meaning for so many years. Now we face life-structure in a societal environment that is different and offers meaningful options to those previously provided by our work. Filling our lives with recreation and hobbies is poor substitutes for the complexity, continuity and challenges of the workplace.

The beginning of retirement marks anew phase in our lives. When we cross the boundary between employment and retirement, questions of meaning will inevitable arise, if they have not already been acknowledged. Even if there has been some thought about those questions, taking retirement provides an actual live experience rather anticipated experience. How do we find meaning in retirement? What will we do with the rest of our lives? How we build structure in our lives to take the place of work? To be engaged in a worthy struggle might be essential to our survival. How can we make our lives a worthwhile contribution to humanity? These are just some of the type questions that are relevant for retirees.

The most important of any choices that we make is that they lead to engagement with the world but not busyness. Busyness can crowd our genuine awareness of the importance meaning and have us feeling numb. Nor do we need to be programmed by this propaganda and myths of the retirement industry by telling ourselves repeatedly how great retirement is when, if we were honest with ourselves, we might say otherwise, Osborne (2005) poses an essential questions:-

What are the retired people good for? This is the question every retired person has to answer for himself/herself. Until better answer s are found, capable and useful people will try to lead stereotypical existence in t6he mythical retirement world in which there is no loneliness, worry, sickness: and death in short a time and a place devoid of meaning.

There are a number of theories about human development and the lifespan that can shed light on the role of our past in shaping the meaningfulness of our future retirement. The first theory is called activity or role theory. When we retire we may lose some of the role we have played in the past that are directly related to our jobs. If we held a high executive or professional post in our occupational field we have to move from the role of being a VIP to that of being an ordinary person. For others within their occupational role there may have been sub roles such as social organizer or chairman/secretary of various sub-

committees. These roles and the social contact associated with them are also lost in retirement. However although we may no longer hold our occupational roles we may continue to socialize with some our former co-workers.

Another source of roles could be aging. Retirees may have reached a point where they can no longer continue with certain physical activities. We can compensate for the loss of some activities associated with our occupation by taking on activities that are appropriate to our capacities. If retirees move their residence there is likely to be made more severe if the movement involves a great distance. Moving to a place where the climate is warmer may not compensate for the loss of friendships and activities that have been built up over many years. Even though retirees can try to develop new friendships and activities within the new environment they are no substitute for the loss of long-term relationships and communal activities. Apart from the time it takes to develop a new circle of compatible friends then the problem of the energy require and the absence of roles that were once the medium by which social relationships developed. For example, during that period couples were raising families they would have met another families who were involved in shared activities such as schooling, sports and cultural events. Continuity theory can also help us understand the transition to retirement. It is based on this fact that although we live in this present our existence is an extension of the past and an anticipation of the future. The changes that occur within our lives happen within the context of a continuous life-space. To some extent at least, our past determines our present and future. This is why is a good predictor of our future, but this does not mean we are necessarily prisoners of our past. Change is always possible.

A third theory to consider, when trying to understand the transition to retirement, is crisis theory. It suggest that the loss of an occupational role can lead to an identity crisis. One of the reason why retirees adopt new roles in retirement is that, to some extent, these new roles are a compensation for a possible identity crisis caused by the loss of their occupational role. The value of roles or activities is that they offer a form of engagement that can help fill the hole left by this loss of status work-life structure. This spectre of low income, loss of status and declining health can increase the probability of retirement leading to an identity crisis.

Professional literature have identified certain psychosocial effects of retirement on retirees which calls for counseling such as disbelieve or denial which according to, Christy & Anyim (2005), is the situation in which one is in a fantasy. He is not sure whether he is dreaming or something real is happening. Another problem as identified by Akinade (2003) is anger where a retiree may be annoyed either with self, the employer, anyone in his family he suspects has contributed to his fate. Anxiety disorder, depression

and substance abuse are also identified by Charisty and Ayim (2005) as being part of the problems encountered by retirees.

The attempt to examine the problem encountered by retirees as they finally disengage from active service was to see the necessity and possibility of counseling them for proper political participation, for it is only when the counselor becomes abreast with the possible problems and perception of the retiree that he can come to his aid, so that he can successfully adjust into his new life and forge ahead. For as Hendricks and Hendricks (1977) asserted, during retirement years, most people find-themselves with more time on their hands than their experience or interests can accommodate, the amount of time free from specific demands of the job has and will continue to increase. Unlike prepared for the degree time attendant with retirement, it is quite possible that older workers released from the pressures of sustaining life will be unable to utilize their retirement as they anticipated during the hurried years of work. Therefore counseling have a great role to play in assisting retirees use their time judiciously especially for political participation which is also an area that perseverance, dedication and commitment demands-patience.

### **Couselling Nigerian Retirees for Political Participation**

The counselor counseling retirees for political participation is saddled with the responsibility of making his clients realize that they are now going to face a Herculean task of having to adjust to their new found engagement, which is surrounded by wrangling intimidation, having to listen to the minutes complaint and having to sit down with all caliber of people from the well to do the educated the semi-literate and even illiterates to share ideas and fashion out a programme of action because in poetics everybody feels important and his opinion has to be listened to. Another very important factor for the retiree to note is the financial demands of politics can he use his pension benefits to canvass for votes or has to rely on political god-father for sponsorship or is he only going to be a member an" executive member of a particular political party. Whatever be the case the retiree have to be cautioned how judiciously he is going to utilize his benefits.

In counseling the retirees on a general note, Egong, Akpami and Usani (2005) suggested a model programme for counseling retirees where they indicated thus: - Aim: To assist the retiree to adopt to another style of life on retirement duration of which should be six months. The specific objectives training programme are as follows:

1. Participate in pre-retirement orientation programme
2. Attend seminars and workshops on skills acquisition for alternative jobs.

3. Learn how to make use of pension benefits.
4. Acquire inter-personal skills for the new life.

The programme content for counsellors in such a situation has to be the use of the various theories and techniques of counselling one of which the behavior modification theory amongst whose proponents are Watson Ivon Parlon. B. F. Skinner, E. L. Thorndike and Albert Bandura. The counseling intervention of this theorist have the following steps are identified by Nwoye (1990):

- a. Identification of the problem for which a counseling remediation is sought.
- b. Definition, in behavioural terms of the specific goal to be achieved in the face of the problem is in need of resolution.
- c. Behavioural assessment and determination of the base line data regarding the occurrence and intensity of the problem under attention.
- d. Determination and selection of the treatment strategies to be applied for the achievement of the goal that has been specified.
- e. Evaluation is the counseling out come vis-à-vis the goal set in advance of the treatment strategies applied.

We need to understand that most of what we do in retirement will be a continuation of what we have done before retirement. The obvious implication of this is that we need to incorporate preparation for retirement life into our present lives. Don't assume that when we retire that we can transform our lives without already having worked on this project. Our future stands upon the shoulders of our past. The time to start preparing for retirement is a least in this 50s. All our lives prior to retirement will influence our retirement. The continuity of our lives suggests that we need to approach retirement from a whole life perspective and not from late scramble or the default of compulsory retirement due to regulation or ill health. For retirees to conveniently adjust into new life of political participation such a project has to start in the last days of ones working life.

Retirement usually triggers are view of our lives. For some retirees there is a feeling of completion while for others there can be regret, or satisfaction, self-blame and overall feeling of opportunities wasted. We may feel guilty about what we are always going to be guilty to the extent that we have not fulfilled our authentic potentialities. This type or guilt has a positive function for without it we would not be moved to develop much our capacity. Limit and anxiety are signs of our having lost our human capital can lead to feelings of guilt and, in extreme cases, complete self-rejection. It is the feeling of being condemned. Our anxieties about death, fate, morality spirituality and the meaning of it all are not like fears of specific objects or situations that can be eliminated. We cannot argue

these anxieties away. They are part and parcel of being: they are always with us. Fortunately being itself contains the power to achieve the courage to be. This moral courage to be requires the acceptance of this type of anxiety before in an more forward with our lives.

As we begin retirement many of us may become more aware of our mortality and that we are entering the afternoon of our lives. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung advises us to look forward rather than back. By looking forward we can get a more realistic appraisal of our potential lifespan and perhaps develop some priorities about how we hope to spend the rest of our lives, rather than clinging to the past. Jung, Erikson and many others urge us to focus on developing our potential to become more human in terms of wholeness, wisdom and caring. Jung asserts that retirement may have this potential to be a transformation rather than a mere transition, if we are willing to let go of perspective and values that are no longer appropriate. Having achieved or productive peak in mid-life we have a opportunity to reach our peak in the latter stage in life.

The individual psychology of Alfred Adler, could be applied in counseling retirees for amongst his prepositions are that:

- a. Man is a creature imbued with innate inferiority feelings and compelling need for compensation. He takes this position because in his view it is through the natural ability, which man has for noticing of a mismatch between what he is already and he would like to become what any meaningful improvement can be brought to be in his life, the retirees can be drawn to this.
- b. Man as an animal with an innate drive for striving for superiority or perfection. According to Adler man is a creature blessed with an innate tendency to struggle to improve himself.
- c. Man as creature with a capacity for social interest.

Retirees can be shown the implication into the general advised to look-inward so as to adjust.

For retirees to have actual safe adjustment into the general society after major part of their lives well spent. In public service, there is great need for pre-retirement counseling in all establishments. So that retirees can be informal of what to expect on retirement and how to adjust to new life situation.

## Conclusion

Retirees need to have a proper insight as to the kind of life they would be leading after service. The paper believes that if there are qualified and professional counselor in all our establishment the fear of anxiety and even refusal to retire would be overcome.

## Recommendations

As a matter of recommendations, this paper submits that:

1. There is the need for the training and retraining of professional counsellors.
2. The trained counsellors should be posted to all establishments not only the schools which housed younger generation, but to ministries, companies and all employment agencies.
3. That prospective retirees can be counseled before time.
4. The political climate in the country needs to be addressed.
5. There is need for political education, maturity and understanding amongst the actors.

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OSBORNE, J. W.; WASHINGTON BUREAU OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Department of Guidance & Counselling  
Kwame Ninsin University, Accra

ABSTRACT

The study examined the effectiveness of a self-help programme for young people with mental health problems. The programme was based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and was delivered through a self-help manual. The study was conducted in a community centre in Accra, Ghana. The sample consisted of 100 young people with mental health problems. The programme was evaluated using a quasi-experimental design. The results showed that the programme was effective in reducing symptoms of mental health problems. The programme was also well received by the young people. The study has implications for the development of self-help programmes for young people with mental health problems.

Introduction

Drug and alcohol abuse has been part of human experience throughout history. Whether we call it drugs, alcohol, or substances, it is a part of our lives. In the past, drugs were used for medicinal purposes. However, in the 19th century, drugs were used for recreational purposes. Today, drug and alcohol abuse is a major public health problem. In Ghana, drug and alcohol abuse is a growing concern. The use of drugs and alcohol is increasing among young people. This is due to a number of factors, including the availability of drugs and alcohol, the influence of the media, and the changing social norms. The use of drugs and alcohol is also linked to a number of social problems, including crime, poverty, and unemployment. It is therefore important to understand the causes of drug and alcohol abuse and to develop effective interventions to reduce its prevalence.

There has been an increased interest shown by the adolescent community world-wide in the use of self-help programmes for the treatment of mental health problems. This is due to a number of factors, including the increasing prevalence of mental health problems, the need for self-help programmes, and the availability of self-help programmes. Self-help programmes are a type of intervention that allows individuals to help themselves. They are usually based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and are delivered through a self-help manual. Self-help programmes have been found to be effective in reducing symptoms of mental health problems. They are also well received by individuals. Self-help programmes are a cost-effective way of providing mental health services. They are also easy to use and can be accessed from home. Self-help programmes are therefore a valuable tool for the treatment of mental health problems.