



## A Diachronic History of the Scopes of Practice of Counselling Psychology in Three Sub-Saharan African Countries

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### **Abstract**

In 2016 a landmark article was published in the *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* aimed at providing a global portrait of the discipline of counselling psychology. Unfortunately, only experiences and histories of counselling psychology in eight countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) were represented. Similarly, in 2019 another important article was published in the *Counseling Psychologist*, aimed at highlighting the factors that influence counselling practice in four countries (Iceland, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey). Unfortunately, again, the history of Counselling Psychology in the whole of Africa apart from South Africa remained omitted in these publications. The present article is an attempt to close this gap. Its principal objective is to let our foreign partners who plan to spend their sabbatical or other such experiences in any of the three African countries highlighted in this study be aware of what goes on in the field of counselling psychology in these countries and how they will be able to fit in when teaching or practicing counselling psychology in any one of them.

**Keywords:** *Africa; Counselling Psychology; Counselling Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa; Scopes of Practice of Counselling Psychology; Health Psychology; Multicultural Counselling*

### **Introduction**

Goodyear and colleagues published a landmark article in 2016 in the *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. The aim of the article was to provide a global portrait of the counselling psychology speciality. As it turned out, only experiences and histories of counselling psychology in eight countries (Australia,

Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) were explored. In 2019, another important article was published by Ægisdóttir and colleagues in the *Counseling Psychologist*, aimed at highlighting the socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts that influence counselling practice in four countries: Iceland, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey. An embarrassing revelation in reviewing the two publications is their consistent omission to investigate the experiences, and the changing and enduring themes in counselling practice in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, outside South Africa. This consistent omission unfortunately tended to render the whole of Africa apart from South Africa as a *terra incognita* (or an unknown territory) as far as information on the state of counselling psychology in sub-Saharan African countries outside South Africa is concerned. Fortunately, the situation in the wider extant literature is not as grim as the above observation might appear to suggest as there have been some previous attempts, published in other outlets other than the *Counseling Psychology Quarterly* and *The Counseling Psychologist*, which offered some portraits of what happens in Africa outside of South Africa with regard to information on the history, development, and prospects of counselling practice in some sub-Saharan African countries (Akinsulure-Smith & Conteh, 2018; Bojuwoye & Mogaji, 2012; Kiweewa et al., 2017; Mpofu, 2011; Mwititi & James, 2012; Okech & Kimemia, 2012; Senyonyi et al., 2012; Stockton et al., 2011). Unfortunately, a major limitation which these earlier attempts appear to share in common is their tendency to repeatedly focus on narrating the history and development, and cultural contexts of counselling psychology in their respective countries of research. Even the one exception to this trend did not go far, as it was a brief academic paper published in 2014 by Faith M. Masambia, entitled *Embracing Counseling and Psychotherapy in Kenya* in which an attempt was made to highlight in pages 7-9 of its contents, information on Counselor Education Programs, Accreditation, Licensure and Certification, as well as on Current Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories, Processes and Trends; including the section on Indigenous and Traditional Healing Methods and Spiritual Healing, highlighted on its pages 10 through 12.

This means that, notwithstanding the contributions of these earlier attempts none had endeavoured, like the present article plans to do, to help the reader or our foreign partners to see together the *continuities and discontinuities in the scopes of counselling psychology* in the three countries (Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania) focused on in this review. The present article is designed to initiate an attempt to correct this shortfall. Part of the rationale of the article is to show that the discipline of counselling psychology has registered a number of shifts and continuities in its scopes of practice across several decades in three sub-Saharan African countries: Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Indeed, as will be demonstrated shortly, the development and evolution of counselling psychology in these three countries were largely influenced by its US and British roots, and had tended to mirror the pattern of counselling practice in the United States and Britain up till today.

However, another important rationale for this article is to show that despite the obvious tendency of counselling psychology in the three countries to almost replicate the histories and themes of counselling practice in the Euro-American tradition, a number of changes in the scopes of counselling practice themes have recently evolved in these countries in response to the peculiar circumstances and tragedies recorded in these countries that differ from experiences encountered in the United States and Britain. Hence the central aim of this article is to provide a diachronic account of the shifts and continuities in the scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three countries to enable our foreign partners who plan to come to these countries to engage in counselling practice/research/teaching be aware of what goes on in the field of counselling psychology in these countries and how they will be able to fit in when practicing counselling psychology in any one of them.

Of course, it is crucial to make clear right from the word go what this article is *not* concerned with. For instance, it will not be attempting to offer a full account of the histories and developments of Counselling Psychology in the three countries as there already exist, some useful works in this area as the references cited above can attest to. Those references in combination, narrate the stories of the emergence

and fortunes of Counselling Psychology in many sub-Saharan African countries including those like Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania targeted for this review. And, neither should it be construed that the diachronic history of the scopes of counselling psychology in the three countries, shortly to be undertaken, are exhaustive in content or applicable in equal measure, in each of the three countries. They are presented here with the aim of providing some approximations of what exist, with the rationale to help to move the literature forward and to speak across these countries as much as it is possible. The study provides a beginning attempt at comparative study of perspectives to counselling psychology in more than one African nation. Such comparative analysis is especially vital given longstanding calls to contextualize counselling psychology within diverse cultural frameworks (Pedersen, 2016) and to move the field beyond Western paradigms toward truly global narratives (Leong & Blustein, 2000).

## ***Methodology***

### **Rationale for Country Selection**

In response to the possible question, why these three countries: Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania? Our response is that we have chosen to limit the geography of our study to these three countries because we strongly believe that they can be rationally studied together as they share a number of similarities. The first of such similarities derives from the factor of the first author's personal contact and familiarity with each of them. For example, the first author did graduate studies in counselling psychology in one of the premier universities in Nigeria and held a ten year academic teaching position in one of the major universities in Nigeria. Hence one of the authors of this article have an intimate internalized commanding impression of the contents and scopes of practice in counselling psychology emphasised in many Nigerian universities. Similarly, Kenya was chosen because one of the authors held a twelve-year academic teaching position in one of the premier universities in Kenya, and was instrumental in developing their undergraduate and graduate programmes in Counselling Psychology during these years. Hence one of the authors had the privilege of an insider's perspective of the content and scopes of practice of counselling psychology in Kenya. Again like Nigeria and Kenya, one of the authors was privileged to serve as Professor of Psychology at the one of the national universities in Tanzania and helped to review and develop their undergraduate programmes in Counselling psychology. This opportunity eminently invested the same author with the position of participant observer with regard to what goes on in counselling psychology in that university, as in the other two above mentioned.

The second area of similarity apart from the factor of one of the authors' personal contacts and experiences in these countries is that they (the three countries) share the same political history, as all three of them were former colonies of the British Empire, and gained their political independence from Britain in the 1960s.

The third source of similarity among the three countries is that as former British colonies, they inherited English and up to today stuck to it as their official language of communication in their universities. Arising from the above circumstances, most of their University curriculum, including Counselling Psychology was influenced by British precedence. Given the above, it is therefore no surprise to note that most of the senior teachers in counselling Psychology in these universities either studied counselling psychology in Britain or in the United States where the language of practice of counselling psychology is English.

Most of these factors taken together go a long way to explain why the counselling degree programmes in universities in the three countries are largely patterned along the lines of Counselling Psychology programmes in the United States and Britain, as will be seen reflected in the account shortly

to be provided of the shifting and enduring scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three countries.

Now, it is equally important to mention that in these three countries, the terms counselling, counsellor education, and counselling psychology are often used interchangeably, as in each of the three countries understudy a possession of at least a Master's degree from a recognized university in either Counsellor Education, or Guidance and Counselling, or Counselling Psychology is needed for one to be registered as a professional counsellor or counselling psychologist in their respective national Associations. Similarly, in each of the three countries it is not the professional body that determines the issue of accreditation but a National Universities Commission named differently in the three countries (e.g., National Universities Commission [NUC], Nigeria; Commission for Higher Education [CUE], Kenya; and Tanzania Commission for Universities [TCU], Tanzania; in charge of degree accreditation for various disciplines in each of the countries' universities. For instance, The Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya is internationally recognized as the Regulatory and Quality Assurance Agency for university education in Kenya. And the same can be said of the situation in the other two countries. In each, after completing their studies, the graduates from these universities then register with the National Professional Counselling Association in that country, such as the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) in the case of Nigeria and Kenya Counseling and Psychological Association (KCPA) in the case of Kenya; and the Tanzania Psychological Association (TPA) in the case of Tanzania. And once registered, irrespective of whether one's degree is in counselling psychology or counsellor education, or guidance and counselling, the one in question is recognized as a qualified counselling professional who can work in several occupational settings such as in private practice, as well as in hospitals, counselling agencies, schools, universities, medical health clinics, prisons and government departments.

The next section of this introductory background will draw attention to ten diachronic accounts of the shifts and continuities in the themes and the scopes of counselling psychology practice in the three countries. But before getting to this, let us first respond to another possible question about the rationale for choice of the counselling practice themes and scopes of practice of counselling psychology, discussed in this review.

### **Rationale for Choice of Themes and Scopes of Practice**

With the background given above, it should be of no surprise that sources of information on the themes/scopes of practice in counselling psychology highlighted and described below under the notion of shifts and continuities in counselling psychology in the three countries derive from the following: First, from the enduring influences of one of the authors' graduate training in counselling psychology at one of the premier universities in Nigeria; Secondly, from one of the authors' years of experience of teaching and supervising students in counselling psychology at one of the national universities in Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania, respectively; Thirdly, from the two authors' respective experience as curriculum developers for counselling programmes and courses at various universities in countries in the Eastern, Western and Southern Regions of Africa. Through such academic and professional experiences the two authors were able to garner and detect and internalise some values of counselling psychology, and have organized and operationalized the themes and scopes of practice of counselling psychology around those values; briefly alluding to their manifestation in these three sub-Saharan countries, as will be shown below. This article thus affords the authors the opportunity to share what one can regard as the main shifts and continuities in the history of counselling psychology in the three countries.

The two authors offer this knowledge not with the claim that these shifts and continuities as they occur in the three countries completely epitomise and therefore generalizable across the countries that make up the entire region of sub-Saharan Africa. The central objective rather is more modest; namely to

share this review as a preliminary contribution to the growth of the counselling psychology literature in Africa and for conducting further research in this area.

Also it is important to point out, even at this early stage in the discussion, the existence of a number of limitations that emerge in the practice of some of those counselling themes/scopes of practice to be discussed. For example, under ‘Theme Ten’ below, which foregrounds the task of community service as part of the scope of practice of counselling practice in these countries, it is unfortunate to note the failure and reluctance of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to include engagement in and completion of community service as a condition for registration for practice as counselling psychologists in South Africa; a stance that goes to demonstrate that some state policies may not be moving speedily to expand the scope of practice of counselling psychology in some African countries to include engagement in the kinds of professional community work that has emerged in the scope of counselling psychology practice in the three countries under review (Bantjes et al., 2016; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2011; Young, 2013).

### **Application of the Principle and Method of Diachronicity**

The principal method which the authors have invoked to facilitate a coherent account of the changing and enduring themes/scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three countries is *the principle and method of diachronicity*. In using this method, the authors drew inspiration from Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary definition of the notion of diachronicity as the method of relating to, or dealing with phenomena as they occur or change over a period of time. Following this definition the authors use the term diachronicity in this article to mean that approach to understanding events like the scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three countries understudy from the way these themes/scopes of practice change and re-emerge over time in some cases, rather than by their moment by moment significance.

On account of the key contributions of one of the authors’ personal experience as the main source of data for this report, the authors have chosen to employ the technique of autoethnography in writing out the report. The methodology of autoethnography was considered useful in this regard because according to Mara and Thompson (2022) it is a technique that foregrounds personal experience (like in the present report) both during research and in writing about it, particularly when engaging in critical self-reflexivity (see Popoveniuc, 2014), regarding, like in the present report, the shifts and continuities in counselling practice in the three African countries targeted for this review.

### **Findings**

#### **Diachronic Account in the Historical Evolution of Counselling Psychology in the Three African Countries**

The following can be distinguished in the shifts and continuance of superordinate themes and scopes of practice of counselling psychology as manifested in some measure in each of the three African countries understudy.

#### **Theme One: The Notion of Counselling Psychology as Equivalent to Career Counselling**

Like its counterpart in the United States/Britain that influenced most of the counselling programmes in the three countries, this is the first fundamental theme in counselling psychology that one comes across in each of the countries under review. As pointed out by Shertzer and Stone (1980), this foundational theme in the scope of counselling psychology that started in the United States and now fully adopted in the three African countries after their years of respective political independence in the 60s emerged with the publication, by the economist Frank Parsons, of a book called *Choosing a Vocation*

published after his death, in May 1909 (Parsons, 2005). In that book, according to Shertzer and Stone (1980), Parsons argued that what young people badly need to attain optimal development and well-being, is information on where they fit in the world of work. This, according to Parsons, implies the need to assist them to get into careers that fit their abilities, interests and values. Counselling practitioners in the three countries agree to this career counselling ideology as articulated by Parsons. And his three-part theory of career counselling practice adopted in the three African countries as well as in South Africa (Maree, 2009; Maree, 2010a, 2013; Maree & Crous, 2012; Maree & Hancke, 2011; Maree & Pollard, 2009; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2011) has continued in its effect on the practitioners up till today.

The eloquence and conviction of Parsons' thought at the time, made the counselling psychology speciality then in the United States and now in the three African countries to become heavily associated with the notion of career counselling as its key scope of practice. While Parsons' three-part theory has been widely adopted across African countries, Brown (2011) emphasizes the critical importance of understanding how cultural values intersect with occupational choice, satisfaction, and success in different contexts. Given the above, the important point that this review is making is that it is no longer in the United States that career counselling is considered the foundation on which the Counselling Psychology speciality is grounded. For the same situation is equally true in the three African countries under review. This is particularly true with the experience in Nigeria following the publication of the National Policy on Education in 1977, in which the need for career counselling in schools was firmly emphasized (Nwoye, 1991). The same is true of Kenya and Tanzania in the same period when the practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools was seen as a step forward for the promotion of effective educational practice and prevention of juvenile delinquency and curbing the problem of indirection and lack of vocational vision among youths in these countries.

The persistence and popularity, in both the United States and in the three African countries, of this counselling practice scope is illustrated by the fact that a number of career development theories (Busacca & Taber, 2002; Crites, 1961, 1965, 1971; Super, 1990); not to talk of Strong's Interest Inventory which was published as early as around 1927; plus the original Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS) which came out 1970; reissued in 1981, 1994, 1996, and 1997 have emerged and been adopted to enable practitioners (in the three African countries) to rise to the challenge of professional career counselling as part of their main scope of practice. Recent works on career development and counselling in South Africa by Mkhize (2005), Nauta (2010); Savickas (2011a, 2011b, 2012); Maree (2010a, 2011); Maree and Pollard (2009); Maree and Hancke (2011); Maree and Crous (2012) are all grounded in, and have their historical background in this same trend. For Savickas (2012), career construction approach offers a more comprehensive framework that addresses the developmental and contextual aspects of career counselling, moving beyond the static matching paradigm to embrace ongoing career construction throughout the lifespan.

Similarly, the influx of psychological tests in recent years in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as career interest profile (Maree, 2010a, 2011) and previously such as the vocational interest inventories (VII) including the version developed by Professor C. G. Bakare at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, arose in the counselling psychology literature in the United States (Whiteley, 1984) and Britain as well as in the three African countries in response to the need for application of a more scientific approach in the implementation of this first item in the scope of practice of counselling psychology in the three African countries: namely, career counselling.

Speaking from the perspectives of the three African countries under the review, we can say one of the reasons for the enduring popularity of career counselling as a major item in the scope of practice of counselling in Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania, was that with it counselling psychology came to be understood and appreciated by the different national governments, community agencies, parents and young people in the three countries as most relevant to their needs (Bantjes et al., 2016; Cook et al., 2010;

Nwoye, 1991; Young, 2013). It also made practitioners in the three African countries to believe that counselling psychology is not mere application of common-sense but a scientific undertaking which entails the systematic process of getting to know through appropriate and valid psychological assessment, the nature of life in different occupations, getting to know each client's talents and abilities, interests, values and aspirations, and matching the two (Busacca & Taber, 2002; Crites, 1961, 1965, 1971, 1973; Crites & Savickas, 1996; Holland, 1994, 1996, 1997; Leung, 2007; Strong, 1927; Super, 1990).

A major weakness of this Parsonian model that had influenced the shift in the scope of counselling psychology in the three African countries is that with it the lay public began to mistake the trees for the forest (Bantjes et al., 2016; Leach et al., 2003; Okech & Kimemia, 2012; Young, 2013). This is because with it, most people in the three countries tended to get stuck with the narrow impression that counselling psychology essentially is most relevant for young people working towards their 'matric' concerns, or those interested in consolidating their decision about which career to get into in their university education. The obvious limitation in this perspective is that if that impression is allowed unchallenged then students in the universities who had already made a decision about what courses to pursue in life would be assumed not to have any need any more for counselling services; an assumption that clearly is unsupported by the facts (Maree, 2010b, 2011; Mkhize, 2005; Nwoye, 1991; Young, 2013).

Unfortunately, in the three countries in Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, and Nigeria this initial US-related idea of professional counselling practice as equivalent to career counselling has persisted till today. Recent works by some counselling psychologists in Africa such as Mkhize (2005) and Maree (2013) bear out this observation all of which demonstrate a sign of people's endurance of conviction in the importance of career counselling as a major item in the scope of practice of counselling psychology in the different African countries up to this day.

### **Theme Two: Counselling Psychology as Psycho-Education and in Exercise in Rational Living**

The point to be emphasized under this theme is that as happened in the history of the evolution of superordinate counselling themes in the United States (Whiteley, 1984), the second major counselling psychology theme to gain popularity in universities in the three African countries is the notion of the use of counselling to promote clients' character formation and personal development. This trend has continued from the early 1970s when it gained popularity in the three African countries till date. The following comment by Wambu and Fisher (2015, p. 95) provide the context and evidence for the above observation: "Kenyan high schools are currently faced with many challenges. Reports of drug abuse among youths, socially unacceptable sexual ventures, academic underachievement, poor study habits, teenage pregnancies, truancy, juvenile delinquency, and serious misunderstandings between teachers and students are common in Kenyan educational institutions (Atemi, 2014; Kariuki, 2004). And in their view and in the perspective of counselling psychology scholars and practitioners in the three African countries, the way to change things for the better in the lives of these clients is through the application of counselling psychology as an exercise in the promotion of client's character formation and personality development through the technique of psycho-education.

This means that in this second phase of emphasis in the history of the evolution of scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three African countries, the task of the professional counselor or the counselling psychologist was defined to include the act of helping to "give psychology away to people" (Cooper, 2009, p. 59), in order to foster in clients, some constructive reflections and positive discernments regarding who and what they are, and ought to be; where their lives are heading to, and whether or not they are happy with what is happening in their lives currently, and what they need to do to achieve the future and the destiny they prefer (Bantjes et al., 2016; Maree, 2013; Young, 2013). The conceptualization of counselling psychology as involving "giving psychology away to people" aligns

with Gladding's (2018) comprehensive view of counselling as a profession that encompasses educational, preventive, and developmental functions alongside traditional therapeutic roles.

Additionally, emphasis on the notion of counselling psychology as psycho-education or preventive psychological process that gained popularity in the three countries at this stage entails the idea of the scope of practice of counselling psychology as involving the exercise of helping people, either in a seminar, or workshop or classroom setting, to learn how to sort out ordinary parts of their lives; including how to hold a job, how to maintain a relationship, how to parent, how to love, how to manage personal earnings/pocket money, how to manage loss and grief, and other annoyances and frustrations of daily living in the human world (Bantjes et al., 2016 ; Maree, 2013; Young, 2013).

The strength of this approach in the evolution of the scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three African countries was that with it people started to see counselling psychology up to today as concerned not only with career counselling but also with the psychological practice of helping people to recover initiative and a sense of agency, and to nurture both personal and social responsibility. Its major weakness is that with it professional counselling came to be confused with teaching and became associated with the notion of an educational rather than a clinical practice. This is a gross misjudgement that has tended to make some people in the three countries to define counselling psychology as a school-based business rather than a clinic-based practice and therefore a matter largely for assisting inexperienced young people in schools, rather than for people of all ages, inclusive of those with psychopathologies.

### **Theme Three: Counselling Psychology as a Talking-Centred Treatment**

Until the time of the First and the Second World Wars, the time when the three African countries in this review were still under the tutelage and direct influence of Britain as colonies of the British Empire, the business of helping people with serious psychological distress was, in places like Britain and Austria, the monopoly of psychiatrists. This arose from the fact that before the First World War years of 1914-1918, the usual assumption in the biomedical field was that all mental disorders are symptoms of genetically inherited degeneracy (Pilgrim, 2009). However, as pointed out by Pilgrim, the events of the First World War generated some concrete data that disproved this assumption. The events of that war rather proved that a large number of fine British soldiers both those in the lower ranks and those within the commissioned officers broke down due to the stress of the *shell shock* and not due to inherited degeneracy. The same war also proved that the psychological distress that overcame those soldiers responded more and better with talking therapies than with drugs (Pilgrim, 2009).

The impact of these revelations in the history of counselling psychology in its relationship with psychiatry was that it helped to lay to rest the general assumption that had prevailed in biological psychiatry that people who become mentally ill or distressed are victims of hereditary degeneracy or biomedical dysfunction or psychopathology, a claim that could not be substantiated with the experience of British soldiers with initially sound medical background. The lessons of that war, as pointed out by (Pilgrim, 2009) rather showed that people breakdown psychologically due to stress. Given this understanding; and, starting from this period onwards, considerable emphasis in both Britain and North America and subsequently in the three countries under review came to be placed on the idea of counselling psychology as having a stake in the psychological healing effected by means of human words; that is to say, through the talking medium or the therapeutic dialogue between the therapist and the client (Nwoye, 1991). The importance of this development for the advancement of the counselling psychology speciality in both Europe and North America and thereafter in the three African countries that inherited the perspectives of counselling psychology from Europe and North America was that it helped to legitimate the role of verbal psychotherapy or psychotherapeutics within the mental health arena that had hitherto been monopolized by psychiatrists who approached the problem of people in emotional

distress through the application of drugs (Pilgrim, 2009). This trend was further boosted by the fact that counselling psychology proved more useful for regaining the mental health of soldiers who developed psychological symptoms due to shell shock (sustained in the war combat environment).

Based on these understandings, and fearing the reoccurrence of the psychological problems faced by soldiers in the WW1, British military authorities as pointed out by (Pilgrim, 2009) sought to pre-empt, where possible, psychological difficulties in any event of war. This made counselling psychology practitioners (in Britain); all of them non-psychiatrists, to become favoured advisers on military selection, military morale and psychotherapy during the course of the War and its aftermath (Pilgrim, 2009). With this the scope of practice of the counselling psychologist in both Britain and the United States (Whiteley, 1984) gained an extra mileage from what it used to be associated with up to this stage. The same trend made the individual counselling psychology practice or individual psychotherapy to become till today one of the cornerstones of the scopes of practice of graduates of counselling psychology curricula in universities in the three countries in sub Saharan Africa such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania rather than just in Britain and North America (Nwoye, 1991).

Although it was not put directly and plainly this way, but Pilgrim's (2002) account appears to suggest that another key change in perspective in the evolution of the scopes of counselling psychology at this period which subsequently influenced the notion of counselling psychology in the three countries under review came with the result of the Second World War. With that war, the previous emphasis on individual psychotherapy or one-to-one counselling psychology process was adjusted or rather extended to recognize the importance of group methods. This is because the pressure to reach more 'soldier-patients', and in the context of the three African countries under review, the need to reach as many student clients as possible, led to counselling psychologists in the three African countries, located mainly in schools (secondary or tertiary) to experiment with group counselling and psychotherapy.

This progression from an individual perspective to a group model was to have important implications for post-war developments of superordinate themes in the scopes of practice of counselling psychology in the three African countries as group rather than the one-to-one approach appeared to be more cost-effective and has been retained in the practice of and training of counselling psychologists in these three African countries as well as in South Africa till today; a pattern that shows that the emphasis on group model of psychotherapy which started in Britain at this stage has persisted to this day in the three African countries.

Consequently, following this development, we now have in place in the practice of counselling psychology in the three countries under review both individual and group counselling psychology methodologies in the list of our armamentariums of practice and in the list of topics covered in the counsellor training programmes in the three countries as well as in South Africa. Corey (2013) documents how the broadening of therapeutic modalities beyond traditional psychiatric approaches opened space for diverse theoretical orientations and culturally responsive practices. This expansion proved particularly relevant in the African context, where indigenous healing traditions already emphasized the power of narrative, dialogue, and communal processing of psychological distress. The integration of talking therapies into counselling psychology practice in Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania would thus be seen to represent both a historical evolution and a cultural alignment.

#### **Theme Four: Inclusion of Behaviour Modification and Diagnostic Assessment within the Scope of Counselling Practice in the Three African Countries**

To better put the discussion of the above theme in some perspective, the following comment by Wambu and Fisher (2015) appear germane and to the point. In their view, although the practice of guidance and counselling was officially recognised in Kenya in 1970. The call for the establishment of guidance and counseling in Kenyan schools was renewed with more vigour in the 1980s and 1990s after

the country witnessed the worst arson cases ever to be committed in the schools (Government of Kenya, n.d.). Most notably, in 1999, 17 girls were killed and 70 others raped in a co-ed boarding school. In March 2000, 26 girls were killed in an arson attack at the Bombolulu girls' secondary school (Daily Nation Newspapers, 2000). In 2001, 67 boys were burnt to death in a boarding school by their colleagues as they were sleeping (East African Standard Team, 2001, p. 94).

Against this background and similar contexts and challenges in the other two countries, the need for inclusion of behaviour modification and diagnostic assessment was emphasized in university counselling psychology training programmes and as central in the exercise of counselling psychology in the three countries in general, and Kenya, in particular. This emerging emphasis centred on the role of behaviour modification as a basic instrument for correctional counselling particularly for work in schools and prisons and other rehabilitation centres/agencies in the three countries. This brought about, too, emphasis by counselling psychology practitioners in the three African countries on the need for diagnostic assessment before intervention could be instituted. Following this development the notion of the use of psychological assessment as part of the scope of practice of counselling psychologists in the three countries was entrenched in the curriculum of counsellor education programmes and in the scopes of practice of counselling psychologists in Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania; and from account, also in South Africa. It is this same point that (Maree, 2010c) in his important editorial contribution to the *South African Journal of Psychology* entitled: Assessment in Psychology in the 21st century – a multilayered endeavour, was drawing attention to.

Also, this development saw the emergence of the eclectic perspective and the need for application of more than one theoretical framework in the practice of counselling psychology and its training programmes in the three African countries. Thus, currently, counselling psychology practitioners in the three African countries are inducted in the course of their university degree education into many different psychological intervention approaches in counselling psychology: psychoanalytic, person-centred, cognitive-behaviour-therapy, group psychotherapy, existential psychotherapy, narrative psychotherapy, family therapy, and African-centred perspectives etc. (Nwoye, 2022), which the counselling psychology practitioners can draw upon in influencing their practice. Hence, the significance of this stage in the diachronic history of counselling psychology in the three countries is that it helped counselling psychologists in those three African countries, including South Africa, to diversify in its techniques and theories of practice.

#### **Theme Five: Counselling Psychology as Investment in Human Potential and Development**

Under this theme the point that must be highlighted is that counselling psychologists in Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania were taught in the course of their training that individuals/clients are to be assisted to focus on development of their potentials and to live “as if making a project of themselves,” in order to make the best of their lives. This ideology means that in counselling psychology practice in these three African countries, the previous emphasis on counselling as education for rational living still persisted, and counselling psychologists in the three countries see themselves as new breed of psychological mentors for the young, interested in helping the latter to develop to their maximum potential in the different departments of life (Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

Following this humanistic emphasis the notion of ‘therapy’ among counselling psychology practitioners in the three African countries is also extended to the idea of helping people to achieve such goals as ‘greater self-awareness’ and “self-familiarity” (Mpfu, 2012; Nwoye, 2022) that should not only help to train the relevant client’s eyes for seeing life properly by making them always ‘to see things together’, but also to lead them to appropriately reappraise their life style. Operating as humanistic counselling psychologists, counselling psychology practitioners in the three African countries were also

interested in working towards freeing their clients from narrow-minded and faulty beliefs and frozen values and to stay away from the problems of dependence on passing fads.

With this also came the interest in helping young clients in the three countries to avoid seeing life only in a one-dimensional perspective or from the surface meaning of things. The advantage of the emergence of this humanistic tradition in the list of the superordinate themes in counselling psychology practice in the three African countries is that it helps to demonstrate that the scope of practice of counselling psychology in the three African countries must entail not only the art of helping people to choose careers, or that of helping the distressed in society to regain their emotional integrity and balance, but also that of helping the people to maximise their strengths by building up themselves and their future (Nwoye, 1991); See Mwititi and James (2012), and Bojuwoye and Mogaji (2012), respectively). The disadvantage here of course is that with it the general public in these three countries still continued to see the practice of counselling psychology as something that is essentially meant for the young, particularly those in higher education, and the mentally healthy, outside of clinical settings. This image has been retained up to today in the three African countries particularly Kenya (Okech & Kimemia, 2012; Wambui, 2015), and even in another sub-Saharan African country, namely Botswana (Stockton et al., 2011).

### **Theme Six: Counselling Psychology as Process of Career Education for National Development**

This theme emerged in the 1960s in the international counselling literature particularly after Russia's Sputnik went to the moon. With that event (1957), the news circulated around the world that Russia succeeded in doing this because they devised a way of fishing out talented young people from the population and giving them appropriate education in the area of science and technology. With this understanding, leaders from the three African countries each of which had just secured their political independence from their erstwhile political masters started to see counselling psychologists as the best bet they have to assist them in such areas as talent searching and matching of students against relevant occupations in the areas of science and technology. In this way, in subsequent years governments of the three African countries (Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania) which gave scholarships to some of their citizens to go and study counselling psychology, did so with this value of helping to build personnel for effective provision of counselling psychology practice as an exercise in talent searching in their schools, the universities, and in the workplace.

It was against this background that the Ominde Report (in Kenya) of 1964 came into being and was the first of several post-independence reports that placed emphasis on the need for provision of professional counselling services in schools and to the general public, with the aim to ensuring the task of talent searching among the youth. It is in the same breath that the 1977 Nigeria National Policy on Education was enacted aimed, among other things, at providing a policy platform through which the Nigerian Nation can use the expertise of trained professional counsellors to promote the task of making the best out of their young citizens in schools. The advantage of this development is that it made these African governments to recognize the value and role of professional counselling practice in national development. But the disadvantage is that with it the old narrow idea of counselling as career counselling (Bantjes et al., 2016; Maree, 2013; Nwoye, 1991), earlier championed by Parsons reclaimed the limelight.

### **Theme Seven: Counselling Psychology Practice as a Major Aspect of Health Psychology**

With the emergence of HIV/AIDS and its devastating impact in Africa and the wider world, counselling psychologists in the three African countries were made aware in the course of their training, that findings from the field of epidemiology in the last 40 years showed that the major killer diseases throughout the world are no longer only the viruses and infectious diseases but stress-related disorders such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer of all sorts, including HIV/AIDS. All these emerging killer diseases, counselling trainees and practitioners in the three African countries were made

to understand, are known as life style diseases, which arise not from what happens to people by accident but from what people do to themselves: through the way they eat, drink, smoke, sex and the drugs they abuse. These, they were informed, are the so-called addiction behaviour life patterns. Being behaviour or lifestyle related they are understood as problems to be prevented through appropriate information and education (Nwoye, 1994), and not just through the process of biomedical intervention. Consequently, the recent years, starting from the late 1980s with the emergence of HIV/AIDS have seen professional counselling practitioners in the three African countries, working alongside medical doctors and social workers in hospitals and mental health clinics to serve this purpose: to engage in HIV/AIDS education and counselling (Bantjes et al., 2016; Leach et al., 2003; Nwoye, 1994, 2008a, 2008b; van Dijk, 2013); including the practice of trauma management and restoration of patients morale (Nwoye, 2008a, 2022), and in some cases, the exercise of teaching people how to manage themselves and how to stay away from these diseases arising from irresponsible personal habits or lives of recklessness. In that way, the earlier emphasis on the idea of counselling as education for rational living tended to reappear and to take over the limelight. In the same way the earlier notion of counselling psychologists as members of the health team which emerged during the World War years has thus persisted in the practice of counselling psychology in these three African countries.

### **Theme Eight: Counselling Psychology as a Multicultural /Feminist Practice**

A major point to be emphasized under this theme is that counselling psychology practice in the three African countries has come to be influenced by the new change of attitude brought about by the postmodernist perspective (Bereiter, 1994) towards members of minority populations, including women and children, the abused, and the poor and members of the indigenous populations. Following the impetus arising from this development, professional counselling psychology practice in the three African countries came to be known as something offered to liberate women and other marginalized peoples from the limitations and prejudices of one-dimensional thinking imposed by patriarchy, the trammels of tradition, and colonialism (Nwoye, 2022). In that way, the emphasis of the counselling profession in these countries shifted to the notion of its responsibility to protect the rights of children, and those of different cultures and ethnicity, and to counsel the abused, the abandoned, the violated and the violent, members of the silenced voices, and the suffering and the dying.

The advantage of this development in the diachronic account of the history of counselling psychology in the three African countries is that with it, counselling psychology came to be recognized as a positive and liberative enterprise, where people are enabled to transcend the unnecessary limitations imposed by culture and tradition, language and ethnicity, with the intention of enabling them to harness their full potential for the greater benefit of all. In the three African countries indeed, this stage provided a path of inspiration for the practice of feminist counselling following the special model of feminism propounded by Buchi Emecheta (1988) of Nigeria, namely Feminism with a small 'f', and negofeminism championed by Obioma Nnaemeka (2004), also a native of Nigeria, who proposes the notion of feminism as a process of negotiation and accommodation (Nwoye, 2022).

### **Theme Nine: Counselling Psychology as Spiritualist and Transformative Practice**

Here the first point to make is that under this theme the concept of spirituality is not the same as religion. Rather when we talk of spirituality in this review we are making reference to the people's worldview and those issues that matter in people's lives. Understood in this way, what is to be noted is that presently counselling psychology practice in the three African countries (Kenya Nigeria, and Tanzania); and from Moeti's (2019) account even in Botswana, has increasingly come to acquire a spiritualist dimension as many clients these days present counselling psychologists in those countries with personal issues and confessions that they have not shared with their clergy, their family, or their friends (Moeti, 2019).

In this way, counselling psychology practitioners in the three countries have become sole confidantes of their clients' private experience of life traumas, their wildest mistakes and guilt, and their real and imagined violations of personal, community and moral statutes. In this regard, counselling psychology practitioners in these three African countries, of course, are not called for, to become totally accepting and nondirective psychologists, or worst, to offer to such clients, moralizing expressions of the status quo, but to provide a therapeutic relationship and a listening ear or psychological presence that goes with it (Bantjes et al., 2016; Christopher, 1996; Young, 2013).

The challenge of this spiritualist and transformative dimension in the scope of counselling psychology practice in the three African countries in line with the spiritualist view of the African people (Mbiti, 1969) is to help their clients to redefine and reflect on the right or wrong things in their lives, to nurture the joy of true love (*amoris laetitia*) as well as forgiveness in their lives, and to enhance and strengthen the self-esteem of demeaned clients.

The greatest challenge of this dimension in the scope of practice of counselling psychologists in these three African countries is the onus to recognize that counselling psychology practice often involves the ability to face issues that carry existential weight as well as questions that will stretch the profession toward more adequate understanding of what it means to be human and what it means to strive toward an understanding and facilitation of human lives in the throes of being and becoming (Nwoye & Nwoye, 2012).

## **Theme Ten: Counselling Psychology as Community Psychology**

Arising from the broad context of armed civil conflicts, genocidal wars, unpredictable natural disasters such as over-flooding of cities and people's homes, and transportation accidents, tribal clashes and ritual killings, crises of abuse in intimate relationships, conflicted labour relations, and the resultant mass trauma of political violence, the notion of counselling psychology as community psychology has entrenched its presence and centrality in the 21st Century in the three African countries understudy.

In this way, counselling psychologists in those African countries like perhaps their counterparts in Asia, Australia and New Zealand currently have started to see, as part of their setting for practice, the local community and institutions/agencies where the victims of most of these tragedies (e.g., the 1998 bomb blast in Kenya and Tanzania) are located (Bantjes et al., 2016; Christopher et al., 2014; Schofield, 2013). In carrying out their roles in the service of the community so challenged, some community-based trauma works with victims of such anomalies are developed. In most of such community trauma work practice, the counselling psychologist is typically positioned to play the roles of advocate, prosecutor/interpreter, partner, and anchor to those victims in particular, and to the community members at large (Christopher et al., 2014; Nwoye, 2013). Similarly, in some instances, the role of the community counselling psychologist in the three African countries is to develop community based programmes aimed at building bridges of dialogue between the government and citizens living in informal settlements as is often the case in some parts of Kenya, and Tanzania, who resist the Government order to vacate to a new location.

Also, community counselling psychologists in the three countries often find the need to organize for the benefit of returning war refugees, particularly those abused or involved as child-soldiers in the conflict who have committed some atrocities during the war, some cleansing rituals to promote the return of holistic health in their lives. Typical examples of such cleansing rituals include those made available to returning refugees from the Sierra Leonean and Mozambican civil conflicts (Honwana, 1997; Nwoye, 2021).

### ***Implications and Recommendation***

One or two lessons to take home from this discussion can now be highlighted. The first is that although counselling psychology in the three African countries has its roots firmly planted in the United States'/British model of the profession, a number of factors and contexts unique to experiences in these African countries have led to the emergence of counselling services and themes that are not covered in the mainstream in the Euro-American models of practice. Four instances that reflected the emergence of these departures were highlighted under themes 'seven', 'eight', 'nine' and 'ten' above. The implication of this is that although the counselling profession in the three African countries might have taken their respective roots in the United States/ Britain, some aspects of its models of practice can easily be considered as home grown or like in the case of HIV/AIDS counselling and nutritional therapy (Nwoye, 1994) as more intensified or invigorated in the three African countries than is arguably the case in the United States and Britain.

The second lesson to take home from this discussion is that as far as counselling and psychotherapeutic practice in the three African countries are concerned, especially in relation to the task of adequate implementation of theme three above (i.e., Counselling psychology as a talking-centred treatment), there is need to move beyond the BioPsychoSocial (BPS) model that dominates the practice of counselling and psychotherapy in the United States and Europe. This is because some psychological illnesses that often show up among clients in the three African countries are seen as dramatic illnesses that carry a hidden message whose meaning must first be decoded and determined before a proper avenue to achieving a cure can be found (Gone, 2021; Holdstock, 1979; Mpofo et al., 2011; Nwoye, 2015, 2022; Sodi & Bojuwoye, 2014). Thus, because the experience of psychopathology, such as sudden insanity, and other categorical states of incoherent thoughts and actions, are understood in Africa as instances of dramatic rather than ordinary experience. The tendency in the Africentric paradigm to mental illness is to 'read' such illnesses not as simple illnesses but rather as a 'text', carrying a hidden message, pregnant with meaning (Nwoye, 2015). This implies that within the Africentric paradigm to mental illness, sudden, severe, psychological illnesses are approached as meta-communications to be 'read' and interpreted, rather than to be categorized or classified as emphasized in the spirit and framework of the Western DSM-5-TR manual. And recognizing such illnesses as 'symbolic illnesses' or rather as 'statements' or 'letters' or metaphors with hidden meanings, they can only be effectively explained and decisively dealt with, through the application of the African perspective to clinical diagnosis and treatment (Nwoye, 2015). The Africentric paradigm to clinical diagnosis and treatment has extensive range of convenience (encompassing not only the BioPsychoSocial [BPS]) model of illness explanation endorsed by the Eurocentric paradigm, but also the spiritualist explanatory framework excluded or overlooked by the Eurocentric perspective to illness causality explanation, giving rise to a more inclusive framework to mental illness explanation namely the *BPS-S* model emphasized in the Africentric perspective, where the last 'S' in this African model refers to the Spiritual dimension that may be implicated when certain psychological disturbances are brought for attention by the clients (Nwoye, 2022).

Given these indications, what is recommended in this review is that the Eurocentric approach to counselling psychology training we have inherited that is currently dominated by an emphasis on the BPS and the medical model, must be deconstructed and its limitation uncovered and appreciated and acknowledged to create a basis for accommodating the recognition of the possibility that, as understood in the Africentric perspective, a certain difficult psychological disturbance in a given client, the type that refuses to go after all hospitalization has been attempted, may have a spiritual, rather than a biomedical or biopsychosocial origin (Bartholomew & Gentz, 2019; Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Holdstock, 1979; Mbiti, 1969; Nwoye, 2015; Sodi & Bojuwoye, 2014). Where that is the case, the understanding in the Africentric paradigm is that its cure must be sought beyond the limits of the BioPsychoSocial framework.

## Conclusion

Having reached to this point perhaps the best way to conclude is to say that although the ordinary citizens, such as parents, teachers, and students in communities in the three African countries reviewed, may tend to assume that counselling psychology is all about helping clients to think clearly and choose wisely about their careers, this popular understanding or presumed more common focus of the profession among the lay folk in the three African countries only tells but part of the story about what counselling psychology as a professional psychological practice and research discipline is all about. For, although the call to career counselling is part of the classic role of the professional counselling psychologist inherited from the Euro-American tradition of the discipline as can be seen from this presentation; it is only but a part of the description of the entire professional mandate of a trained counselling psychologist in the three African countries (Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania) in particular and the other regions of the continent in general.

Beyond these historical limitations lies an opportunity for a fundamental paradigmatic shift in how counselling psychology approaches career development in African contexts. Rather than maintaining a reactive stance that merely facilitates student-environment fit within existing career structures, counselling psychology in Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania could embrace a more proactive developmental approach that actively contributes to national advancement. This shift would involve moving beyond traditional career matching to actively redirecting and nurturing student interest toward critical national development areas, particularly STEM subjects, which have proven instrumental in propelling nations toward innovative and technological self-sufficiency (Amegah et al., 2023). Such a paradigmatic transformation would require counselling psychology to evolve from being a passive responder to individual career concerns toward becoming an active agent of national human resource development (African Development Bank Group, 2024). This vision could be realized through strategic government involvement in counselling psychology practice and the integration of community-based initiatives within educational and career institutes. By positioning counselling psychology as a developmental partner rather than merely a support service, schools and training institutions could leverage counselling interventions to identify, nurture, and channel talent toward sectors critical for national development (Farao & du Plessis, 2024), thereby transforming counselling psychology from a peripheral support function into a central driver of human capital development that addresses both individual fulfilment and collective national progress.

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