



## **Psychology in Nigeria: Reflections on the second half of the century (2015 – 2065)**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is a reflection on the post-fifty years of Psychology in Nigeria. It examined how psychology in Nigeria fared along a set of dimensions: strengths and weaknesses; contributions to the solution of problems in society; training provided, and standing in the scientific community. The evaluation revealed lots of unmet expectations. It also showed that psychology have also made significant progress in some areas, and have acquired multi-disciplinary status in the Nigerian university education. There is no other factor that points to the prospect of psychology in Nigeria than the trust that the Psychology Bill (Senate Bill, number 624) would soon become an Act of the National Assembly. The Psychology Bill, which is awaiting the President's accent, is expected to revolutionize the practice and regulation of psychology in Nigeria when mainstreamed.*

### **Introduction**

The popular cliché that psychology has a long past and a short history is true of international psychology, but that is also true of psychology in Nigeria. Long before the formal introduction of psychology as an independent academic discipline, psychology existed in many forms within the country. Mefoh (2014a) argues that the history of psychology in Nigeria can be traced along three developmental stages, namely: non-formal, informal, and formal entry stages. The non-formal era refers to a period of folk psychology, when people rely on intuitive theories to understand people and their behaviours. Since people in that era lacked the resources to understand why people think and act as they do, much knowledge and many believes are fixed by intuition.

The informal stage refers to the period when scientific psychology crept into the Nigeria education's scene. Education as a discipline started in Nigeria's tertiary education in

1932 at Yaba Higher College and later at the University of Ibadan in 1948. Many theories of the discipline of education are founded on core psychological principles. So, students of education were the first to be taught scientific psychology in Nigeria, followed by students in the medical schools and those in other social sciences. Teaching psychology to students of these disciplines when there were no trained psychologists' in the country imply that psychology was in the hands of non-psychologists, such as educationists, psychiatrists and other professionals who taught psychology as a service course.

The formal stage of psychology in Nigeria began with the official introduction of psychology as an independent academic discipline into the curriculum of higher education in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1964. The development of Departments of Psychology in Nigerian universities was somewhat sluggish at the beginning. Between 1964 up to the middle of 1970s, only three Departments of Psychology existed in Nigerian universities as follows: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1964); University of Lagos (1969); and the University of Jos (1976). Although psychology made a rather belated entry into the Nigerian University education curriculum, the discipline has grown in leaps and in bounds. In terms of the number of graduates of psychology and the number of independent Departments of Psychology in the Nigerian universities, psychology has grown in popularity. One is not thinking of mere popularity, but popularity in terms of efforts to meet the needs in the society. Psychology has become so popular that it has assumed a somewhat multi-disciplinary status in the Nigerian university education. Lectures in introductory psychology are now often oversubscribed, as students from Law, Medicine, Business, and the social sciences are required to take a course or two in Psychology in partial fulfillment of their programmes. Makanju (2017) stated in a recent publication that there are thirty-three



accredited Departments of Psychology in Nigeria. However, since some Departments of Psychology operate without full accreditation, the number of Departments of Psychology in Nigeria may probably be more than what the statistics show.

### **Status of Psychology in Nigeria at fifty**

The Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) celebrated fifty years of psychology in Nigeria in November, 2014, at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (the place where the discipline started in 1964). At that event, scholars and practitioners expressed joy that the discipline has matured and with hope for better prospects in the future. Many hoped that from that moment, that psychology in Nigeria will cease to be addressed as a 'young discipline'. Prior to the Golden Jubilee celebration, some researchers (e.g., Gire, 2004, Nweze, 2007) frequently refer to psychology in Nigeria as a 'young' discipline. Of course, some other researchers (Mefoh, 2014a; Uzoka, 2005) do not agree with that assumption. For example, Uzoka (2005) opined that: "we are not young as a discipline anymore, either internationally or nationally. Introduced into the Nigerian educational system in 1964; we cannot be a dormant element in the social engineering of the nation" (p.14). That aside, there were a consensus amongst members of the Association at the event that psychology as a discipline has performed above average in its first fifty years of existence. In this section of the paper, the author looks at how psychology has fared in those fifty years using Louw's guide. Louw (2002) argue that typically a discipline will be examined along a set of dimensions that would include strengths and weaknesses, contributions to the solution of problems in society, training provided, and standing in the scientific community.

***Strength and weaknesses***

Psychology as a discipline began in Nigeria with many conceptual misconceptions about its subject matter. Many Nigerians earlier believed psychology to be the study of witchcraft, which led many people to think that psychologists read peoples mind. It was probably because of the misconceptions about the subject matter of psychology that Olomolaiye (1985) charged psychologists to do this: “one of the basic things psychology can offer Nigeria now is an opportunity for Nigerians to know what psychology is and what psychologists do. It is time we remove from the minds of Nigerians the conception of psychology as an abstract discipline...” (p. 343). Nigerian psychologists seemed to have received this charge with open hands. There was some sort of resolve by every psychologist to seize any opportunity to teach the Nigerian people what psychology is. That psychology is not related to witch-craft and that no psychologist can read anyone’s mind, as it were. The misperception of psychology was not limited to the illiterate people only, some educated people, including surprisingly some social scientists, believed the myth that psychologists read peoples mind. In one instance of this opportunity, Ojiji (2011) reported how he educated a panel of interviewers on what psychology is, following the panel’s genuine demonstration of lack of knowledge about the subject matter of psychology. Earlier, Uzoka (2005) shared an experience he encountered with a fellow professional (not a psychologist). The two were having a lively conversation, until Uzoka introduced himself as a psychologist. Immediately, the man became somewhat uneasy and depicts a picture of someone that that has been betrayed. The man felt concerned that Uzoka did not warn him that he is a psychologist and was quietly reading his mind all the time they were chattering. Uzoka had to reassure the man that his fears were baseless. He told him that no psychologists can read anybody’s mind; he spent ample time to educate him about the discipline. These



are isolated cases, but psychologists have generally demonstrated that contrary to fortune telling, the discipline of psychology uses a variety of well-developed techniques to understand why people think and act as they do. Although the number of times that the general public was taught about the subject matter of psychology is not known or documented, those subtle interventions have contributed very significantly to the image of psychology in Nigeria. In a survey about the public image of psychology and psychologists in Nigeria, Obot (1993) found that respondents generally viewed psychology positively. In terms of weakness, the inability of psychology to gain full autonomy from education remains worrisome. How can people with education degrees still teach in Department of Psychology, fifty years after psychology was founded in Nigeria? This is happening! In some Departments, these graduates of education are even made the Head of Department, while psychologists work under them.

### ***Contributions to the solution of problems in the society***

Psychology is often faced with the unrelenting question about its contributions to national development. As a discipline, psychology has contributed in solving several problems, which tend to hinder the individual and the entire society from self-fulfillment. Psychology has contributed to improving human conditions in Nigeria as it is the case in most advanced societies where the discipline started and is more firmly established. Two examples relating to psychology's role in advocacy and conflict resolution would suffice for the present discourse. Uzoka (2005) called on psychologists to become useful to the society through active involvement in advocacy. Uzoka wrote that: "psychologists should be in the forefront in the advocacy for good governance. ...We must be vigorous in our advocacy for equity and fairness in the distribution of

national resources..." (p.16). Following this clarion call, psychologists have assisted the society in mobilizing critical stakeholders towards public policies in order to improve social life. A critical area where psychologists got the government's attention is on the issue of child abuse and neglect. Psychologists employed professional conferences, mass rallies, child advocacy publications and media publicity to force the government to legislate against abuse and neglect and it did! As often said you win some and lose some. In 1981, a group of psychologists produced a position paper (Uzoka, Eyo, Obi-Keguna, Ikeagwu, Ibeh, Iwuh, & Ozioko, 1981), in which they articulated some policy areas that psychologists should be engaged in. Areas covered in the paper includes: industrial growth/personnel development, health care, social/child welfare, educational policy, town and urban planning, family planning, national policy on research, town unions, psychology and politics, advocacy for African lifestyles, need for a psychology lobby and psychology manpower. However, with most government's distrust for the academia, the issues raised in the paper were largely disregarded. Eyo (1999) said this about the document: "the import of the paper is yet to be sufficiently appreciated" (p.97).

A second example is psychology's role in conflict resolution. The incidence of domestic conflicts and violence is on the increased in Nigeria and this condition has continued to cause mental distress on the citizens. Not many people will give psychologists a chance to resolve a major conflict, but that was what a group of psychologists did in the Mambilla Plateau. Ojiji (2011) gave a narrative of how he led a group of psychologists to resolve the intractable conflict in that North-Eastern part of Nigeria using a simple psychological strategy. The psychologists drew up the intervention plan, which included a research base (i.e., using the knowledge of general and social psychology to manage the conflict) strategy. Because there would be little success in the management of conflicts if the emotional causes of the conflict are not rationally examined, the group



used research to arrive at the root causes of the conflict. Large numbers of the people in Mambilla Plateau were interviewed to gain better understanding of the conflict. There were several sessions of the meetings, at the end, the entire group signed an agreement to end the hostility and to support any structure put in place to sustain peaceful co-existence in the area. In the end, the conflict was resolved, and the efforts of the psychologists were commended and formed the basis of interventions carried out by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja, Nigeria and many other national and international agencies in the Mambilla Plateau.

### ***Training provided.***

What is the training in psychology in Nigeria like? As mentioned above, there are about thirty-three Departments of Psychology in Nigeria, or slightly more. Thus, psychology has become very popular and thousands of young Nigerians are yearly graduating with psychology degrees from Nigerian universities. However, if a contest should arise between quality and access; the later will carry the day. The reason being that government allows very little or no funding for psychological education and this culminates in poor or low quality teaching facilities and low-value research by teachers. Every Department of Psychology in Nigeria, for example, is supposed to have a functional laboratory. But due to the poor funding of psychological education, new laboratory equipments are not regularly purchased and obsolete materials are not usually replaced. In the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for example, laboratory materials purchased around 1982 still deck the laboratory shelves; and as Gire (2004) rightly pointed out, “some of these items have questionable pedagogical value in preparing students to engage in contemporary social science research” (p.47). This is the reason

why many psychologists in Nigeria, including Experimental Psychologists, employ only the traditional methods of research (e.g., using questionnaire methods to collect behavioural data) instead of using more sensitive and more advanced non-invasive methods (e.g., neuro-imaging techniques) to conduct cutting edge researches.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has the statutory function to regulate and standardize undergraduate programmes in Nigerian universities. Mekanju (2017) wrote this about the NUC: “one measure of quality assurance put in place by NUC is the four-yearly accreditation programmes exercise, where each academic programme in accredited universities, must undergo an inspection visit by accreditation teams from NUC” (p. 278). How does most Departments of Psychology in Nigerian universities manage to secure full accreditation despite the sorry states of materials in many Departments? By excluding important stakeholders like the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) from making contributions on entry requirement for the discipline, the future of psychological education in Nigeria is bleak. There has been continued mismatch with the needs of the society and with what psychology is offering. The NPA is in a better position to harmonize the programmes run by various Departments of Psychology, and to emphasize the kind of education that is relevant to the needs of the society. A situation where some core courses and the credit hours allocated on available courses are significantly variable in several Departments of Psychology is not healthful. To get around this problem, many universities now set different criteria for admission into graduate training in psychology. For example, the Departmental Postgraduate committees in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the University of Ibadan frequently treat ‘excellent results’ from Departments of Psychology (outside their own) with some reservations. For example, a First Class degree may be re-evaluated as a high Second





Class Upper Division, while some 'middle-level' results are denied admission completely.

### ***Standing in Scientific Community***

Increase in students' enrolment and the number of graduates of Psychology are frequently cited as major indexes of growth of psychology in Nigeria (Makanju, 2017; Mefoh, 2014b). But a more important index for accessing the status of the discipline in Nigeria is the relevance the society attaches to the discipline. Nigerian nation presents some of the characteristics of a traumatized society, with worsening insecurity, a stagnant economy and some of the worst health indicators in the world (United Nation Development Programme, UNDP, 2000). The prevalence of these ills in the Nigerian society is a glaring indication that although psychology has witnessed a somewhat exponential growth in enrolment and the number of graduates produced each year, the status of the discipline is still low in the country. Akin-Ogundeji (1991) claimed that there were about 150 psychologists in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria combined. Although this estimation may probably not be a true reflection of facts, but the point inherent in that claim is that there are small numbers of psychologists in Nigeria compared to the increasing population. In other words, psychologists are spread thin across many domains such that their impacts are not felt in the society. Nigeria has a huge population. But the number of qualified psychologists in Nigeria is too few to render any appreciable services to a large population of about 200 million people. Eyo (1999) puts it very succinctly: "but considering the range of services that should be rendered in a country of 120 million people (the size at that time), the number of graduate psychologists is a drop in the ocean" (p.96). Mefoh (2014a) estimated that the

ratio of access for need of psychological services is probably 50 psychologists to about 150,000 citizens (or 1: 3000). This situation is different in other climes, where psychology has established its foothold as a viable profession. For example, while less than one thousand (1000) psychologists are registered with the Nigerian Psychological Association as at 2014, South African Psychological Association had in year 2000 registered about four thousand four hundred and fifty-five (4455) psychologists, of which 2575 were women (Louw, 2002). Registration with one's professional association should be a *sine qua non* to practice as a psychologist; but sadly, many practicing psychologists are not registered with the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA). The majorities who fail to register are not monitored by the Association and they commit quackery in the profession and/or give the discipline a bad name. The NPA need to take up the challenge to embark upon the registration of all psychologists through its zonal chapters, so that it can regulate practice and punish psychologist who go astray.

### **Reflections on the second-half of the Century 2015-2065**

Gross (1979) wrote about international psychology, "Today, psychology is art, science, therapy, religion, moral code, lifestyle, philosophy and cult" (p.3). This is not exactly the case with psychology in Nigeria, but there has been a phenomenal interest in scientific psychology since the discipline was founded in Nigeria fifty-five years ago. So far, the overall impact of psychology as a discipline in Nigeria can be assessed in relation to manpower development, psychological research, conflict resolution, advocacy and health care services. Psychology has many specializations, some of the notable areas of the field include: clinical, developmental, industrial/organizational, experimental, counseling, social, forensic, military, health, etc. Evans (1999) refers to these many specializations in psychology as a "loose confederation of sub-disciplines" (p.15). To



qualify to practice as a psychologist in Nigeria, one requires a higher degree in Psychology. Little high level manpower is produced yearly, and because universities require high level manpower, many psychologists who earn higher degrees, especially doctorate degree, teach in the universities. The few with higher degrees who are not absorbed in the academia work in applied settings such as schools, health, industrial and commercial settings. In relation to the health care services, clinical psychologists work in the psychiatric departments of major federal and state hospitals and teaching hospitals, providing services relating to psychological assessment, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation, and care of persons with abnormal behavioural problems. This group of psychologists oftentimes works in concert with a number of other professionals in the hospitals, such as psychiatrists, doctors and nurses, to offer them psychological support in the management of mental health cases. Most clinical psychologists working in this area hold advanced degrees in psychology, especially Master and/or Ph.D Degrees. However, because of scarcity and needs, some first degree holders are often engaged to offer ancillary services in hospitals, under supervision of a more senior psychologist. The constitution of the Nigerian Psychological Association declares that what qualifies one as a psychologist is “at least a Master’s Degree in psychology from a recognized university” (NPA, 1984, p.4).

Because psychology has not been sufficiently used effectively for the solution of Nigeria’s multifarious problems, Eyo (1999) calls for a judicious application of psychological services in nation building. Eyo posits that, “there is no advanced country today that does not capitalize on the contributions of psychology for the understanding and solution of national and international issues. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria should not

be found wanting in this respect because the price of being found wanting may be too high” (p.104). Psychology in Nigeria completed the first half of the century in 2014, the next half, between 2015 and 2065, is the focus of this section. To reflect on this, this section of the paper is sub-divided into two parts, namely: constraints and future prospects of psychology in Nigeria.

### ***Constraints***

Although the Nigerian public has begun to respond positively to psychological services (Gire, 2004), the vast majority of highly qualified Nigerian psychologists teach in departments of psychology in Nigerian universities, leaving only a handful of skilled psychologists to provide psychological services to only few numbers of people out of the very large numbers needing psychological services. This situation has continually led to the rating of the discipline of psychology as low in Nigeria. Akin-Ogundeji (1991) had this to say of psychology in Nigeria: “psychology is still largely a classroom research enterprise with little practical relevance to the problems of living in contemporary Nigerian society” (p.3). Akin-Ogundeji makes this statement to point to the fact that psychology as a discipline in Nigeria contributes very little to national development. Psychology’s overall impact is only probably perceptible in teaching and research. This is an indictment to psychologists in Nigeria. As experts in human engineering; psychologists need to move out from the classrooms to meet the people at the base of the society, where they are badly needed. No profession is as close to the hearts and minds of the population as psychologists. They must therefore confront governments with the travails of the population, the harshness of poverty and its negative consequences on the mental health of the people. Psychologists must be involved in the re-shaping of the public attitudes and thoughts about nationhood and must advocate



that there can be no lasting peace without justice. The Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) needs to make a strong case for the value and role of Psychology in everyday experience and wellbeing of citizens. As Gire (2004) proposed, “the NPA needs to take on this challenge and embark upon an extensive and sustained campaign to promote psychology as a discipline and profession that is relevant to the nation’s wellbeing” (p.55).

Thus, to make psychology more relevant in the future, Nigerian psychologists, including those who teach at the universities, need to go out to meet the public. They should mobilize the people to embrace development and transformation; psychologists must make pronouncements in schools, in sports, in arts, in media and government that there is a new way of life. A way of reaching agreement – with no bloodshed, no loss of life, no violence, and no wars must be vigorously pursued in the country.

Another major constraint to the growth of psychology in Nigeria is the continued lack of guiding philosophies or theories that can sufficiently address the cultural needs of the Nigerian and African people. International psychology is founded on the culture of western industrialized societies of Europe and America, and has been accused for its lack of responsiveness to different cultures or for its cultural one-sidedness. One frequently referred example is the Arthur Jensen’s (1971) proclamation that on the average, black people performs more poorly than whites on standard I.Q. tests, and that special programmes of compensatory education do not have much success in removing the difference. Jensen’s submission spilt the entire scientific world; the conclusion was widely criticized and was seen as fueling ethnocentrism in science. Many scientific falsehoods as Jensen’s have been described as “psychological apartheid” (Eweka, 1985),

yet many Nigerian psychologists has remained so intellectually and theoretically colonized that they do not think that there is need to interrogate Eurocentric or Westocentric psychology. Uzoka (1989) frowns at this professional disposition; he wrote: “we have made no sustained efforts to put forward coherent philosophical or theoretical points of view that are Nigerian or, indeed, African. We have accepted the western dogmas as final commentaries on man and the human condition” (p.108)

The goal of the author is not to blithely recommend that western (or international) psychology, its subject matter, vocabulary and framework, should be discarded completely. That is far from the truth. Gire (2004) rather, captures the author’s intention in the following statement: “the uncritical acceptance of concepts and methods without testing their validity or appropriateness to the Nigerian situation is unacceptable” (p.56). In this instance, efforts to domesticate western psychology would be a welcome development. The late Peter Omoluabi readily comes to mind as someone who worked so tirelessly to re-standardize or domesticate several psychological tests in Nigeria to ensure that they are culturally relevant to the Nigerian people. Similarly, other Nigerian Psychologists, especially those working in medical settings, have developed some therapeutic techniques that are authentic African. Ebigbo and colleagues’ (1995) harmony restoration therapy (HRT) was conceived to challenge the cultural imperialism in which the west imposes western personality norm on Africans. In other words, the therapeutic technique re-addresses the imbalance in personality assessment between Africans and the Americans and the Europeans. That was the reason why HRT is Peter Ebigbo’s *magnum opus* and earned him the Nigerian National Order of Merit – the award is Nigeria’s highest award for academic achievement.



Another significant impediment to the growth of psychology in Nigeria is the grip education has on psychology. The association or closeness of the disciplines is unhealthy and seems to confuse the general public about the autonomy of psychology as a fully fledged discipline of its own. Eyo (2004) wrote about the relationship of the two disciplines as: “the long association of education with psychology in Nigeria has created the false notion, which has persisted in many circles in Nigeria to this day, that psychology is the same as education, and that educationists can necessarily change places with psychologists” (p.19). Otherwise, how one can explain the recent development in the University of Ibadan, where the Department of Guidance and Counseling, a Department in the Faculty of Education, advertise for higher degree programmes (MSc and Ph.D) in clinical psychology? How will students from such a programme fare in comparison with other students who did the same programme in the Department of Psychology of that same university? One would expect that the practicum and internship curriculum of the two departments will differ significantly; some graduates will come out with the requisite skills to help people deal with the problems of living, while others would only come out with smattering knowledge of what to do in the field. The Department of Guidance and Counseling, University of Ibadan is one way quackery infiltrate our profession; those professional ‘hermaphrodites’ (half education and half psychology) capitalizes on the weakness and fears of gullible people to survive. Eyo (1999) warn people who patronize or seek the services of non psychologists. Without an in-depth knowledge of psychology, people who claim they are psychologists when they are not can ruin a client mentally and behaviourally, and for life too (Eyo, 1999).

## **Future prospects**

With the many successes so far achieved regarding the Psychology Bill, the second half of the century of psychology in Nigeria (i.e., 2015-2065) looks really bright. The Bill (SB. 624), which proposes to establish the Nigerian Council for Psychologists and other related matters has reached advanced stage of becoming law. The Bill has scaled all the hurdles in the National Assembly: the Bill passed the first and second readings in the Senate, it went for public presentation by the Senate Committee on Establishment and Public Services Matters, it was represented on the floor of the whole house in the Senate, it was sent to the House of Representative for concurrence. There, it went through the first and second readings; and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019, the Bill passed the third and final reading in the House of Representatives. The Bill was then returned to the Senate chamber on that day for onward transmission of the Bill to the President and Commander-in-Chief for assent. That is the status of the Psychology Bill. Once the President signs the Bill, it will become law. Securing the Act establishing the Nigerian Council for Psychologists will be the singular most significant achievement of psychology in Nigeria throughout its fifty-five years of existence. When the Bill gets the Presidential assent, it will become an Act of the National Assembly and will confer a charter status to the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA). A chartered Nigerian Psychological Association will be empowered under the law to regulate the training and practice of psychology in Nigeria. Makanju (2017) puts it better, “a charter status will give the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) the legal muscle to be involved in the development and approval of curriculum, as well as training mode and process for students in the profession” (p. 279).





The expectation for the growth of psychology in the second half of the century is quite high, as mentioned above, owing to the optimism that the Psychology Bill will become an Act of the National Assembly soonest. With the Act in force, the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) would then brace up to tackle the many impediments militating against the development of psychology in Nigeria. By definition, the NPA is the umbrella Association for the training in, and practice of psychology in Nigeria. Therefore, if NPA must live up to its mandates, it must fulfill the following functions:

### ***1. Regulate the training of psychology in Nigeria***

The NPA must partner with NUC to ensure that the minimum requirement for running Department of Psychology in Nigeria is met before the establishment of any new Department of Psychology. That is, there must be equitability in the programmes run in all the Departments of Psychology in Nigeria. This will enable all graduates of psychology in Nigeria to acquire similar skills after graduation. The Psychology bill will give NPA the legal backing to determine who teaches its undergraduates and will control the influx of non psychologists in the field. It is common knowledge that in some Departments of Psychology in Nigeria, non psychologists, especially people from education, serves as Heads of Departments.

### ***2. Oversee the activities of the various Divisions of Psychology***

Psychology has been described as a “loose confederation of sub-disciplines” (Evans, 1999, p. 15), due to the fact that the discipline has many specialist areas. Usually, specialists in specific areas form associations to bring together professionals in various specializations of psychology. Notable among these are the Nigerian Association of Clinical Psychologists (NACP), Nigerian Association of Industrial/Organizational

Psychologists (NAIP), Nigerian Association of Social Psychologists (NASP), etc. The NPA should be the parent Association of those Divisions and must provide the required leadership through perhaps bringing their executives into the expanded- executives of the national body for quick dissemination of information.

### ***3. Regulate practice of psychology in Nigeria***

If the NPA can establish a functional mechanism for credentialing her members, it will go a long way in engendering control of members by the Association, and also preventing charlatans from invading the profession. The inability of the NPA to brace up to this challenge has not helped the discipline to achieve genuine growth in Nigeria. Because of this laxity, many people with diverse backgrounds now claim to be rendering psychological services to the people, when in fact they engage in some sort of occultism. Of course, the frequently cited problem has always been that the NPA lacks the necessary legislation to call erring psychologists to order. But with the success so far achieved with the Psychology bill, one can begin to see some light in the tunnel.

### **Review and Summation**

Scientific psychology has existed for about fifty-five years in Nigeria, beginning from 1964 till date. With that number of years, the discipline is no longer a young discipline. The discipline has become very popular, assuming a multi-disciplinary status that even students of other Departments now take some courses in psychology. Only few graduates of Psychology go to graduate schools to specialize at the master's level or beyond. The rest of the graduates look for jobs straight out of university. Thus, graduates of psychology are found in the civil service, in public and private industrial organizations, in banks, in the armed forces and the police, immigration, drug law



enforcement, self employment, etc. By and large, psychology in Nigeria has made some salient contributions to manpower needs of the nation.

Although every psychologist is expected to help in the development of psychology in Nigeria, but the growth of psychology in Nigeria depends a lot on what the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) does or do not do. Thus, the NPA as a professional association for psychologists in Nigeria needs to be strengthened to achieve its aims. The NPA has its truly ugly moments in the 1980s like other professional associations, but the situation is improving little-by-little. The Association has started to inspire confidence among its members. A former President of NPA and member of the Board of Trustees have this to say about the NPA:

“We now have a vibrant association that one can be proud of, and doing all it can to raise the standard of psychology in Nigeria. One can only appeal to psychologists in Nigeria, to join hands with NPA in strengthening practice and training in psychology, because there is still a lot of grounds to be covered, before NPA can join the leagues where the American Psychological Association and British Psychological Society (BPS), etc. belong.” (Makanju, 2017, p.273).

Securing the Psychology bill would be one way members can contribute to making the Association begin to live up to its set objectives of promoting psychology in Nigeria. At this point, I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate the National President of NPA, members of the Board of Trustees, the college of Fellows and members of the Association, plus our beloved students, for their efforts in getting the Psychology bill to its present status. Let us continue to pray for the President and Commander-in-Chief of

the Nigerian armed forces so that the Spirit of God will influence him to sign the Senate bill number 624, which is the Psychology Bill, as soon as it is possible.

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