

# Integration of Divination Therapy and Modern Counselling (Rational Emotive Therapy) in Combating Fear Among Tiv Undergraduate Students in Benue State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

In Nigeria and amongst the Tiv people in particular before the advent of modern counseling the people had their traditional ways of seeking for help and solving their problems. This study is an attempt to integrate Divination counseling therapy into modern counseling (Rational Emotive Therapy) among Tiv undergraduate students in Benue State. The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study comprises all Tiv undergraduate students in universities in Benue State. A sample of 80 undergraduate students was randomly selected for the study. Instruments for data collection were Interview Guide and a structured Questionnaire titled "Integration of Divination Therapy and Rational Emotive Therapy in Combative Fear Questionnaire (IDTRETFCQ) which were validated by experts. Data collected for the study was analyzed using Frequency Counts, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that divination therapies (Or-shor) are available and used among the Tiv undergraduate students and has been effective in combating their fears (Myamchiem). The finding also revealed that modern counselling (Rational Emotive Therapy) is available and used in the universities and has been effective in combating fears among the undergraduate students. Based on the finding, the study concluded that school counsellors who attend to students with cultural issues must learn to integrate their customs and beliefs in resolving their personal-cultural problems

**Keywords:** Divination Therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy and Fear

**DOI:** 10.7176/JCSD/53-05

**Publication date:** November 30<sup>th</sup> 2019

## Introduction

The Tiv people inhabit the Benue valley in the middle belt of Nigeria. They occupy the rich alluvia plains of the River Benue, one of the two major rivers in Nigeria. Traditionally they are known for their rich cultural values which they strictly adhere to. These cultural values include truth and honesty which are the uncompromising virtues of the people (Mimi & Jighjigh in Gbor, 2010). In terms of occupation they are predominantly efficient, effective and productive farmers.

In Nigeria and amongst the Tiv people in particular before the advent of modern counseling the people had their traditional ways of seeking for help and solving their problems. In which case *Akombo* (witchcraft) and divination were used (Sai, 2016). It was common practice that an *Akombo* practitioner was known as the man who treats illnesses. This was because the treatment of diseases was the first main job of the *Akombo* practitioners. Wegh (2003) maintained that once an illness was identified in an individual, a diviner (Orshor) was consulted to know the cause of the illness, be it inability to walk, impotency, infertility, poor agricultural yields, failure amongst many other misfortunes.

The most feared objects in Tiv land included owls, lizards, snakes, crabs, chameleon etc. Normally when these animals appear in a person's house it is seen as a bad omen and the Tiv people associate them with "*Tsav*" mystical powers. Bohannan (1965) said that *Tsav* is morally neutral. It could be used for either good or bad. The malevolent aspect of *Tsav* is used to bewitch (*Tambe*) somebody.

Added to that Ndera (2013) attests that it was commonly believed that Tiv elders belong to a secret organization called "*Mbatsav*" witchcraft whose members possess a strong super natural power called "*Tsav*" which could be used to improve or impede the progress or development of an individual or community. The Tiv also believed that *Mbatsav* (witch) have powers over all plants and animals, rains, soil fertility and water bodies including all the aquatic resources they contain.

It is also a common belief among the Tiv that *Mbatsav* witches carry out their activities by manipulating or invoking different types of unseen powers called (*Akombo*) to inflict their victims with diseases (Ndera, 2013); hence the need to seek divination to ascertain where a problem was coming from. In spite of the exposure of the Tiv people to modern religions including Christianity, the fear of objects, some ominous animals, *akombo* and witchcraft is still pervasive among the people. This fear is transferred from generation to generation and where ever a Tiv man goes.

### **Divination Therapy (*Ishorkpehen*)**

Divination is defined in the English Oxford Dictionary as the practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by super natural means. Amongst the Christians, this practice is unacceptable and God warned his people the children of Israel against the practice of divination and sorcery (Leviticus 19:26).

Divination in Tiv is called *Ishor* while the diviner is known as *Or-Ishor*. The divination process is called *Ishor ikpehen*. Among the Tiv, a diviner is the father and revealer of secrets who by virtue of his/her extra-curricular sensitivity to spiritual reality and training uncover the mysteries of human life by revealing the past, present and even future secrets of hidden things and facts. He/she also belongs to the category of medicine men both in training and duties. He/she seeks to interpret and explain the mysteries of life, convey the message of God, divinities and the ancestors and other spirits to the members of the community (Pine, 2016). Moti and Wegh (2001) view divination as a means of understanding, diagnosis and treatment of common ailments that are suspected to have supernatural causes. This knowledge is passed from one generation to another as a father may pass to his sons. "*Ishor*" as attested by Moti and Wegh (2003) is the paraphernalia used in this method of divination. The diviner plays very significant roles in Tiv society, gives guidance in daily affairs, settles disputes, diagnoses diseases, gives solutions to various problems and looks into the future. The diviner is freely consulted by all Tiv people who wishes to.

In Tiv communities, the diviners have the duty of interpreting and enunciating the relationship between the Tiv people and the invisible forces. The ancestors and deities influence the behavior and activities of the people. The deities can be employed by individuals and the whole community to accomplish their goals. It could be said that a form of social-spiritual-material contract exists between the Tiv people and the deities in as much as they are "worshipped" or "revered" only if they offered the people their wishes

The main instrument used is the *Agbende ishor* (shells of *ishor* which consists of four small bisected seed pods or pieces of bone separated on one side and smooth on the other. These are joined together by a string. Two sets are normally used in divination. The shells are believed to make revelations through this mysterious formation which the diviner understands by his supernatural powers.

In the first phase, the therapy proper begins when an individual has a dream (unusual happenings). Dzurgba (2016) attests that dreams in Tiv land have both religious and social implications. These unusual happenings (*Myamchiev*) can cause fear indicating that the witches (*Mbatsav*) are trying to kill someone. It could be child, wife, husband etc hence evil dreams are signals of evil plans.

Secondly, the dreamer explains his dreams to the head of his family who summons the community elders and briefs them about his unusual experiences. The elders select a delegation and send them on an errand to a diviner to find out which witches and wizards are behind the dream. The *Orshor* uses the socio-psychological approach to interrogate his clients about marital, family and kinship relations. The diagnosis very much depends on these leading questions that are asked. In the final analysis the use of common sense is applied to reach conclusions in respect of the problems. This why there is this common saying in Tiv that "*ashe hembra ishor*) (the eyes are more reliable than divination.

In the third phase the delegation that went on divination expedition would be called upon to inform the council of elders about their findings. Here the revelation of the diviner would be made public at the venue of the meeting.

The trial session of those accused is long. If the accused are not found guilty they are discharged and acquitted but the council would issue a general warning against all those persons (witches) *Mbastav* who are responsible for the dream. If they are convicted they are compelled to swell a religious oat "*Swem*" that deals with justice vowing not to continue with their intentions. This conflict is finally put to rest in the presence of all and sundry. Adult men, women and children all sit in the open courtyard to witness this event. At the end of the proceedings, the victim (dreamer) feels relieved and tells everyone that now he/she has peace as issues of the dream is resolved. This ends with eating, drinking and celebrations.

### **Theoretical framework**

The theory upon which this study relies is Albert Ellis (1962) of Rational Emotive Theory (RET). Albert Ellis theory is derived from his early approaches to sex, marriage and family problems making it relevant to be integrated into the traditional form of counseling which also relies on similar tenets.

His view about man: Ellis views man as both rational and irrational. When man is rational, he is effective, happy, competent and forward looking. His emotional disturbances or neurotic behaviour however results from illogical or irrational thinking. It is illogical for anyone to expect everybody in a community to love or approve everybody. Man's unhappiness results from within and can be controlled. Thus, man should learn to recognize irrational, inconsistent and unrealistic perceptions and replace them with rationality and reasonable philosophy. Ellis posited that people get themselves disturbed through irrational thinking which is referred to as Activating factor, Belief and Consequence (ABC) pattern of personality formation.

In application, if "Orduen," a two hundred level Biology student failed his examination repeatedly after several resists and long hours of study, he says to himself, "My people are behind this failure". Why should I fail

after such hard work? He becomes depressed and attempts to run away from school. A traditional counselor will see this in a wider dimension than a bunch of irrational thoughts. Consultations with his elders will be required to find out who is behind the failure and even much more inflicting him a wondering mind hence his fleeing from the school.

### **Integrating this Approach into Modern Counselling**

Fear is defined as an unpleasant feeling triggered by the perception of danger, real or imagined (Wikipedia.org). Anagbogu (1992) stated that the causes of fear among Nigerian children include ignorance and superstition. The author reiterated that Nigerian fear both real and unseen things and there is no exception with the Tiv child. A fearful child will not be able to acquire suitable intellectual skills especially scientific skills involving observation. The Tiv child who fears bewitchment from his cultural background may experience set back and failure in academic pursuits or even school dropout. Modern counseling would require cultural history, medical history and importantly social history to assist their client.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The introduction of modern counseling programme in Nigerian schools by some Reverend Sisters at St. Theresa's College Oke-Ado Ibadan in the year 1959 and the inclusion of guidance and counseling programmes in the National Policy on Education in the year 2001, presents alternative sources of seeking for counselling. Many Nigerian students now seek the services of the school Guidance counselors to resolve their vocational, educational and personal social concerns. Others combine modern counselling services with religious counselling to address their problems. Despite all these the options a number of troubled students still resort to their family customers and traditions of akombo and sorcery to address their debilitating fearful experiences and setbacks in life pursuits. For instance, Olayinka (1978) maintained that traditional mode of counselling is part of our heritage as long as people have their beliefs in the efficacy of what customs and culture can offer in terms of guidance, traditional counseling will always persist. No wonder students go for modern counseling for public purpose but visit traditional counselors for emotional and spiritual support because their belief is engraved in them. Thus observation shows that some students seek traditional help to excel in school and settle other persona social problems they encounter. This research therefore is set to ascertain the fears that prompt students to seek help from traditional sources or modern counselling methods or both.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is on integration of divination therapy and rational emotive therapy in combating fear among Tiv undergraduate students in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include:

1. Determine the availability of divination therapy in the communities of the Tiv undergraduate students
2. Ascertain the usability of divination therapy in the communities of the Tiv undergraduate students
3. Ascertain the effectiveness of the diviners(Or-shor) in combating fear (Mnyamchiem) among Tiv undergraduate students
4. Determine the availability of modern counselling (Rational Emotive Therapy)therapy in the undergraduate students' school campuses
5. Ascertain the usability of Rational Emotive Therapy in combating fear among the Tiv undergraduate students
6. Determine the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Therapy in combating fear among the Tiv undergraduate students

### **Research Questions**

1. Are divination therapies available in the communities of the Tiv undergraduate students?
2. Are the divination therapies used in the communities of the Tiv undergraduate students?
3. Are the divination therapies effective in combating fear among the Tiv undergraduate students in their communities?
4. Are modern counselling services (RET) available in your school?
5. Are modern counselling services (RET) used in your school?
6. Are the modern counselling services (RET) effective in combating fear among the Tiv undergraduate students in their communities?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study comprises all Tiv undergraduate students in universities in Benue State among which are (University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State University, University of Mkar, Mkar and National Open University of Nigeria). A sample of 20 students each from the four universities making a total of 80 undergraduate students was randomly selected for the study. Instruments for data

collection were Interview Guide and a Questionnaire titled “Integration of Divination Therapy and Rational Emotive Therapy in Combative Fear Questionnaire (IDTRETFCQ). The instruments was validated by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. Data collected for the study was analyzed using Frequency Counts, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. A benchmark of 50% was used to answer research question 2 and 3 while 2.50 was used to answer research question 3 and 6.

## Results

### Research Question 1: Availability of Divination Therapies

The respondents were interviewed on the availability of divination therapies in their community. From the interview, it was ascertained that most of the respondents (66 respondents representing 83%) attested to the existence of diviners (Or-shor) in their communities.

### Research Question 2: Usability of Divination Therapies

**Table1: Percentage Usability of Divination Therapies**

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE (%)		DECISION
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
1	I have directly benefited from the diviners (Or-shor ) services in my community	47	33	58.2%	41.8%	Utilized
2	My family members have benefited from the diviners (Or-shor) services in my community	61	19	76.3%	23.7%	Utilized
3	My friends/school mates have benefited from the diviners (Or-shor) services in my community	64	16	80.0%	20.0%	Utilized
4	We highly patronized the diviners services (Or-shor) in our community	59	21	73.8%	26.2%	Utilized
<b>Grand Percentage</b>				<b>72.1%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>Utilized</b>

Table 1 shows the usability of divination therapies as respondent to by Tiv undergraduate students in Benue State. As revealed on the table, all the items (item1, item2, item3 and item4) have percentage yes above 50% benchmark. This implies that the divination services (Or-shor) are utilized among the Tiv undergraduate students in their communities.

### Research Question 3: Effectiveness of Divination Services (Or-shor) in Combating Fear (Mnyamchiem)

**Table 2: Mean Effectiveness of Divination Services (Or-shor) in Combating Fear (Mnyamchiem)**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Divination therapy attributes the true cause of fear to an enemy	80	2.95	1.02	Effective
2	Divination therapy dispels fear (Mnyamchiem) by identifying offenders	80	3.01	.90	Effective
3	Divination therapy builds confidence in clients by involving the entire elders in the community	80	2.66	.88	Effective
4	Divination therapy stop re-occurrence of the fear (Mnyanchiem)	80	2.89	.85	Effective
<b>Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.88</b>	<b>.91</b>	<b>Effective</b>

Table 2 as presented reveals the effectiveness of divination services (Or-shor) in combating fear (Mnyamchiem) as responded by the Tiv undergraduate students. As revealed on the table, all the items with mean scores ranging from 2.66 – 3.01, all above the benchmark of 2.50 were considered effective by the respondents. The table revealed a grand mean of 2.88 which showed that the divination services (Or-shor) are effective in combating fear (Mnyamchiem) among the Tiv undergraduate students in their communities. The table also revealed high standard deviation values ranging from .85 – 1.02 which showed the homogeneity of the responses among the Tiv undergraduate stude

### Research Question 4: Availability of Modern Counselling Therapy

The Tiv undergraduate students were also interviewed on the availability/existence of counselling unit in their school. All the 80 students interviewed (representing 100% respondents) confirmed its availability.

**Research Question 5: Usability of Modern Counselling Therapy**

**Table3: Percentage Usability of Divination Therapies**

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE (%)		DECISION
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
1	I have directly benefited from any counseling services in your school	74	6	92.5%	7.5%	Utilized
2	My friends/school mates have benefited from counseling services in my school	70	10	87.5%	12.5%	Utilized
3	We (students) highly patronized the counseling services in my school	77	3	96.3%	3.7%	Utilized
<b>Grand Percentage</b>				<b>92.1%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>Utilized</b>

Table 3 shows the usability of modern counseling services among Tiv undergraduate students in Benue State. As revealed on the table, all the items (item1, item2 ad item3) have percentage yes above 50% benchmark. This implies that modern counseling services are utilized among the Tiv undergraduate students in their schools.

**Research Question 6: Effectiveness of Modern Counselling in Combating Fear (Mnyamchiem)**

**Table 4: Mean Effectiveness of Modern Counselling in Combating Fear (Mnyamchiem)**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Modern counseling attributes illogical thinking as the root cause of fear	80	2.88	.99	Effective
2	Modern counseling therapy removes fear by helping individuals replace illogical thinking with logical thoughts	80	2.76	.83	Effective
3	Modern counseling therapy ensures confidentiality in solving an individual's	80	2.91	1.01	Effective
4	Modern counseling does not prevent reoccurrence of the fear emotions	80	2.77	.96	Effective
<b>Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.83</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>Effective</b>

Table 4 as presented reveals the effectiveness of modern counseling services in combating fear (Mnyamchiem) as responded by the Tiv undergraduate students. As revealed on the table, all the items with mean scores ranging from 2.76 – 2.91, all above the benchmark of 2.50 were considered effective by the respondents. The table revealed a grand mean of 2.83 which showed that the modern counseling services (RET) are effective in combating fear (Mnyamchiem) among the Tiv undergraduate students. The table also revealed high standard deviation values ranging from .83 – 1.01 which showed the homogeneity of the responses among the Tiv undergraduate students

**Discussion of Findings**

In any research work the findings and discussions are very important because it is the means by which results are communicated and interpreted to the public. From the data collected and analyzed on the availability and usability of divination therapies in the Tiv communities of the undergraduate students, the result shows that the divination therapies are available in the communities of the Tiv undergraduate students. This finding corroborate with that of Moti and Wegh (2001) who attests that divination therapy is found in Tiv communities and is used as a means of understanding and treatment of common ailments. This therapy is available and its practice is passed from generation to generation.

Finding of the study as shown on table 3 on the effectiveness of divination therapy in combating fear reveals that the therapy is effective. This is in line with Moti and Wegh (2001) who stated that divination therapy identifies the offender and the community elders warn such a person to restrain/desist from his/her evil plans. This is not far from the fact that the Tiv people live in a community and are often one another's keeper, once the community takes a decision on any issue uncovered by a diviner which they do not approve of, it stands and no one contradicts it.

From the data collected and analyzed on the availability and usability of modern counselling therapy (Rational Emotive Therapy), the finding revealed that modern counselling is available and used in all the universities. This finding is in line with National Policy on Education (2004) that mandated the introduction of counselling services in all levels of educational institutions in Nigeria. Added to that, Nigerian counsellors are exposed to all theories of counselling which they freely apply any as the situation demands. This finding as observed could be that the undergraduate students are at developmental stage and faced with a plethora of problems that require counselling services and as a result voluntarily patronize the services of guidance counsellors in the universities.

On effectiveness of modern counselling services (RET), the finding revealed that modern counselling (RET) effective in combating fear among the Tiv undergraduate students in Benue State. The finding is in tandem with

the view of Olayinka (1978) who asserted that emotional problems arise when there is self talk or internalized sentences (irrational belief) which can be replaced by verbalized sentences. This finding as observed could be that RET is effective because students with ordinary problem are assisted to overcome them.

### Conclusion

Modern counselors must learn to liaise with students with cultural issues to enable them adjust properly. The Tiv people refer to culture as “*igbetar*” which suggests that their way of life was given to them by God, *Aondo* the creator from the beginning. The most important cultural values “*Jighjigh*” (honesty) and “*mimi*” (truth). These two cultural values formed the basis of Tiv thought process and human actions. The elders use these concepts to settle disputes. As a result any concept of modern counseling which deviates will impact negatively on the clients.

Secondly, a lot of students suffer from a breakdown of familiar or communal relations and divination therapy involves communal relations from both maternal and paternal relations. An important aspect of this therapy is that it ensures normalcy and restoration at all levels.

### Recommendations

This study recommends the inclusion of traditional beliefs, practices, values and their knowledge in counselor education as this will go a long way in combating fear amongst the people who are caught in the web of denying the existences of cultural practices yet experience it in their day to day activities.

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