A Synchronic Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach to Counselling Psychology in Contemporary Traditional Societies

Geoffrey Wango

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Abstract
There are divergent though rational perspectives of Psychology. An understanding of our human psychology can only be found in the concept of all of our philosophies, including traditional societies. This is because traditional societies such as the African, Asian and other indigenous communities have a deep founded customary philosophy that is embedded in both the traditions and religion. This paper examines the philosophical underpinnings of African Psychology. African traditional philosophy is founded in traditions and religion that includes guidance and counselling, psychopathology, coaching, teaching and mentorship. This paper demonstrates that the philosophical nature and foundations of traditions and religion must be re-evaluated in order to benefit from improved counselling psychological services, and hence the interconnectedness between counselling psychology, traditions and religion. This requires an overhaul to a philosophy psychology perspective and advanced therapeutic services.

Key words: African Psychology, African Traditional Philosophy, Counselling Psychology
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Introduction
Many people are obviously inclined to study their indigenous traditions. Our ethnicity and grouping has significant contextual factors for counselling, psychology and psychotherapy. Yet the psychological knowledge of Europe and North America has been predominant in various academies and this tends to place aside other psychologies. A shared view among many scholars in philosophy is that an understanding of various epistemologies is necessary for the development of knowledge, including in counselling psychology. Inherent in this positioning but often unrecognised are two challenges, that is (1) the internal and external validity of knowledge claims on tradition societies; and, (2) application of psychological and philosophical theory and research in traditional contexts. An understanding of traditional psychology and philosophy will review the two aspects in reverse. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between psychology as a discipline and psychological theory and research. Subsequently, we need to draw on the discipline of psychology for instance and establish the traditional psychology by drawing on both internal and external knowledge systems and by extension guided by the conventions of psychological and philosophical activity. Thus, this paper synchronises counselling psychology in contemporary societies using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

I have been careful in giving examples of particular practices in all communities. This is for several reasons. Firstly, certain people including highly respectable scholars take it in when an example is given of their community. Some argue that their community is being ostracized. This publication is about creating an understanding of ourselves not a source of conflict. Secondly, it can be argued rightly sometimes that a cultural practice is superior or inferior depending largely on our perception of our world. Subsequently, I have been careful to mention certain practices and only state those that may be considered inappropriate based on my own understanding as well as human right values that I am strongly convinced should be gladly upheld. I state that part of it arises out of
my understanding since I also accept my own limitations and also because I would
rather not prescribe on culture or behaviour. Thirdly, and arising from 1 and 2 above, the
purpose of this paper is to create an understanding of our humanity. Psychology is a
study of humanity and ways of living; it is not a haphazard critique of our way of life.
Therefore, a study of ourselves within a psychological perspective should enable us live
healthier more fulfilling life. Lastly, I have been careful with the hermeneutic
phenomenological approach since I aim to explain the experiences of a people and their
interpretation of it, not necessarily my own understanding and at the same time being
careful with introspection. It is possible that we can fail to grasp certain aspects but
embrace others even in our context. Admittedly there is nothing to be ashamed of or
apologetic about our traditions; these were our ancestors and we are deeply proud of
them. This is also our natural heritage and we are glad to be part of it. Equally, we must
learn to interact in various ways with our children, spouse, parents, relatives, friends,
neighbours, colleagues and other acquaintances.

Rationale for Studies on Counselling Psychological Services in Traditional Societies
This paper is significant because persons working in the helping profession such as
clinical psychologists, counsellors, pastoral counsellors, psychiatrists and psychologists
as well as social workers including nurses and other care givers need to recognize the
ever-present social and cultural contribution to individual and social perception. The
social cultural aspects also influence psychological well-being. In addition, this paper
highlights the need for, and raises awareness of the variability that exists among various
communities with regard to help seeking in therapy. It also provides insight into the
explanations underlying the disparities among diverse clients according to their
traditions.

Collectively, the literature on guidance, counselling and psychological development in
the more traditional societies would enable us to identify several characteristics that
affect the utilization of counselling psychology and mental health services. Firstly, this
is helpful to understand the concepts of guidance, counselling, coaching and mentorship.
Secondly, it enables us to understand why certain clients may be willing to seek
assistance while others may decline to seek help. Thirdly, we can utilise such and
additional knowledge in efforts to increase counselling psychology service utilization. In
the end, this will lead to an improved understanding of the therapeutic process by which certain factors, cultural, religious or individual inform help seeking. My intention with this study was to elucidate the extent to which various kinds of processes can be identified to determine how psychological factors influence help seeking in the traditional context. Future studies can also capture how individuals, couples, families and communities enact these factors in their particularized context.

**Acknowledgements**

I wish to acknowledge with utmost gratitude our forefathers who investigated and founded out the wisdom upon which this book is based. I wish to acknowledge the clients in the case studies though some of the identities have been hidden or obscured for purposes of confidentiality. In addition, I have cited several aspects such as life skills and other examples of our traditions, many of which I am unable to directly trace a source. I want to attribute them to our traditions and the persons who have cited them, some many of whom I have read their work and forgotten. Any errors in poor or lack of interpretation are entirely my own and I fully take responsibility.

Further, I am highly indebted to all our African scholars and writers who diligently researched on and have written extensively on our traditions, religion, our philosophy and psychological perspectives. They include: Gagnolo, (1933), Kenyatta (1966), Mbiti (1969), Middleton (1953), Mpofu (2011), Mugo (1982), (Mwamwenda (1989), Njoroge & Bennaaars (1986), White (1980), Wiredu (1980) and many others. In addition, I deeply appreciated all the scholars in psychology who have made immense contribution to our undertaking of human mind, behaviour and cognitive processes (Wango, *In Press*). They include Freud, Jung, Adler, Carl Rogers, Skinner and many others (Wango, *In Process*). The contribution of these scholars to psychology and philosophy is immense and I have personally been their student since I have learnt all my psychology from them, benefitted from their impeccable knowledge and in turn learnt a lot from them.
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1.0. African Traditions and Religion: Concept and Philosophical Analysis
This paper is a critical analyzes of the philosophy of African traditional societies that includes a critique of the major conceptualisation of African traditions and religion. The purpose is to establish the psychological underpinnings about the world around the people who live in traditional societies, especially with reference to counselling and therapy. This paper deliberates on African cosmology (world view), particularly the philosophical nature, context and content of traditions and religion that includes the self as a system, but somehow consume the same individual in the overall psychology framework.

African traditional societies may not have had a formal recording of their philosophy, religion or heritage. But there are exceptions and these are important. They include proverbs and riddles, folklores (myths and legends, short stories), oral traditions, songs and dances, art and shrines, customs, ethics and morals of various communities and societies. Thus, we can define African philosophy and further link the philosophy with related subjects such as psychology, counselling, education, growth and development, and social economic political structures.

It is prudent to note that various scholars such as Dawes (1985; 1986; 1998), Idemudia (2003; 2005), Nwoye (2001, 2006a; 2006b; 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013a; 2013b) and others (Bulhan, 1981, 1993; Guthrie, 1980; Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994; White, 1980; Wiredu, 1980) have proposed an understanding of African epistemologies. This is necessary for the development of psychological knowledge appropriate to the continent. It is worthwhile to mention that various scholars propose the need for an expanded philosophical view and hence Dawes (1998) concludes that African psychology needs to be guided by the conventions for psychological activity which exist in the various corners of the discipline. Scholars have outlined the need for an African Psychology and the Africanisation of psychology including the need for a clearer understanding as well as an expanded view of the development of
psychological knowledge appropriate to the African continent (Dawes, 1985, 1986, 1998; Nobles, 1980; Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994). This paper elucidates on the components of a philosophy and psychological in traditional societies.

2.0. Conceptual Framework
This paper adopts the use of hermeneutic phenomenology approach (Finlay, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Langdridge, 2007; Kafle, 2011; Kakkori, 2009; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutic phenomenology is the study of phenomena: their nature and meanings. Max van Manen defines (1990) hermeneutics and phenomenology as human science approaches which are rooted in philosophy. Phenomenology is an umbrella term encompassing both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches; a way of researching the essence or essential meanings of phenomena (Kafle, 2011). According to Merleau-Ponty (1962) the aim of phenomenology is description of phenomena, and for the purpose of this paper, traditional societies. Langdridge (2007:4) defines phenomenology as a discipline that aims to: “focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them”. The focus is on “people's lived experience.” Husserl (1970) argued that our experience is also our world and this is also applicable to people in traditional societies. Phenomenology focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right and concerns with meaning and the ways in which meaning arises in experience. For the purpose of this study, the definition provided by Grbich (2007) of phenomenology as an approach to understand the hidden meanings and the essences of an experience together is highly appropriate. This is because life in traditional societies is both meaningful and experiential.

The choice of hermeneutics phenomenology is informed by three notions: first is the focus on meaning and interpretation that enables a shift from interpretation to existential understanding. This is fundamental for traditional societies. Secondly, it allows an understanding of ourselves as the being of entities even within our worldview; this is what determines entities as entities. Thirdly, it enables deal with our traditional philosophy and the relationship with other components such as language and logic in comprehensive, explicit and formal ways. Again, this is important because traditional societies may not have a lot of recorded notes hence language, folklore and art are significant sources of information. I argue
that phenomenology has the potential to penetrate deep into the human experience and trace the essence of a phenomenon and explicate it in its original form as experienced by the individuals and as a sensitive and unique way to understand human existence (Henriksson & Saevi, 2009; Langdridge, 2007; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This quality of illumination of the core state of being of a phenomenon requires a very careful attention and the outcome is naturally greater than the sum of its parts and it is only conclusively logical in hermeneutic phenomenology.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is focused on subjective experience of individuals and groups (couple, family, clan, community / society). It is an attempt to explore the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories. In that paper, the emphasis on hermeneutic phenomenology endeavours to get beneath the subjective experiences. This is because though phenomenology is a way of researching the essence or essential meanings of phenomena, there is need for objectivity (Heidegger, 1977; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The phenomenon must be what it is (Heidegger, 1977; van Manen, 1990). This is the essence of a phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). This paper takes cognizance of various theoretical frameworks such as Riggs Prismatic approach (Riggs, 1973; 2006; Wen-Shien, 2008). Riggs argued that when analyzing prismatic (traditional) societies, many scholars often fail to understand how they essentially function and fully comprehend the conditions under which a society (and particularly for psychology an individual in that society) functions. It is possible that in many ways, we may only have grasped the concept of a specialized structure of the traditional social system such as the traditional philosophy, and not able to completely conceptualize the entire social structural system that includes the individual who is a element of it. This is why the hermeneutics phenomenological approach, that is, it will include in this paper the individual and the interrelationship between the social political and economic factors.

Hermeneutics enables find the genuine objective nature of the things as realized by an individual. Indeed, van Manen sees the meaning of phenomenon and the essence of phenomenon as synonymous (van Manen, 1990) which is important in the context of a religious + tradition combination in which culture and customs, values and virtues are
intertwined. In addition, hermeneutics is significant because it is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of our being in the world. The paper adopts a narratives and a thematic analysis. This includes how our similar and/or different ways of being in the world (same or different) are connected to our lives (the self and self system that I have highlighted in this paper).

3.0. Tradition and Religion Philosophy: Indigenous community life and living in traditional societies

Traditional living was intertwined with religion. Africans for instance have been described as ‘notoriously religious’ (Leonard, 1966; Mbiti, 1969). Religion and religious system consists of a set of beliefs and practices which bind the people to a commitment based on their faith. This is why scholars such as Leonard (1966:429) argue as follows:

"The religion of these natives [Africans] is their existence and their existence is their religion. It supplies the principle on which their law is dispensed and morality adjudicated. The entire organization of their common life is so interwoven with it that they cannot get away from it."

Admittedly, it is this intertwining of religion (sacred) and traditions (secular) in Africa and other traditional societies that creates a problem when trying to understand the lives of traditional societies. This is because the religion and traditions influences thoughts and reasoning, as well as feelings and actions. In essence, it influences the process of establishing the philosophy of traditional societies like in Africa.

Indigenous African communities living in Kenya for instance migrated from various parts of the continent. They often interacted with traders, explorers and tourists who came in from various parts of the world such as Portugal, Arabia, Roman empire, India and Greece. Most of the visitors were mainly on the East African Coast from as early as the first Century A.D. While the majority of the visitors went back to their countries, some settled, and intermarried with the local populations giving rise to a new Swahili culture along the Coast. Arab traders settled along the Coastal strip in the 10th Century. The development of the history of Kenya and the people therefore has the Islam and Christian influence, colonisation and thereafter.
The first major European presence in East Africa started with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 when Vasco Da Gama’s arrived at the coast on the way to the East Indies. The first German Christian Missionaries arrived in 1844. In 1888, Kenya became a British Sphere of Influence administered by the British East Africa Company. The construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway started in Mombasa in 1895, reached Nairobi in 1899 and Kisumu in 1901. This opened the interior and missionaries and white settlers moved into Kenya from 1900. The construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway was carried out principally by labourers from India because of a lack of indigenous labour in sparsely-populated Kenya. While many of the workers died during the construction of the railway, most of the surviving Indians returned home, while others decided to remain after the line's completion, creating a community of Indian East Africans. In 1920, Kenya became a British Crown Colony. The missionaries introduced formal Western education where learning and teaching activities are formalized in a classroom situation in the 19th Century. The country achieved independence in 1963.

Indigenous African communities had their defined way of life. A child growing up in the African traditional community was expected to conform to various traditions. These traditions, including religious beliefs, customs and values had obvious psychological and cultural implications. There were several rites of passage and these had various implications as follows:

(a) **Marriage and family**

Everyone was expected to marry, get married and have children. Marriage as a union was held in high regard and as the norm. Persons who failed to get married or had complications in their marriage were ostracized, but assisted to cope with societal norms. Various communities had words that indicated non-conformity. A couple was expected to have children in order to propagate the clan and the community. Children were also the highest level of priority and thus the success of a marriage (family) was in the children. The couple was expected to have several children, both boys and girls and the males were held in higher esteem.

Among the Gikuyu for instance, a man had to be married and have children. A man or woman who had no children was a ‘thata’, meaning barren. Again, the word had sexual overtones and
often referred to the female rather than a generic word, and was perceived to exclude the males. This was because as a patriarchal society, it was assumed that it was the woman who could not bear children, rather than the actual process of reproduction that involves both the male and female.

Children were treated differently with high premium placed on boys. For example, the birth of a boy among the Gikuyu was heralded by five joyful shouts or ululations from the mother, midwife and pick up by the women, while a baby girl received four. The ululations were a mark of the arrival of the child that was important in order to perpetuate the clan. Males were considered significant as they perpetuated the family name, while girls were a source of bride wealth. Twins, child/ren with disability and albinos were considered unusual (bizarre) and in several communities, they were killed while in other communities, a special ritual was performed to regularize the birth.

Similarly, a woman who was divorced was referred to as a ‘gĩcokĩo’ meaning returned goods. This word is a pejorative term that implied she was unworthy, rejected, and dishonourable. However, if a man was widowed, they were duly advised and easily took in a divorced woman, in which she would now be glorified as a wife to be honoured.

(b) **Growing up: Duties and responsibilities**

Child development included learning to take up effective duties and responsibilities. Duties and responsibilities were aligned to gender. The child was taught how to sit up, walk, go on errands and take up light duties. The communities such as the Gikuyu were particular about the child learning to walk nicely so that they do not become bowlegged (referred to as ‘mbogoro’, bow legged). Social values and norms such as kindness, generosity, honesty, obedience and accountability were promoted. The guidance and coaching reflected on social values, philosophy, religion and system of management including the moral code.

Children were guided, counselled, coached and mentored using songs, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings, poems and stories (folk tales and fables, myths and legends). These reflected on the traditions and history of the family, clan and community. Children were taught the names of
family members, plants and animals, language and communication (including etiquette, respect for parents and others) and important events. Lullabies, songs and dances were a common way of learning for the children, and enabled them to be inducted in the community. Also, the children were allowed to play games and interact with each other.

Children took up duties and responsibilities according to gender. Girls learnt to cook, make baskets and pots, grind corn and other household chores. Boys built small houses, cut trees for firewood, play with bows and arrows (or spears), go hunting or fishing, herding livestock, work in the garden and other masculine duties. Girls assist the mother look after the younger children, gather firewood and fetch water.

(c) Circumcision and entry into adulthood
Circumcision was an important rite of passage and in certain communities such as the Gikuyu, Kamba, Samburu and Maasai, both males and females underwent circumcision as a rite of passage. Adulthood is attained only when the rite of passage has taken place. An uncircumcised boy or girl could not establish relations with a circumcised girl or boy. In addition, they cannot establish a home, conduct sexual relations or hold a position in society because the rite of passage initiated the boy or girl into the community, bestowed social rights and obligations.

Communities had various severe terms to refer to anyone who hesitated or declined to adhere to the initiation process. For example, in Gikuyu ‘kĩhĩ’, uncircumcised boy and ‘kĩrĩgũ’, uncircumcised girl. An uncircumcised male or female were highly stigmatized. Additionally, they could not marry or be married. This explains why the rites of passage involving circumcision including female genital mutilation are so entrenched in certain communities.

(d) Rites of passage in practice
There were several rites of passage including circumcision (described above in greater detail), marriage and death. Christianity has immersed the baptismal rite. Many people attach a lot of significance to these rites of passage as well as other traditions. Admittedly, the influx of other religions such as Christianity, Islam and others as well as modern medicine,
technological advancement and globalization does influence how some of the rites of passage and associated ceremonies are conducted. However, the social attachment and adherence has remained largely embedded in the psychological and social influence of the people and has implications on overall well being.

(e) **Marriage and family**
Many people, whether entirely traditional or those who have adapted modernity still place high premiums on marriage and family. In some of the communities, young people were allowed and at liberty to choose their partners, while in others, the family or clan selected the spouse and the young couple had no choice in the matter. In the more traditional societies, married people command greater respect and enjoy higher status. Only persons who were married could hold prominent positions as elders.

It is possible that the intensity of inclination and the importance attached to marriage and family may be diversified. A major contention would be aspects of modern living such as the goals of marriage and family, the place of children and other pertinent aspects thereof such as role of religion and (payment and honouring) bride price. While there are certain aspects of family and marriage that will be applauded by one group (depending on the orientation such as ethnicity/race, traditional, religion, rural or urban) other people may opt to skip certain rituals and lay emphasis on other aspects. For instance, a traditional inclination may emphasize on bride price and certain rigorous procedures while a more modern approach may place emphasis on legislation of marriage, clearly assigned duties and responsibilities as well as the freedom in the union (child and human rights placement). Thus, the following though important even in traditional societies may be more prominent in a modern relationship: marriage and partnership; divorce and separation; and, child rights and responsibilities including adoption laws.

(f) **Death and dying**
Many people still mourn and bury their dead as guided by traditions and religion. Again, there is evidence of incorporating modernity (medicine, scientific and technological advancement, new philosophies of death and life hereafter) including eulogies, morgue, funeral processions,
religious ceremonies and other technicalities. Persons leaning towards a more traditional approach will also emphasize on improved communication with the dead and the ancestors in different ways.

3.1. **Mediating factors: Guidance and Counselling and other Psychological Services in Traditional Societies**

As already stated, the traditional way of living was dictated by, and consisted majorly of religion and traditions. Although this is a very simplistic conceptualisation of traditional societies, the structure below captures the essence of traditions and religion that is fundamental to our understanding of the societies, the philosophy and the psychology. This includes the language (s) spoken, words and meanings shared and the value system.

**Figure 1:** *Traditional Society as Tradition and Religion*

![Diagram of Traditional Society as Tradition and Religion]

Religion and traditions are amalgamated since they have the equivalent components (*Figure 1 and 2*) and are intertwined. This amalgamation can be represented graphically as in *Figure 2*.

**Figure 2:** *African Tradition Philosophy: Tradition and Religion come up together*

![Diagram of African Tradition Philosophy]

In the first instance religion and traditions combined constituted the African traditional philosophy. However, religion and traditions are intertwined with the way of life. This is because culture and customs, values and norms, beliefs and ways of living are dictated by both the sacred and the secular inclinations (*Figure 3*).
It is acceptable that traditional ways of living including customs, beliefs, folklore, worship and way of conduct (blessing and curses, values and norms) were both secular and sacred. It is acceptable that the way of life is informed by religion and culture though by no means mechanically straightforward, even in instances of relatively psychological conventions. Culture is, by its nature, dynamic and subject to continual challenge and development; thus, standards derived from a consensus amongst members of a community will, by their nature, be temporary and, sooner or later, subject to revision. More fundamentally, religious and traditional standards do not exist in the abstract but rather should be seen as the negotiated property of social groups, in other words as socially constructed and socially embedded. However, a close look at the way of life reveals another component that is significant for psychology, the individual system of life. The individual system of life is how the individual and community define life and how they go about living. The system of life is not different from religion and traditions; instead, it is a part of it and embroidered within it. Together with traditions and religion (that are of course intertwined) and the system of life (implanted in the religion and traditions) the three forms the traditional philosophy in which we can understand counselling psychological services.

In the traditional society model, guidance and counselling is defined in traditional terms; it includes coaching, mentorship and teaching on adherence to the philosophical underpinnings of the community. This can be demonstrated as in Figure 4:
In traditional societies, guidance and counselling was provided to young people by informed members of society (elders, older relatives, parents) on a day-to-day basis. Coaching, mentoring and teaching included life skills. Traditional societies had their own psychological processes, personality characteristics, and the processes of social cultural adaptation to their indigenous social conditions and exotic influences (Gagnolo, 1933; Lassiter, 1999; Leonard, 1966; Kenyatta, 1966; Masolo, 1999; Mbiti, 1969). It is possible that certain communities still retain a cultural affiliation with their ancestral origins. Ideas, beliefs and values are representations because they emanate not from individual but from collective social activity. Thus, religion and traditions are fundamental ideas, although developed in the context of the community and, hence, determined by social processes.

3.2. Interpreting the African Traditional Philosophical and Psychological System: Concept and Philosophical Analysis

I argue that in philosophical terms, many early scholars were enthusiastic to argue that African and traditional societies were highly religious. This is highly understandable and indeed commendable given the enthusiasm with which missionaries wanted to bring normalcy into the so called barbaric traditions. It is also worthwhile to note the philosophical underpinning of the religion + tradition = African Philosophy. But certainly, the African philosophy is certainly more encompassing and included the education system (Njoroge & Benmaars, 1986) as well as other facets of life such as literature (Guthrie, 1980). For the purpose of this paper, I propose that the philosophical perspective of traditional African and
other traditional societies should encompass a psychological component that includes the self concept and therefore albeit differently. This includes elementary psychological process of cognitive functioning that may be interpreted in Vygotskian terms (Vygotsky, 1987).

In psychological terms, the religion + tradition require the additional element of a system of life for the individual. This system of life is the individual, family, community and activities of daily living (ADL). African psychology is obviously embedded in principles which incorporate religion (spirituality) and culture (traditions) but it is the cognition process that is missing out. According to Idemudia (2005), cognition includes our thoughts, ideas, beliefs, understanding and knowledge. A system of life that identifies the self (Figure 5) aligns the cognitive process in that it enables the person (self or individual) to grow up, undergo various rites of passage including marriage, have children and mature into adulthood.

**Figure 5: Traditional Philosophy: Tradition and Religion, Incorporating Self**

In the earlier model of tradition + religion = African traditional philosophy, the individual growth and development is all within the confines of the traditional philosophy, not, and never outside it. Thus, it would seem that one is free to make independent, family or community decisions but in essence, the decisions must be confined within the precepts of the social philosophy. Essentially, all decisions are dictated by the traditional philosophical orientations and bound by them, not independent of them. In this model, guidance and counselling is defined in traditional terms; it includes coaching, mentorship and teaching on adherence to the philosophical underpinnings. Yet it is the same model that Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Carl Rogers argued about in various perspectives of psychology (Wango, In Process), that is, the need to allow the individual (self) to define himself or herself and find their place in society. In psychoanalysis terms for instance, this would involve a
person interpreting their world. The two perspectives can be compared in which the more traditional perspective of guidance and counselling continues to be in the philosophical framework, but feeds into the innovative model of refined counselling psychological services as in Figure 6:

**Figure 6:** Traditional Philosophy and Psychology: Interpretation and Conceptualisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Psychology</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(foundations)</td>
<td>(interpretation)</td>
<td>(psychology perspective + integrated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Traditional Philosophy and Psychological System (Religion, Traditions and Self. Self includes environment (social economic, political))</td>
<td>Guidance and Counselling, Coaching and mentorship on adherence to tradition and culture (traditions and religion)</td>
<td>Health and Well-being (Health will be defined to include wholeness. This integrates physiological, spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, psychological and emotional wellbeing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance and Counselling, psychiatry, psychopathology and Psychology as: (1) enabling facets to deal with life and challenges, (2) prevention and treatment of mental illness (4) assisting persons in situational difficulty)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the conceptualisation and interpretation of philosophy and psychology is different in three aspects that allow a re-orientation of counselling psychological services:

1. The traditional philosophy changes to philosophy and psychology: >> This allows the foundations to take in the cognitive process. In addition, it allows an expansion of the self into their environment (the social-economic-political circumstances).
2. As a result of (1) above, the psychology perspective that was assumed is now integrated: >> This implies that health and well-being should lead to wellness, a conscious process rather than assumed, and includes components of wellness.
3. The effects of (1) and (2) lead to a re-definition and reorientation of the role of guidance and counselling psychological services. Counselling psychological services are facets of life not affixed to it: >> This allows an expansion of counselling psychological services (guidance and counselling, psychiatry, psychotherapy, clinical psychology, psychology, pastoral counselling and care, coaching and mentorship) that are defined, programmed and purposeful. It also places the works of various scholars including those of African origin (Azibo, 2003; Idemudia, 2003, 2005; Kadzin, 2000;
Nwoye, 2006a, 2009, 2010, 2013a; Wango, *In Press* and others such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Carl Rogers, Skinner and others in a universal perspective = psychology is about improving people’s lives. The modified framework allows psychology to penetrate into the social economic political lives of our people. Thus, a poorly managed political or economic state as has been prevalent in several undemocratic nations in Africa is of concern to psychology, just as the education system and human rights must promote societal well-being.

The proposed model (*Figure 6*) highlights the individual as a system in their own right and argues that s/he must find a place in their family, clan, community / society, nation and in the world, but at the same time adhering to the norms and values of the society. Tradition and religion are still interacting but the individual is in between and interacting with them as albeit in a healthy relationship to ensure wellness. This does not in any way make the individual and their systems completely independent but s/he is an important part of the overall system. This can be represented in a diagram (*Figure 7*) that incorporates self in the religion and traditions.

*Figure 7:*  *African Traditional Philosophy and Psychology: Religion, Traditions and Self System*

In the earlier traditional model (*Figures, 1, 2, 3, and 4*) religion and traditions appears to have merged to organise the society into a philosophy but neglected the individual as a member of
the same system to which s/he belonged and is a significant member. The traditional +
religion philosophical system seems to have assumed that the individual and by inference
other components of self (family, clan, community) will abide by the traditions (which I agree
is alright). Yet it is this inference that neglected the psychological needs of the person in that
the traditional philosophical system did not allow for a definition of self outside this
philosophical framework of a culture + religion = community balanced living as suggested in
*Figure 5* and *6*, and hence a need for a new equation: culture + religion+ individual =
community balanced living and well being (*Figure 6* and *7*). The new equation would be able
to take in aspects of individual needs and well-being including the spiritual, social,
psychological, intellectual and physiological needs (*Figure 6*).

The African traditional philosophy and psychology perspective clearly outlines the complex
nature of our lives. This is also linked with language and communication. This is in line with
van Manen 1990, 111) insistence that hermeneutics is sensitive to the subtle undertones of
language, in the way language speaks when it allows the thing themselves to speak. Language
includes labelling and categorisation (Wango, 2012) and hence the context and content of our
lives that effectively becomes part of the communication and cultural systems (beliefs,
perception and may assign stereotypes). This process in turn influences the social and
psychological health and wellbeing of the client. This can be demonstrated in *Table 1*.

**Table 1**  *Labelling and Categorisation: Clusters and Clustering*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stigmatised (Inappropriate, Irregular)</th>
<th>Prestigious (Privileged, Appropriate, Bestowed higher status)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Inappropriate (irregular / deviance)</td>
<td>Appropriate (norm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Laziness, irresponsible,</td>
<td>Diligence and industry, hard working, bravely and courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/children</td>
<td>Childlessness (infertility)</td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumcision</td>
<td>Uncircumcised</td>
<td>Circumcised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Unacceptable (outcast)</td>
<td>Acceptable (honoured)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Person with disability</td>
<td>Regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents with child/ren with disability</td>
<td>Parents with regular child/ren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female (girls, women)</td>
<td>Males (boys, males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>Sorcerer / witchdoctor</td>
<td>Medicine man / traditional healer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Stigmatised (Inappropriate, Irregular)</td>
<td>Prestigious (Privileged, Appropriate, Bestowed higher status)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage union</td>
<td>Divorced / separated</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>Healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Cursed</td>
<td>Sacredness and assiduousness to God was automatic, not negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>Gay and lesbianism</td>
<td>Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>Attempted</td>
<td>Sober</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labels and categories involve meaning because life has a meaning and this is linked to the hermeneutic phenomenological approach used in this paper that has both a textual and thematic analysis. For example, Freud argued that interpreting a dream implies assigning a meaning to it. In the same way, a person will strive to be a part of the community, nay not to be an outcast (Cases I, II, III, IV, also Figure 8). Persons who are labelled and categorised (appropriately or inappropriately since society decides on criteria) are likely to feel segregated from the community and thus are not a part of the community including persons with disability. Let us examine two instances for the purpose of this paper, that is, persons with special needs and infertility.

We must be aware, for instance, that according to the World Health Organization (2011), more than one billion people in the world live with some form of disability, of whom nearly 200 million experience considerable difficulties in functioning. Part of that functioning is caused by labelling and discrimination that in turn will adversely affect their psychological wellness and overall wellbeing. In the years ahead, disability will be an even greater concern including psychological functioning because its prevalence is on the rise. This is due to a number of reasons including an ageing population and according to the World Health report there are other factors such as higher risk of disability in older people as well as the global increase in chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mental health disorders.

Infertility is a worldwide concern with an estimated more than 80 million couples suffering from infertility (Fathalla, 1999; Ombelet & Campo, 2007). The majority of persons suffering from infertility are in the developing countries. Different traditions and religious beliefs
explain the way a community regards childlessness. Traditional societies are patriarchal and in almost all instances, women are solely blamed for infertility, resulting in the social stigma of childlessness. Ombelet and Campo (2007) point out persons in the developing countries encounter a lack of facilities at all levels of health care, but especially infertility diagnosis and treatment. In addition, infertility has much stronger negative consequence as persons suffer social isolation, economic deprivation and domestic violence. Women without a child are highly stigmatized leading to utter isolation, neglect and is a major cause of domestic violence. Many of the women end up as a second wife in a polygamous marriage. In many societies, the spouse of a woman who could not get married was given a sister or relative as compensation. Ombelet and Campo (2007) state that tubal infertility due to sexually transmitted diseases, unsafe abortion and post-partum pelvic infections are the main causes of infertility in developing countries. Yet these conditions are only treatable if assisted by reproductive technologies, which once again are often unavailable in the developing communities or if available too costly for the large majority of the population who cannot afford basic treatment.

Labelling and categorisation creates two kinds of immediate classes, an inner and outer circle. This can be illustrated in Figure 8:

**Figure 8: Labelling and Categorisation: A Class Status in Traditional Philosophy**

There are people who are not alright, who are not part of the community and thus are set apart from the rest of the community. They are bestowed low statues. These people will have low self esteem, negative attitude to life, will be unhappy and frustrated. They may not reconcile with community and self.

There are people who are right, whose lives and trends resonates with the community and are bestowed high statues. These people are likely to have a positive attitude to life successful and everything is ok with them. These are in harmony with community and self.
Persons who are stigmatised are an outcast and hence are likely to live apart from the rest of the community. Similarly, they are psychologically tormented and hence they are most likely to experience stress, frustrations, disappointments and hence more likely to be depressed. Unfortunately, they are also most unlikely to seek help since in the first instance they have been set aside and secondly, they are made to feel ashamed of their own misfortunes and finally, they are likely to succumb to their inevitable fate. This is why in Case I, Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* strives to be industrious and conscientious, but unfortunately, Okonkwo ends up as an outcast. Okonkwo is aware that the people will not rise to fight the white man and thus he chooses to take his own life, an act of abomination. Similarly, Obi in Case II (Chinua Achebe *No Longer at Ease*) wants to marry Clara who is an outcast but ends up ostracised by his own society when he is caught taking a bribe.

This is important because when persons in the more traditional societies and others who lean heavily towards their traditions encounter modernity (including other religions, medicine, technological advancement and information age) they are suddenly stuck by their own confinement - they have to understand the limitations of the traditional philosophical system (closed, rigid) as different from the more modern philosophy (open, flexible). This has implications as outlined in the next section.

### 3.3. Implications and Synchronisation of Philosophy and Psychology

The society appears to have outlined the terms and conditions of living using the traditions and religion. But the problem arises in the social system where the rules of engagement appear to have been superimposed on the individual rather than negotiated. Counselling psychological services should have been an arbitrator but in the traditional philosophical settings guidance and counselling, coaching and mentorship were part of the programme inbuilt instructions (*Figure 4*). Guidance and counselling, mentoring and coaching were part of the functional keys - they were meant to induct the individual, family and clan into the community philosophy and not enable a negotiation or navigation (*Figure 4*). Yet the individual requires to be defined (*Figure 5*). Further, a close scrutiny of counselling and psychological services in their mode of procedures implies an operational programme that although inbuilt in the earlier system enables the person to navigate through life (*Figure 6*).
However, it is evident that within the traditional philosophy, religion and traditions are intertwined (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4). Thus the individual (self system) would find it difficult if not impossible to penetrate the traditional philosophy since s/he should have been contained within it (Figure 5 and 6 or ostracised Figure 8) leading into an intricate balance between religion, tradition and self (Figure 7). This can be demonstrated in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Self System Prohibited entry into African Traditional Philosophy**

The philosophical foundation in religion and traditions is interwove and constricted. The self system is outside the design (and thus finds the society circle Figure 9 untenable), yet should be a part of the philosophy to enable effective functioning with the overall scheme.

The traditional philosophy without the self (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4) can be explained using the concept of marine shipping. Religion is the ship, and the ship is the traditions. The crew in the ship (my colleague tells me to call it old ship or dhow) are automatically bound and stuck in the ship. But in a modern ship, the captain has a steering wheel (guidance), a campus (counselling) and a map (coaching and mentorship) - not a railway line (guidance and counselling traditional format) in the waters (Figure 16). A railway line in the waters would
be disastrous as the captain would be stuck in a fixed pathway and the ship may be condemned to a certain destination as the lanes dictate the conduit.

Guidance and counselling (counselling psychology) and other psychological services must be like a prepared (equipped and organised) rocket (self system – well formed personality) moving into space. The official beginning of space is 100 km above the Earth’s surface and gravitational influence extends well into space. This implies that even if a rocket reaches space, the force of gravity will still pull it back towards the Earth. To get rockets into orbit, they need much more thrust than the amount that will get them up to the required altitude. Rockets also need sufficient thrust to allow them to travel with very high orbital speed. Thus, the rocket has to break into orbit with determination and speed (Figure 10 and 15). The analogy of the rocket moving into space is also true of anyone who wants to understand self (whether through psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, person-centred, cognitive behavioural approaches).

**Figure 10: Self System Prohibited entry into Space in Traditional Philosophy**

Thus, a person who is a part of, and orientated in the more traditional society may in the rocket analogy be attempting a thrust into space. In many instances, they lack the thrust, determination or speed. Thus, they may appear confused, disorientated, and indecisive or in the end unable to decipher their own predicaments because they are ultimately pulled down
by the greater force of gravity (Cases I, II, III, V, VI, VIII). In several instances, they appear disillusioned and unhappy, anxious and depressed, discontented and disconnected. It is this lack of a philosophy psychology framework that is the crisis rather than attempting a trade off (Cases IV, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII). This may explain why many people in the more traditional societies are anxious, stressed, and depressed.

In traditional societies, people were born and brought up by society; they were part of society and never apart from the community (Figure 1, 2, 3 and 4). People went about growing up, getting married, had children, adhered to social norms (values, beliefs and customs) and lived in harmony with members of the family, clan and the larger community. Those with loss and in grief were and are supported as befitting cases for psychotherapy. Deviants were labelled and categorised (Wango, 2012, see also Table 1 and Figure 8) and certainly cursed. Therefore, the nature of personality in the African traditional context is absolute adherence to traditions and religion (Figure 1, 2 and 3) and this would appear to have swallowed the individual, family, clan and community into the pond. Thus, the ideal admirable African personality for instance is one who like Obierika in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart is a part of, a member of the community and lives harmoniously with all people, and not Okonkwo who perhaps is too ambitious and thus his zeal appears to drive him out of his own community (See Case 1). If counselling psychological services in traditional societies had a wider perspective and emphasis than a mere part of tradition, Obierika could have assisted his friend Okonkwo whom he introduced so well, ‘This is Obierika, my great friend’. Ultimately, it is like the friendly chat and all the counselling including from the old man Ezeudu does not transform Okonkwo who is transfixed in the traditions. But let us contrast him with Obi, in No Longer at Ease (See Case II).

Obi in Chinua Achebe’s No Longer at Ease wants to marry a girl who is seen as an outcast by the community because ‘her great-great-great-great grandfather had been dedicated to serve a god’ (Achebe, 1958:65). Joseph his friend cautions Obi (Achebe, 1958:68 - 69):

*What you are going to do concerns not only yourself but your whole family and future generations. If one finger brings oil, it soils the others. In future, when we are all civilised, anybody can marry anybody. But that time has not come. We of this generation are only pioneers.*
Here again, we see Obi’s friend Joseph offering guidance, counselling and mentoring just as did Obierika to Okonkwo. In the case of Okonwo (Case I), he was too rigid on traditions, but Obi is too liberal (Case II). Again, the individual is being carried away by a current too strong to resist. Counselling psychology today will certainly deals with the challenges of life through the life cycle in a society in transition; this includes individuals living in both a traditional community as well as a society in transition (Cases III, IV V, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII). Both the persons who opt for the traditional living and others crossing over to modernity (including pioneers) will be a matter of concern in their attempts to deal with various issues such as family, marriage, career, rites of passage, drug abuse (and other forms of addiction), illness and disease and other issues.

Let us go round back to the aim of counselling psychological services again in order to place the examples provided and others within a traditional philosophical psychology; helping is not judgemental, and guidance and counselling in traditional societies did constitute advice, teaching, coaching, entrepreneurship and a lot of learning. This was certainly logical and developmental hence useful to the variety of clients (see definition of terms in glossary). But then does anybody understand the traditional philosophical psychological framework. Can we understand Obi for instance? I have found many educated people, celebrities and other intellectuals and elite struggling with the same oddities in our lives. In Kenya for instance, a famous world athlete Samuel Wanjiru died in mysterious circumstances and his death was the subject of discussion in Kenya and of course penetrated to our classroom discussions; what happened, how could counselling and psychology assist the rich and famous, the place of Sports Psychology (Wango, In Press)? For me, Obi represents the typical client struggling with several things in life and lifestyle including various societal demands like having a car and a house (mortgage), and putting up an image of success yet vehemently sometimes in conflict with self (I think I prefer the term ‘likeness of mixed accomplishment’ rather than ‘outright success’ because even loans and mortgages are not free of charge and have to be paid).

This paper would not be complete if we did not pose the question of the future of a person living in a traditional-cum-contemporary society (Cases II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI,
XII, XIII). This is because to quote Chinua Achebe in reverse, we must ask whether ‘man can wrestle with the semi gods!’ The trend in human rights, liberation movement and democratic ideals as well as technological advancement including in medicine and renewed information will have social economic political and psychological implications on our world and our country. This inevitably has an effect on the individual even if s/he assumes traditional viewpoint. I would like to pose a thought here: aren’t our thoughts, feelings, attitude, actions and reactions prompted by human needs, or is counselling psychological services and components not about our human living? Counselling psychology must be a part of our lives, our issues; that hope (Cases VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XI, XIII). Thus, guidance and counselling, mentorship, coaching and teaching must engulf our philosophical world view, not us being drowned by them.

Chinua Achebe is, in my view is the master in capturing the overall cognitive process in Obi (in No Longer at Ease). One can experience the feelings, the thoughts, the struggles and the reactions – this is simply breathtaking (Achebe, 1958:90):

*Obi admitted that his people had a sizeable point. What they did not know was that, having laboured in sweat and tears to enrol their kinsman among the shining elite, they had to keep him there. Having made him a member of an exclusive club whose members greet one another with ‘How’s the car behaving?’ did they expect him to turn around and answer: ‘I’m sorry, but my car is off the road. You see I couldn’t pay my insurance premium!’ That would be letting the side down in a way that was quite unthinkable. Almost as unthinkable as a masked spirit in the old Ibo society answering another’s esoteric salutation: ‘I’m sorry, my friend, but I don’t understand your strange language. I’m but a human being wearing a mask.’ No, these things could not be.*

This is counselling psychology at its best; the stakes are much higher – it is a life and a living. Achebe is highly philosophical yet so empathetic, genuine while still offering Obi unconditional positive regard. Simply put, Obi is struggling with life. But again, does society define how to deal with this, is the formula for breaking into orbit provided (Figure 15) or is the attempt (Figure 9 and 10) already blocked! Fast forward to the demands of living today and we must admit they are too much to bear for some (or many). Thus stress, anxiety, depression and heart attacks are increasingly common as individuals and families attempt living up to societal expectations. Companies, organisations and nations are at breaking
points. Some women may need to redefine the waist line, while others will struggle with past pregnancy weight so as to also keep the back straight. Social life and the demands of living includes bank loans that are not well thought out to buy an expensive car, bigger house and high quality expensive furniture to be a ‘spirit with the spirits’. Certainly, there are various clients (I am being polite and considerate too) living beyond their means but like Obi in Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, society expects some of these people to display a certain way of life and keep high standards, including where they live, the car they drive and who they interact with. Psychological disturbance leading to maladjustment and /or mental illness, high rates of corruption rampant in our society, more working hours to earn higher (additional) pay, the yearning for higher education to keep up with the demands of career advancement and the cut throat competition may therefore be a premonition to imminent illnesses (psychological disturbance, emotional turmoil, physiological illness, spiritual emptiness, physical exhaustion, moral decadence and social alienation).

Inevitably our lives constitute our philosophy and as a matter of course flows into our psychology. Our interpretation of our traditional philosophy must demonstrate the reality of our lives and hence on counselling psychology (*Figure 8, 9, 10, 14 and 18*). This can be explained using the prism theory (Riggs, 1973; 2006) as one option though not the only one but because it is unique and in this instance rhymes with traditions and the hermeneutic approach adopted in this paper.

In the Prism Model, Riggs describes how a ray of light passes through a prism: when a fused white light is beamed through a prism, the white light is subsequently diffracted into a rainbow of colours (*Figure 11*). Riggs further conceptualizes the diffraction process itself as creating a continuum. Riggs (1973; 2006) discusses dimensions of culture, economy, politics, communication and symbolic developing world and argues that there exist aspects of both traditional and modern structures. Thus, there is an attempt to fuse traditional and modernity including information, science and technology. When the traditional philosophy (religion and traditions) encounter modernity (information, science, medicine, improved understanding of religion and more modern traditions), the traditional cultures tend to be scattered and diffracted. This can lead to confusion, disappointment and disillusionment.
In a prismatic society, there exist characteristics of fused and diffracted societies side by side. This is because some of the features of the earlier culture are unable to effectively interact with aspects of the new culture. Similarly, the traditional societies will encounter difficulty when absorbing the new cultures.

Traditional African life and religion was essentially monotheistic. This is because God transcends into the lives of the people in their everyday life. That traditional societies and Africans in particular are notoriously religious describes and still correspond to most people's idea of the African philosophical viewpoint which is also a reality. Though this may correspond to ancient religious traditions, a fast forward to modern reality may not have a similar correspondence. However, it must be accepted that there are still people who are inclined to strong religious doctrines, this time depending on the religion (ancient religious traditions, Christianity, Islam or any other. Today, there are several religions flourishing and dominating the African continent.

The perspectives of heterogeneity, overlapping, formalism, and social transformation are very essential. This is because there are particular characteristics in prismatic society, even though an understanding of them needs refinement. This is important in psychology because the
people’s philosophy (traditional philosophy) is an important component of their psychology yet modernity is a part of our lives in that humanity is encompassing the global perspective. Thus, traditional philosophy, psychology and modernity will have to co-exist in the new world order as demonstrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Philosophy, Psychology and Modernity

The fundamentals of psychology can be perceived in the extent to which African traditions and philosophy can be interpreted using modernity such as psychology theories as well as application in our social economic political environment. In addition, psychology too will seek to comprehend other interventions such as use of complementary, traditional and alternative medicine (CTAM) even in modern settings. Complementary, traditional and alternative medicine is not part of conventional medicine as practiced by medicine and allied health professionals. Instead, it is part of how society, particularly traditional communities deals with health and other problems. Part of health includes psychological issues and mental disorders. The use of CTAM in traditional societies especially in certain contexts is often equated to those who seek hospitalizations, religious and other professional services. It can be argued that the use of CTAM in traditional societies is common (including in modern living) due to several reasons as follows: (1) In traditional societies, conventional health care services are limited and less often unavailable (inadequate); (2) In many instances, people have always
turned to traditional healing; (3) Easy access to traditional and religious healers and advisors; 
(4) In certain instances it may be cheaper, or free of charge; (5) There is no referral; (6) In 
many instances, it is the only available treatment; (7) Strong traditional beliefs including a 
strong conviction in the supernatural; and, (8) There are instances without any solution or cure 
by modern medicine or matter cannot be resolved by religion such as acute illness and other
fatalities such as infertility.

The suggestion that CTAM can offer a possible solution is always a relief and people will 
gladly accept the offer (Case V).

For counselling psychology, the three components (African tradition philosophy, psychology 
theories and modernity in Figure 12) represent a society in transition. This is because 
practitioners (clinicians, counsellors, social workers) working in conventional counselling 
settings would favourably regard counselling as helping to be considerably adequate. Yet it is 
important to be aware (and sometimes to know) whether the client they are assisting can be 
effectively coordinated in order to prevent undesirable interferences between diverse 
treatments. However, to date, it may not be possible to obtain data regarding CTAM contacts 
among clients. In addition, it is possible that a person may find inner peace in prayer or in 
fulfilling certain traditional obligations. Thus, what we may in various ways regard as 
unconventional therapies as complementary rather than an alternative to conventional healing, 
including in medicine (Druss & Rosenheck, 1999; Paramore, 1997; Rössler et al. 2007).

Even then, it can be argued that contemporary modern society would require a deeper 
interpretation. This can be demonstrated as follows using the Philosophy and Psychology in 
Traditional Societies (PPTs) model.

4.0. Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies

This paper argues that the self has both a tradition and a religion and these are important 
elements of the social economic political system. Additionally, the self requires to be enabled 
to express themselves in a philosophy and system that serves them. The stability of the 
philosophy psychology framework (Figure 7 and 12) is embedded in both religion + tradition,
as well as a recognition of the individual as a significant component of the overall system. This is the Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTs) model.

4.1. **Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies approach**

The proposed Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTs) approach is a model based on the four P’s:

1. **Phenomenology.** PPT is a hermeneutics phenomenological approach. This is significant because it takes in both the narrative and thematic analysis in context and content.

2. **Philosophy and Psychology.** PPT includes all the P’s, that is clinical psychology, counselling psychology, psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy (therapy), pastoral counselling and care as well as other facets of life such as philosophy, politics (political science), personality and personal development, power and position. It also includes pathology and psychopathology.

3. **Personality.** An important component of PPT is personality. This is because the person is important in psychology (after all, psychology is the study of human behaviour and mental process). Hence personality and personality development are essential components of PPT.

4. **PowerPoint.** PPT is a PowerPoint since it places the individual in a position of enabled power and positioning, priorities and privileges (*Figure 5, 6, and 7*). Subsequently, PPT enables a re-definition of the individual in a new framework that is more enabling and empowering in relation to the earlier almost fatal predicament (*Figure 13, 14 and 15*).

The marked shift in fundamentals of psychology commences with an incorporation of self system into the tradition and religion components (*Figure 7*). The new philosophical orientation is then composed of self, religion and tradition, and it is fully acceptable that the three are interconnected, that is, they form an association. Subsequently, the African traditional philosophy can be transcended into a new perspective, that is, the philosophy psychology in traditional societies (*Figure 13*) that comprise of self, tradition and religion.
The self has both a tradition and a religion and these are important elements of the social economic political system (some scholars especially in philosophy might ask, are tradition and religion prerequisites or mandatory). The stability of the philosophy psychology framework (Figure 12 and 13) is embedded in both, religion + tradition, as well as a recognition of the individual as a significant component of the overall system.

Admittedly, the transition from tradition + religion has not been so transitory in several traditional societies particularly in the developing countries. This is because many of the societies were under ‘colonial’ rule. Kenya for instance became a British Colony in 1920 and gained independence in 1963 while Nigeria gained independence in 1960. Both colonization and neo-colonisation imposed themselves on the people and on the existing religion + tradition, thus making the individual more vulnerable to several forces beyond their control. The traditional, colonial and neo-colonial acumen has been articulated by various African writers such as Chinua Achebe (1958; 1960; 1964, 1966) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1967; 1977; 1980; 1986). This is why the individual in the more traditional societies is more susceptible to manipulation even in their own social economic political environment as depicted in Figure 14.
It is evident that persons in traditional societies have undergone several phases (I to IV) in the transition, and thus require the additional shift to achieve a philosophy psychology structured living (Figure 15). Subsequently, the self requires a launching pad and this transition too requires a foundation in order for it to be well established.

In the harmonised living, the components of the earth sphere would be religion + tradition + self (Figure 7 and 13) while the foundation for orbit launch would consist of various theoretical underpinnings in psychology (such as psychoanalysis, behavioural, person centred approach, cognitive and systems approach). This is represented in Figure 13 that has the three essential ingredients (Tradition, Religion and Self as in Figures 7 and 12) and the components in earlier philosophical structure (tradition and religion in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4) that clearly support and paves way for the launch rather than the individual being dominated by the sphere.

Thus PPT does not dismiss, undermine nor underrate the African philosophical foundations. Rather, it aims at strengthening the foundations in order to provide a strong foundation for individual (rocket) take-offs. Subsequently, PPT can also take in additions such as psychological theories, as well as modernity (medicine, information, science and technology)
unlike African traditional philosophy that may have been more closed and in the end prevented the even the individual from penetrating their own sphere (*Figure 9*). Thus the religion + tradition + self provide the perspective for thriving in a new world order (*Figure 15*).

**Figure 15:** *Fundamental of Self Components together with Tradition and Religion*

![Diagram of Self Components with Tradition and Religion](image)

The rocket in this instance is the self and the orbit is the self actualization enabled by coping and positive (appropriate) strategies. The thrust includes aspects of religion and tradition as well as other immediate strategies (education, health, life skills, attitude, socio-economic-political setting). ‘Thrust’ enables the individual to cope with life and its challenges. Many space shuttles can achieve the height of 100km at approximately 2 minutes into flight. I been asking myself what activities one can undertake in that time (laughing, smiling, squatting, say a quick hallo to a friend) and hence the importance of ‘life thrusts’ (education, health, life and social skills, the appropriate social economic political setting).

A shift in the guidance and counselling conceptualisation to rhyme with modernity must thus commence with various changes as depicted in *Figures 14* into *Figure 15* and into *Figure 16*. This is because in traditional society, guidance and counselling was like a ship on railway line
– counselling psychological services were more fixed and this would have assumed that the philosophical framework ensured the individual (ship) remained on track (tradition + religion) and thus prevent derailment (deviation). However, it would obviously be difficult to manoeuvre the ship when there is need for adjustment. The adapted counselling psychological services encompasses guidance (steering wheel) and counselling (campus), coaching and mentorship (map) is more technical and client friendly as demonstrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Re-Organisation of Fundamental of Self Components, Tradition and Religion

Subsequently, counselling psychology in the new framework is a roadmap and the blue print is implanted in the PPT (Figures 16) thus, diminishing on the difficulties experienced in a closed system (Figures 9 and 10) and other subsequent systems such as colonialism (Figure 14 and 18). It can then be argued that those who attempted to abandon ship such as Okonkwo and Obi (Cases I and II) tended to drown while programmes like Rights of Passage Experiences (ROPE) are to an extent successful because they are inclined within the innovative framework.

4.2. Professionalism in Counselling Practice

The new framework will also resolve some of the major emerging themes in counselling psychology in African Psychology, including globalisation. This is because counselling psychology and psychology must be guided by international standards such as the diagnostic
and statistical manual of mental disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; 2013). This includes adherence to a code of conduct for practitioners in counselling psychology (American Counselling Association, 2005; Bond, 2000, 2010; British Association for Counselling, 1991) as well as operating within a legal framework (Republic of Kenya, 2009, 2010; Wango, 2011).

Professionalism must be instilled in counselling practice including in developing countries (American Counselling Association, 2005; Wango, In Press) and psychological services aligned to international standards such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association (2013). This is because in several instances, counsellors continue to have a dual relationship and this is very prevalent in several instances in traditional societies as follows:

1. Teachers as counsellors (teacher counsellor, guidance and counselling teacher).
2. Serving officers in various institutions such as the police or military acting as counsellors / chaplains.
3. Clergy / Pastors as counsellors (spiritualism and psychological roles).
4. Counsellor as part of an organization.

It is clear that there is a direct clash of ethical imperatives in such a dual relationship, especially in the relationship. Also, there are issues on confidentiality and autonomy in the counsellor role; that is, upholding the organization values and norms or well being of the client. The position in professional practice is to uphold the principles of counselling (justice, fidelity and autonomy). But the dual relationship has significant issues in that the employee owes allegiance to the organization / institution and thus institutional issues may take precedence rather than upholding the values of counselling. The reverse may also be true when an officer decides that the needs of the client take precedence. Counselling and counsellors in the developing countries will make decisions in either taking on a counselling role and thus suspend their duties and responsibilities for the duration of the counselling appointment. This would imply working full time as a dedicated counsellor in order to clearly delineate the roles. They also can simply make use of their counselling skills without stepping into a formal counsellor role.
The concept of a serving teacher, operational police officer or clergy performing in the role of counsellor, is completely incompatible with the role of a teacher, police officer or a pastor. In the more customary traditional settings, the work of the teacher, officer or clergy tend to be delineated from daily work. This would make more sense if it was explicitly stated that the powers and duties of being a teacher, pastor or officer were completely suspended during such delineation. But in essence, this is not the preposition though many would claim that there is separation of powers, duties and responsibilities. Instead, the official role is revived by the simple notion that the counsellor is also a teacher, officer or member of the clergy who is trained in counselling. While it is acceptable that the role and training tend to soften on the complimentarily of roles, it still arouses some degree of concern since the assigned role in the organization / institution still stands (teacher, officer, pastor).

5.0. Application of Philosophy Psychology in Traditional Societies in Contexts: Communal living and Relevance of African Philosophy

Philosophy Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTs) may explain why certain aspects of our lives such as education, finances, laws and legislation, politics, policies and ways of life in the developing countries bestrode like a colossus. This arises from the spill over (Figure 14 and 18) in which a traditional philosophy was replaced by two consecutive autocratic (oppressive and dominant) systems (colonialism and neo-colonialism). Indeed, persons in the developing countries will only achieve greater human rights and higher democratic ideals in the third force – a force that will recognise and place the individual at the helm of the human sphere.

The politics and the social economics systems of traditional and developing countries is thus a topic of study. Politicians in the developing countries for instance are powerful people with great influence (power, privileges and finance acumen). The politicians have the political links and create an empire that is as widespread and powerful as their wings can fly. The political empire is also a social economic political link that includes all (religion, tradition, social and political influence). The leaders become a god (godlike) giving them a competitive advantage that enables the politicians reign over the populace (physical, cultural and spiritual dominion).
In all this, the individual is falsely played into a fulsome player – people living in highly communal societies may think that they are a part of the whole and they are deceived that they are part of the overall conceptual framework. Yet s/he cannot tilt the scales towards self (individual, family, clan or community) as this is neither permitted nor provided for in the traditional framework. Indeed, it is like the self is in all endless restless ferment. Life is exasperated by the tomfoolery of implications. This explains why the International Criminal Court (ICC) could have designated Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto as renegades castigating them for the violent Kenyan post election of 2007 in which about 1,200 died, yet Mr. Uhuru and Mr. Ruto were elected President and Deputy in 2013. Indeed, Mr. Uhuru and Mr. Ruto are heroes in their community and they are applauded as leaders, not criminals. The explanation is simple since it lies in the very fact that ICC is not as highly proclaimed with such international standing particularly in developing countries (I would prefer to keep off politics at this juncture). But for all it is worth, politics and other aspects of the traditional societies (including education, poverty, and a direct link for us health and mental health in particular) are all accomplishments of a fashioned triumph and hence a need for transformation as proposed from Figure 14 to Figure 18.

Social transformation and differentiation are edifying processes and take time. The major question then is how a society (traditional, modern or otherwise) can undergo transition. Inevitably, tradition, religion and modernity should exist in proportionate interconnectedness to enable the individual discover a place in the society / community in which they are a part (Figures 7 and 17). This interconnectedness is significant because if the three existed in sequence, the relationship is difficult in interpretation since it implies succession rather than an overlap.

A fully functioning person must be able to interpret the three components: traditions, religion and modernity. Therefore, there are several ways of viewing the concepts, and one way is in form of triangles overriding on each other (Figure 17). This would imply that aspects of one triangle (component) are superimposed on each other. But when the triangles are in sequence (Figure 17) aspects in a triangle (component) may be inadvertently left out leading to a psychologically disturbed person. This is why the interconnected of the circles is suggested.
The interconnectedness allows more interactions that in turn incorporate the various aspects. Thus, we need to recognize and embrace various facets of our social economic political systems. In the end, we acquire the potential to successfully confront the challenge of cultural encapsulation. Barrack Obama is a classic example of a person who goes out of their way and finds the self and in turn seeks a fulfilment in life and achieves it becoming the first black American president. Obama has the education and the skills (Obama 1995), but he does not go put to conquer the world but to find himself, his place in the universe and then sets out on an orbit path. It is important to note that he goes out with a thrust into orbit. This is significant because many of us do not know what we seek in life, nay think that we need to shoot arrows at our enemies (both real and imagined) and that we need to conquer the world. Some people find fault in everything and everyone, they want to triumph over tradition and religion; the world, reach the depths of the ocean and touch the sky, all at the same time. Yet need to find ourselves first, then our pathway and then start picking arrows to shoot if and when necessary. It is not just possible to shoot or throw spears because we hear people shoot arrows, throw spears or any other activity for that matter. Certain actions are wise, others may certainly be foolhardy!

It is important to mention a few aspects in Obama. One is education; it is time to assess the type and quality of education that we impart to the children, is it meaningful, does it provides knowledge and other prerequisites (critical, linked to our environment). It is important to note
that education in colonial states was a tool for oppression and in post independence it may be serving the elite and leaving out the poor and disadvantaged in the community. Two, human rights and proclamation in the growth and development, establishment, and social economic political setting of individual and their standing in society is significant. The individual must obtain fundamental principles of human rights for self and others. This includes the values that we impart and hence Obama receives rights and advocates for them. Three, we must ask ourselves about our social economic political circumstances particularly in the developing world. This is why education, health, human rights, politics and social economic development must be a part of philosophy and psychology.

6.0. Modernity and Modernization and Healthy Well-being

Today, the worldwide system of countries and cultures are highly interconnected and mutually affect one another. Our interconnectedness is marked by the scientific invention, technological advancement and highly developed communication that has significant influence on the daily lives of all of us. This in turn has created newer global economics, firmer human rights perspectives, more open political systems, divergent though more inclusive foreign and domestic policies and a more liberal economy. Nonetheless, the global population continues to exponentially deal with various issues such as poverty, illness and disease, unemployment, substandard living conditions, malnutrition, human rights abuses, illiteracy and environmental pollution. It is interesting that modernity still has to reckon with ethno-political conflict, conflict and war, natural and human disasters and other traumatic situations. Psychotherapy and counselling psychology are embedded in this worldwide system of interconnectedness. Subsequently, the entire psychology including counselling needs to be responsive to 21st Century, with particular awareness and sensitivity of human behaviour, thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions.

Psychological wellness and mental health in traditional societies have had a cultural orientation in that they are embedded in the religious – traditions realm (Figures I, II, III and IV). Thus, they have historically been neglected as far as health is concerned. Additionally, traditional societies (most of them in the developing countries as well) are often faced with several challenges chief among them the political turmoil, poverty, HIV / AIDS and other
diseases. In addition, other health issues seem to have been more prominent such as infectious diseases, malaria as well as maternal and child mortality. Thus, it would require a shift in focus for the political leaders to focus on psychological wellbeing and mental health.

Psychological issues and mental health in traditional societies are often compounded by five major factors. (1) Firstly, there is the stigma associated with mental illness that arises out of the religious-traditional orientation. This includes the myths and legends, perceptions and misconceptions. (2) Secondly, and arising from (1) above, there is the obvious lack of knowledge about the treatment and extent of mental health. This leads to stereotypes, stigma and discrimination. (3) Thirdly and arising from (1) and (2), there is a mistaken belief that mental illnesses cannot be treated and this takes us back to pre-renaissance and later on the developments in psychopathology, psychiatry and psychology. (4) There is the persistent problem in developing countries, that is, inadequate resources and poor (unavailable and/or lack of) health facilities, especially to the majority of people who are poor (deprived financially, politically and socially). Lack of adequate (and unavailable) facilities includes health and mental services (prevention, treatment and diagnosis). (5) All these factors, that is, 1 to 4 inevitably leads many people to seek complementary and traditional alternative helping services (hence the reason why religious healing and prophetic interpretation, traditional healers, herbal medicine may be popular (somehow acceptable, fashionable) though without reasonable proof of success). In the end, psychological illness and mental illness in traditional societies join the endless list of acts of the gods (mystical and the world of the supernatural), rather than the treatment (management) norm.

Life in traditional or modern setting has challenges on an every day-to-day basis. Modern living constitutes a unique setting exposing persons to particular physical, emotional and psychological challenges. We must therefore examine in a logical framework the cause of pain and suffering, including emotional disturbance. This is because life has negative and painful circumstances and hence emotionally, pain and hurt are bound to happen in various situations. Yet many people in the more traditional societies grow up with over-the-top privacy when it comes to several aspects such as follows: body, sex, feelings and emotions, family, marriage and death. Thus, we must rely on psychological services such as counselling
and psychotherapy in order to assist people in various circumstances, including a need to end the cycle of self-blame. In several instances, there has been a tremendous growth in more appropriate understanding of psychology. Hitherto, mental illness was perceived in hereditary, progressive terms and this was detrimental to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment enabled by informed preference.

The new world order in a traditional society will require individual and society to transcend from the four phases in Figure 14 to five phases in Figure 18. The whole process must culminate in a harmonised way of living that must incorporate the individual in the society (individual and society). This can be represented graphically as follows:

**Figure 18: Philosophy and Psychology: A Transition of a Society and a People**

![Diagram of Figure 18: Philosophy and Psychology: A Transition of a Society and a People](image)

This is a transition that undergoes five phases, that is, from (1) traditional societal setting, to (2) colonization, to (3) independence (the first liberation that led to independent states and unfortunately to neo-colonization (this is also the first free force)), moving on to (4) multi-party politics and enhanced democratisation processes and policies (second liberation also called the second force), and culminating in (5) modernized human rights and democratisation process (this is the third force).

In my own personal view, a lot of frustration and disenchantment is experienced by people in traditional societies resulting from constricting one’s thoughts, emotions and actions. The feelings and emotions are just bottled up and cocked! This is because in a traditional society,
especially in the mix up of traditions and modernity, the person does not know exactly how to react to various situations (*Cases III, IV, V, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII*) and this certainly leads to various emotional disturbances including stress and depression. Yet much emotional turmoil can be avoided or dealt with by releasing emotions through various ways such as self-expression, physical exercise, spiritualism (prayer and meditation).

Forward moving, we must be highly selective in thought, emotions and ideas. We must begin by asking ourselves about ways of seeking help and as well as the purpose of helping (clinical psychology, counselling, pastoral counselling, psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy). For instance, can a person of a different ethnic community offer helping in equal measure to a client? To what extent do various aspects such as gender, culture, religion, customs (including beliefs), age and others play a pertinent role in the helping process? Are they an advantage or an impediment? Let us extend the discussion further and pose several questions: to what extent is colonisation, independence and thereafter significant in traditional and modern societal settings? How can counselling psychology assist persons in transition process, for instance from one stage to another (primary to secondary, secondary to higher education, imprisonment (incarceration) to community living, sexuality and orientation, changing family structures and relationships)? Will future generations in traditional societies be a part of, or different from the present philosophical setting? This is because as demonstrated in *Figure 18*, even the traditional societies will with time undergo transformation perhaps into a different (let’s call it world view) society, and to a people of peoples.

So is it a fast forward or should traditional societies move back towards an inclination to societal philosophy? I’m not sure but I certainly think that many scholars would prefer to stay clear of any debate on traditions especially because it involves a highly delicate balancing act. Core beliefs of a society are very important since they enable us to conceptualise our personality, our perception about people and our worldview. Psychologically speaking, our beliefs are at the depth of our heart – they are a greater part of our philosophy and thus part of our inspiration and aspirations. Thus, we cannot ignore them or assume their implications. But, and at the same time, it is not possible to continue to encourage any mindless and unfocused ideas (now that is a heavy one from me, and my colleague asks me to cite
examples!) since they may be ill-fitted to function in our modern society. Instead, we must build on success, not abject failure, hope not frustrations, accomplishments not desperation, we must look forward with positive anticipation and not disappointment and disenchantment. Yet, this is a new concept altogether in a (traditional) society dictated by fate and the gods and that may have tended to ignore the self altogether.

An enhanced understanding of self enables us to go on a treasure-hunting in our hearts and examine some of the messages implanted there-in. In such instances, we must present new beliefs and conviction, even in traditional societies about mental illness where mental illness are viewed as hereditary and progressive, and highly stigmatised. Instead, we must inform people that emotional disturbance including stress and depression, mood disorders, mental illness and many other diseases are treatable informed by treatment preference, including use of medication and therapy. It is a new way of growing up and socialisation from a dependency to independent that will have fundamental implications. This is a new order in which the philosophical foundation of self system, religion and tradition is person oriented, and the self is one amongst others as illustrated in *Figure 19*.

*Figure 19: Philosophy and Psychology: New World Order and a People of Peoples*

Such a new world order would alleviate pain and suffering, stress and emotional turmoil in several ways: Firstly, it would place into prominence health, education and social economic
political order as paramount. Secondly, it would promote prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness and mental illness into priority. This is significant because in traditional societies, certain clients in distress have a clear causative agent / phenomenon and appear convinced that the situation / circumstances cannot be halted / changed by an intervention (specific or general). This includes a medical or curative intervention, or therapy. This is common with depression and mental illness that are associated with religious phenomenon. A new world order is made up of peoples and incorporates education, health, law and human rights.

*Figure 20: Philosophy and Psychology in a New World Order: A System of Systems of Self in a Global World*

The tradition, religion and modernity in the new world order (*Figure 20*) will embrace several areas of emphasis such as education, health, law and human rights that take in our overall wellbeing. At the same time, such a movement will reinforce and affirm some of the core principles and philosophies of humanity, including psychology and philosophy. A worldwide emblem endorses values such as human rights, understanding, respect, positive cultural values, norms, and appropriate conduct. It esteems all gender, ethnicity / race, nationality, religion, social economic status or country. The science and practice of philosophy worldwide will benefit from such an outcome (*Figure 17, 18, 19 and 20*) and thus a new brand of psychology and philosophy. Life is interesting because as we are born and brought up we learn about birthdays, sweets and biscuits, chocolate and ice cream. We learn the nursery rhymes, watch television but soon learn that life has its own dark side. For just as there is a birthday there will be a death date, there is laughter and sadness, life and death, heath and sickness, good and evil, success and disappointment, effort and frustration. We soon get working at them all as we get older, hopefully wiser, learn more about life including
knowledge and etiquette, and acquire life skills including emotional intelligence, resilience, patience, kindness and all else. It is a challenging life after all, not the bread and butter in the nursery rhymes.

This paper is based on a conviction that there is need to understand the traditional societies and their psychology and hence I applaud all the scholars who have greatly made enormous contribution to such a worthwhile process (Nwoye, 2001; 2006b; 2010; 2012). In addition, we need to ask ourselves how many other practitioners in the traditional societies (African for instance) are aware and thus conscious of their predisposed attitudes and beliefs regarding their philosophical underpinnings. This is perhaps the reason why Nwoye has argued for an inclusion of African Psychology in actual training of psychology particularly in African universities. This would in turn enable practitioners to understand their own gender, the gender roles they occupy, and that of their clients, will tend to better identify, assimilate and deal with related transference issues in the therapeutic relationship including conflict, anger, erotic transference, power issues. In professional ethical terms, this is vital for the autonomy of the client, fidelity to the therapeutic contract, and justice in the therapeutic relationship that differences in gender roles do not overpower or distort congruence, empathy and mutual respect in a psychodynamic and integrative process.

At the end of it all, humanity is embracing the process of globalization which carries within it in-built homogenization. We need to ask whether the individual must play the philosophical tune, must s/he be attuned to prescribed rules or can s/he be independent and free? This is because if the self is isolated from community, the individual will be left in a huff-disoriented and alone, abandoned in the abyss of life. There is a great need to recognize and embrace the different faces of life (Figure 20) including forms of counselling around the world with a more equally balanced comprehension. Through this paper, I hope that readers will acquire a deeper understanding and respect for the importance of comprehending the cultural assumptions of traditional societies. This will guide counselling psychology and help seeking. Examining the cultural values and practices of persons and cultures will lead to a more affluent perspective about various approaches to counselling not often reported in the scholarly literature (Cheung, 2000; Pedersen & Leong, 1997). This in turn will lead to further
development and refinement of effective, indigenous counselling models and strategies, while contributing to a comprehensive base of psychology, philosophy and human behaviour (Heppner, 2006; Heppner, Leong, & Gerstein, 2008; Heppner, Leong, & Chiao, 2008).

7.0. **Conclusion**

In modern living, the role of psychology, counselling and counsellors, therapy and psychotherapy, pastoral counselling and care, and social work will require a more general discussion and orientation leading to more extensive revisions and elaboration. It will also require a definition of terms (clinical psychology, counselling, pastoral counselling and care (and chaplaincy), psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychology). This will go hand in hand with a coherent conceptualisation and interpretation of psychology. Psychology studies include traditional philosophy in order to be able to elaborate on our worldview. Hence psychology must be able to elucidate on our lives, including our psychological dispensation.

An enhanced understanding of psychology will enable design appropriate behavioural interventions that take into account our humanness and biases and human behaviour. It is also possible that there will be cultural characteristics in psychology studies and this is evident in the traditional and the modern society worldview. This includes aspects of language, beliefs, religion and social stigma, as well as psychological characteristics in help seeking, psychopathology and psychotherapy. In addition, other aspects of mental illness, counselling, psychopathology and psychotherapy should be investigated, for example: language and communication; folklore; trust, confidentiality and disclosure; belief and religious systems, and how they influence help seeking among various societies. The role of language ability and communication in accessing care have led to the finding that greater English language proficiency may be associated with increased help seeking (Delgado et al., 2006; Vega et al., 1999), yet many ethnic groups and their languages in traditional societies may not have an exact equivalent for therapy, clinical psychology, counselling, psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy. Yet it does not mean that such social services and support systems were nonexistent. Instead, the available words translate to a range of services that includes guidance, coaching, counselling or mentorship. Also, the misunderstanding of mental illness, some of which exist up to date, may inhibit a more professional approach to helping. Thus, appropriate
approaches to religion and cultural values, medicine, information and technological advancement (*Figure 17*) would determine the type and significance of help seek approaches as well as final outcome of therapy. The focus of this paper was to explore greater understandings, role and identification of counselling psychological services.

Psychology has a significant role to play in resolving various issues including educational, finance, health, psychological, social, and other related problems affecting both developed and developing countries. In the developing countries, there are critical issues including education, social, health and HIV and AIDS, poverty and other concerns (Kasomo, 2013; Wango, *In Press*). This is why studies on African Psychology and counselling in developing countries such as Kenya must be intensified (Bojuwoye, 1992; McGuinness et al., 2001; Okech & Kimemia, 2012; West, 2007). Some scholars such as Idemudia (2003; 2005) and Nwoye (2001; 2006a) have argued for African psychology which places this paper in context, particularly the apprehension of psychology in traditional societies. We must also note of many recently published excellent scholarly social, psychological philosophical works dwelling on traditional societies with various discussions of significant conceptual perspectives. I have therefore simply suggested that perhaps we should propose a psychological framework such as above that is anchored on Philosophy Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTS). Such a structure encompasses a framework on Philosophy, Psychology and Personality in Traditional Societies (PPPTS).

In the end, it is possible that an individual can achieve greater positive outcomes if they were allowed and enabled to experience themselves. The self is as important as society.
Note
There is a lot of mix up and overlapping of the terms counselling, guidance, guidance and counselling, coaching, mentoring, teaching and life skills education. An understanding of these terms must also include pathology, psychiatry, psychopathology and psychotherapy. This leads to lack of clear roles as well as ambiguity in meaning and application in the developing world. Guidance and counselling has tended to encompass various components including guidance, counselling, career guidance, mentoring, spiritual guidance, teaching and life skills education. This explains why for instance the teacher counsellor in the school guides pupils / students on life skills, study skills, careers and spiritualism. Thus, a member of the clergy (pastor) who is only endowed spiritually may insist on offering counselling even when s/he may not have undertaken adequate training in counselling. Counselling psychological services and roles must therefore be defined. The following selected terms have been defined in order to guide the reader to an enhanced understanding of the conceptual framework of this paper.

African Psychology Kazdin (2000) defines African psychology as a body of knowledge concerned with understanding African life and culture. I use the term African Psychology to refer to Psychology in traditional Africa perspective and as practiced in traditional African societies. This included various aspects of psychology such as guidance and counselling, coaching and training, teaching and mentorship.

Career guidance This includes activities and services to assist an individual or groups to make informed decisions on education, training and professional (career) choices.

Chaplain This is a member of the clergy attached or assigned to a branch of an institution (educational (school, college, university), military, police or society).

Coaching This is a form of development (guidance and training) in which a more
experienced or trained person supports a learner achieve specific or higher personal and professional goals.

**Complementary, traditional and alternative medicine.** Complementary, traditional and alternative medicine (CTAM) is help seeking that is not part of conventional medicine or professional practice. Instead, it is largely part of how the society or community deals with various issues, including health, mental disorders and psychological problems. CTAM is a range of products that includes religious rites, herbal medicine, traditional healers and performance of certain customs. It can be argued that the use of CTAM in traditional societies is common (including in modern living) due to several reasons as follows such as: strong traditional beliefs, lack of, or inadequate health care facilities; easy access to traditional and religious healers and advisors; in certain instances it may be cheaper or free of charge; and, in many instances, it is the only available treatment. Admittedly, CTAM may even constitute the only solution especially in societies with deep rooted religious and cultural convictions.

**Counselling** A helping relationship in which helper (counsellor) assists person (client) through a process to resolve their issues / concerns / situational difficulty, or cope with situation/s.

**Counselling psychological services** Range of services that include guidance and counselling, coaching, mentorship, psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy.

**Culture** A way of life of a given people. This includes customs, symbols, language, parables, proverbs and riddles, idioms, songs and dance, stories, shrines, art and celebrations. These are all forms of expressions of way of life of the community. Culture includes how the community defines people, kinship, ways of relating to each other, and even ways of expression.

**Developed, developing countries** Many traditional societies live in the developing countries. The terms developed and developing countries (world) are used in preference to such terms as more or less developed. This is because of a lack of coherent and clear definition of more developed and less developed countries as numerous characteristics among countries and communities are

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similar though diverse such as high or low levels of per capital income, industrialization or more agricultural based economy, and developed or restricted infrastructure. However, developing nations are usually characterized by high mortality rates, lower life expectancy, high birth rates, high levels of poverty, strong cultural links, largely patriarchal, gender disparities and gaps between the rich and poor. There are also deep-rooted and serious iniquities and inequalities leading to ethnicity, racialism, nepotism, corruption and looting of public funds and class affiliations. Though the developing countries share some similarities, they certainly have many differences. Developing countries constitute a ‘region’ or ‘block’ in a more than geographical or political sense. This is because though they may differ greatly in terms of social economic political aspects, developing countries share a history and a structure in terms of social economic aspects, labour market, educational indices as well as capacity for research and development. There are also the political affiliations, and the connectedness with world markets. Nonetheless, all countries will have assorted cultures, political systems, economies, religions and aspirations.

**Educational psychology**  
This is a branch of psychology concerned with the study of learning.

**Faith**  
Faith is spiritual; it is the believing, belief and trust in God. Faith includes the doctrines of a religion based on spiritual conviction.

**Folklore**  
This is the traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioural examples.

**Guidance**  
Advice, information and counsel provided by someone often more experienced or in authority. In traditional societies, guidance was provided by older persons including elders, relatives and older child/ren on a wide range of issues that included rites of passage, marriage and family, community values and norms, customs and beliefs.

**Guidance and counselling**  
Guidance and counselling incorporate advice, counsel and information (guidance) and the process of assisting a person in situational difficulty (counselling). In traditional societies, guidance and counselling
A Synchronic Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach to Counselling Psychology in Contemporary Traditional Societies

- existed in a continuum that included advice, information, training and coaching, and offering assistance to a person in situational difficulty.

**Mentoring** Support and encouragement given to someone to manage their own training or development.

**Mentorship** A relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced person.

**Pastoral counselling** This is counselling provided by a member of the clergy.

**Psychiatry** Study, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness (emotional and behavioural disorders).

**Psychology** Study of the human mind, behaviour and mental processes. It is both an academic discipline and a professional practice and includes research.

**Psychology in Africa** I use the term to include several concepts. This is because there is African Psychology as practised in the African traditional way of life, as well as a variety of interpretation of Psychology in Africa and as construed by several scholars within the context of Africa.

**Psychopathology** Abnormal pattern/s of functioning that may be described as deviant, distressful, dysfunctional, or dangerous.

**Religion** Religion is institutional; the conforming to a system of beliefs, customs, attitudes and practices. Religion includes devotion and worship.

**Sacred** Sacred is the experience of our world in terms of religion and faith, that is, the world as governed by God.

**Secular** The secular explains reality in social and humanly terms.

**Sacred and secular** Sacred and secular represent two different ways of experiencing our world; the sacred based on faith and religion while the secular is more about our human world including our relations with each other.

**Self** Set of characteristics such as personality and ability, reference to an individual.

**Space** The Kármán Line at 62 miles (100 kilometres) is commonly accepted as the boundary between Earth’s atmosphere and outer space. It is estimated to be the lowest height at which a sustained orbit is possible. Below the boundary, an object trying to orbit would fall back to Earth.
| **Teaching** | These are activities that are elements of learning. In traditional societies, teaching programmes were not as formalized and included ways of life such as the traditions, customs, beliefs and folklore. Persons were also guided on traditions, community values and norms, and ways of conduct. |
| **Tradition** | Traditions include customs, habits, beliefs and rituals including religion. Traditions also refers to the social cultural practices that leans more on the habitual and customary practices. |
| **Traditional religion** | This is the religion that was practiced by traditional societies (in many societies, this would be prior to Islam and Christianity). |
| **Traditional society** | The term ‘traditional socieity’ implies the systems, habits, viewpoints, traditions, rituals and beliefs of a society before the emergence of industrialization, modernization, scientific and technological development as opposed to the more modern, industrialized and scientific community. This does not mean that the traditions are immoral or dreadful, nor does this paper castigate them. Inevitable too, all societies are in transition and this includes the presumably more traditional societies. Hence, this paper adopts the phrase ‘contemprary traditional societies’ to depict a society that is transiting between customary and modern practices. |
| **Traditional-cum-modern society** | The world is more global and hence all societies are in transition and will take in other customs and practices. However, human societies which are technologically unsophisticated are persuaded to allow the sacred to invade their secular and philosophical interpretations (more traditional societies), while others who adopt modernity will be inclined to take in new ideas and interpret the world using newly found knowledge and information(traditional-cum-modern societies). A person in a traditional-cum-modern society will be transiting between the two spheres of influence. |
| **Training** | Instruction to impart knowledge and skills. In traditional societies, training included marriage and family, child upbringing, teaching on cultural traditions and other aspects of life. Training in counselling psychology must include knowledge, skills and techniques, principles and professional ethics. |
REFERENCES


**CASE STUDIES**

**Case 1  Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart**

Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is introduced with much honour. Even much more, Obierika is a man made of moderation and is contrasted with Okonkwo the tragic protagonist who is a person of extreme and hence faces imminent epic collapse. Several incidents are not in Okonkwo’ favour: he has a bad temper; he kills Ikemefuna, a boy who calls him father; he accidentally kills a clansman which is a crime against the earth goddess; and, he commits suicide. Okonkwo is over-zealous in his ambitions and it appears he wants to rise beyond the clan and the community, which in the Africa Traditional Philosophy framework is not permitted and is impossible. He wants to get into orbit and has the thrust in that he is famous, industrious, an achiever and the society has honoured him. But he is unable to break into orbit and the force of gravity brings him down with a thud:

When Okonkwo kills a clansman, he has to flee from the clan and is banished for seven years. Further, Okonkwo’s compound has to be destroyed to carry out justice of the earth goddess. The interesting part of it is that Obierika his friend is among the people who destroy Okonkwo’s home compound and later, Obierika takes time to go over several events (Achebe, 1960, 87):

> *Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend’s calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time, he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife’s twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed.*

This is a demonstration of the extent to which traditions and religion though harmonised may have failed to integrate the individual system.

*Chinua Achebe is a great scholar who had noticed the individual’s struggle in a community / society that neither understood the person, nor incorporated them but...*
instead insisted that the individual complies with the societal norms. This is perhaps why Sigmund Freud explained the conscious, sub-consciousness and unconscious, ego, superego and Id. The understanding of ourselves in psychology must attempt to identify the individual and define their lives. This paper argues that it is this individual (and their context in the family, clan, community / society, nation and world) that the African Traditional Philosophy has failed to identify in the search for an African Philosophy which in turn must be based on a Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTs). Instead, scholars have correctly identified tradition and religion in the African Philosophy but in psychological terms failed to identify and / or highlight the individual system. In the end, this takes us back to pre-Freud (Wango, In Process) where the individual was submerged and swallowed by the society / community in which they were apart but could not be a part there of.

**Case II  Obi Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s No Loner at Ease**

One of the classic descriptions of the traditional society’s failure to integrate the individual is Obi Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe’s *No Loner at Ease*. This is also typical of the greater conflict between traditional-modern-living. Obi is a young man newly employed and attempting a stiff balance with a fixed financial income and the demands of modern living. It is important to look at Obi’s woes albeit logically of course. At the height of his financial troubles, his salary is fifty pounds a month. He has recently sent thirty-five pounds to pay for his mother’s treatment in a private hospital. He was also remitting twenty pounds per month to the Umuofia Progressive Union to repay the scholarship granted to him that enabled him study abroad. After paying the twenty pounds, he would have thirty left. Yet some of the people who contributed to make his scholarship a reality earned less than five pounds a month, they had wives and school going children and yet he had none. But now, his car insurance is expiring and he requires fourty-two pounds. At that moment in time, he has slightly over thirteen pounds in the bank. To solve his financial problems, Obi negotiates a loan of fifty pounds and goes straight to the insurance company. He returns to his office to find an electricity bill for over five pounds. Still, at the end of the month, he has to renew his vehicle licence: ‘a whole year was out of the question, but even a quarter alone was four pounds’. The car required new tyres at thirty pounds and income tax in
another two months. Many employed people (both new and those nearing retirement, females and males, young and old) will identify with Obi. This demonstrates that ordinary life even in the so called developing world or living in the city is much more challenging.

Again, Obi wants to marry a girl who is seen as an outcast by the community because ‘her great-great-great-great grandfather had been dedicated to serve a god’ (Achebe, 1958:65). Joseph his friend cautions Obi (Achebe, 1958:68 - 69):

> What you are going to do concerns not only yourself but your whole family and future generations. If one finger brings oil, it soils the others. In future, when we are all civilised, anybody can marry anybody. But that time has not come. We of this generation are only pioneers.

Finally, Obi is in court after receiving a bribe. Obi has just lost his mother and his fiancée, Clara, had gone out of his life. Despite been educated abroad in England and a great future with promise working as a civil servant, the sequences of events are overwhelming even when he attempts a brave face (Achebe, 1958:2):

> Treacherous tears came into Obi’s eyes. He brought out a white handkerchief and rubbed his face. But he did it as people do when they wipe sweat. He even tried to smile and belie the tears. A smile would have been quite logical. All that stuff about education and promise and betrayal had not taken him unawares. He had expected it and rehearsed this very scene a hundred times until it had become familiar as a friend ...The two events following closely on each other had dulled his sensibility and left him a different man, able to look words like ‘education’ and ‘promise’ squarely in the face. But now when the supreme moment came, he was betrayed by treacherous tears.

What is most admirable and highly esteemed of Achebe is the way he captures the going-on in the mind of Obi. This is a master piece in the thought process (Achebe, 1958:90):

> Obi admitted that his people had a sizeable point. What they did not know was that, having laboured in sweat and tears to enrol their kinsman among the shining elite, they had to keep him there. Having made him a member of an exclusive club whose members greet one another with ‘How’s the car behaving?’ did they expect him to turn around and answer: ‘I’m sorry, but my car is off the road. You see I couldn’t pay my insurance premium!’ That would be letting the side down in a way that was quite unthinkable. Almost as unthinkable as a masked spirit in the old Ibo society answering another’s esoteric salutation: ‘I’m sorry, my friend, but I don’t understand your strange language. I’m but a human being wearing a mask.’ No, these things could not be.
This is psychology at its best and today, the stakes are much higher – it is a life and a living. Simply put, Obi is struggling with life, and so are many others in diverse ways.

Once again, the African Traditional Philosophy setting fails to identify the individual system and thus Obi appears alone and deserted. A framework based on Philosophy and Psychology in Traditional Societies (PPTs) would suggest that the thrust (Obi’s education, employment and new status) is not adequate to enter into orbit; instead, Obi requires adjustment in a new world order.

Case III  Case of Lady with cancer of the breast
A lady has been diagnosed with breast cancer. The doctors have suggested a surgical operation to have the breast removed. However, she feels that her faith and religion do not allow any of her body parts to be removed. Furthermore, her husband who is also a strict adherence to her faith is in complete agreement with her. In addition, her sister who was a nurse had breast cancer and even after the removal of both her breasts, she passed on. The sister was also a strict adherence to the same faith and had a premonition of her death in which she was convinced that it was an act of God as a punishment for her failure to keep to her faith.

It is prudent to know that the sister went for a late diagnosis. Also, people can react differently to the same treatment.

Case IV  Payment of bride price as a prerequisite to receive bride wealth
Many unmarried ladies in Kenya are very particular to visit their family, clan or community and pay their own bride price if they have children, even if she is not married. This emancipates from a tradition that states that a man or woman cannot receive a bride price on behalf of his or her daughter, or their daughter(s) as follows: (a) a man has not paid, or has never paid a bride price for his wife, (b) if a woman, married or unmarried bride price has not been paid. Receiving a bride price beforehand is tabooed and it is believed that bad luck will befall the family.
The procedure is as follows (a) a man has to pay the bride price to the parent-in-laws before his children’s in-laws can visit him, (b) a woman has to pay bride price to her family and clan before the in-laws can visit her home and submit a bride price. Many people will strive to adhere to the procedure for fear of any repercussions.

It is true to say though it is scientifically difficult to verify the curse, many people are socially and psychologically disturbed when they have not fulfilled the obligation.

Case V  Complementary, Traditional and Alternative Medicine: Help seeking in traditional healing

Many people in African and other traditional societies (both males and females, educated and non-educated, rural and urban, traditional and modern, religious and of diverse faith or without any faith conviction) will consult and/or visit a traditional healer (medicine man) in the event of illness. People will seek Complementary, Traditional and Alternative Medicine (CTAM). This can be before or after visiting a medical doctor, before or after seeking professional help.

There are numerous reasons why people seek complementary, traditional and alternative help and I will simply outline several below:

(1) In certain instances, a person or family are convinced that the illness has wider implications (such as a curse).

(2) In several instances, there are people in the more traditional societies who adhere to traditional beliefs, customs and practices hence will seek healing in traditional medicine. Still, there are others who believe in, and are highly (more) convinced in the power of traditional medicine.

(3) It is possible that in several instances, it does appear more readily available and affordable means of health care.

(4) Many people are attracted to traditional healers (herbal medicine) because it appears more aligned to the immediate understanding of the people. Besides, traditional healing has been a part of cultural heritage.

(5) People have tried other means (religion – prayer, medical doctors – medicine) and
when they fail, they are willing to try out the traditional healers.

(6) Certain diseases such as mental health care (stress, anxiety, emotional distress, depression and psychopathology) are often associated with a breach of a taboo or a custom. The consequences are a curse by the gods, and the remedy is suggested in performing certain cleansing rituals.

A leaning towards traditional healing is common in many instances even when the scientific diagnostic explanation is readily available.

Case VI  Help seeking (and conviction) in religion, prayer and fasting
Many people are religious and will also seek help in religion and prayer. They will also offer thanks to God for blessings, just as they will seek spiritual intervention for blessing and in everyday life. People will throng in places of worship because they want to demonstrate their faithfulness in religion and through worship. Some clients will also want to offer prayers to God before and after a counselling session, in times of distress and even in the event of illness. Just as some people are convinced in traditional healers or modern medicine, there will be various levels of conviction in religion (high to low intensity).

The zealleness in faith and religion and a leaning in spiritualism could have stemmed from the emphasis on religion in traditional societies. This may have continued even when a person in traditional society picks on another religion. At the sacred level, some people will experience and interpret reality only in religious terms. However, some will allow a more objective (secular) interpretation though still religious. Thus, the same reality will be construed as being under the influence of the supernatural or accessible to human control (medicine, information and technology, education).

Case VII  Life Challenges and Living
Life has challenges, frustrations and disappointments. Yet the social setting makes it highly inconvenient to exhibit certain problems especially due to labelling (Wango, 2012, see also Table 1 and Figure 8). Logically life is full of events and emotions and these can be considered to be ordinary aspects of living. For example, it is most unfortunate to fail to
have a child/ren, to be separated or divorced, experience disability or encounter other misfortunes. When a person is without a child/ren or is mentally ill, it is perceived as a curse. People assume that the person or family must have upset the gods or the ancestors. Remember, in traditional societies, the ancestors are alive with us and must be continuously appeased least they are upset or turn in their graves.

It was assumed, for instance, that relations will flourish and hence it was unfortunate to have a failed relationship. For a male, they are perceived as irresponsible and a person incapable of leadership. The person is looked at with suspicion, as the man who can't even take care or look after his wife or family. If a woman and divorced, it is worse in a patriarchal society where they are labelled as immoral, loose and stigmatized as having bad morals, 'otherwise why then did you leave your husband,' ‘she was not a virgin,’ or 'why did he leave you then'. She is already labelled and isolated. It did not matter if s/he is in the right or wrong, not the attempts made or sacrifices in an attempt to salvage the relationship (marriage). It is also important to note that a lady who is single and with children is also struggling to bring up the child/ren and that such women suffer a lot of endless pain because it is difficult to find a genuine 'male, lover, friend and companion. Additionally, the so-called 'married' women look at them with a lot of suspicion as they are 'always hungry, lusting and stealing someone's husband.

It would be important to explore ways and means of assisting people cope with life challenges (work and relationship issues, stress, general anxiety, burnout, depression) rather than admonishing persons in difficult circumstances or in situational difficulty. Nonetheless, counselling psychological services will adopt a positive psychology orientation in which life is not all about problems.

**Case VIII ‘Gilbert’**

Gilbert is an educated male, religious and married with two children. He has come for help but only after a long persuasion by his friends and family. Gilbert lost his father five years ago, ‘my dad just died! Like that’. Then after a few years, his mother fell ill. Then the younger brother had a mental illness, ‘he went crazy. But now he’s calm’. Then the sister
went to United States and she had depression. Says Gilbert, ‘my sister, she went to the United States and forgot about us. But you know what, she soon went crazy, and was sent to the asylum and she lives there’. It is like misfortune seems to befall his family as he explains it, ‘we have too many misfortunes. I honestly do not know what to tell God. It is like our family has been cursed.’ Gilbert has been persuaded to seek help by a friend.

People tend to view suffering in terms of a curse from the gods, yet it is possible there is a logical flow of events such as the cause of death and depression in a family. This can render the family highly unstable. Thus, individual ideas about pain and suffering contribute to their psychological state of being. It can also lead to feelings of self-pity. Additionally, the participants’ beliefs about what would ease their suffering lead them to seek different coping strategies (including traditional healing, religion or medicine).

**Case IX**  
**Dealing with illness and misfortune**

Traditional societies were convinced that bad luck and misfortune including illness as well as mental illness (emotional disturbance, depression) had a religious etiology. In many instances, bad luck and misfortune was seen as a punishment, retribution by the gods for appalling actions. Thus, it was a misfortune and the person was castigated and blamed for the misfortune. This is why in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Obierika cautions Okonkwo that actions such as killing a boy that calls him father can lead to misfortune.

Mental health and bad luck in traditional societies was associated with misconduct. Subsequently, persons with misfortunes or who were ill including mental illnesses were less likely to seek treatment than those who attribute the illness to other causes.

**Case X**  
**Traditional medicine, superstitions or black magic**

It is interesting that many people seek the services of a traditional healer (medicine man) or in traditional healing. I learnt that people refer to traditional help and assistance using a variety of terms such as African medicine, black magic or traditional medicine. I had the privilege of visiting a few traditional healers (medicine men) just for a chat as I was writing this paper. I must admit I was personally overwhelmed by what the healers claimed they could accomplish. I also was surprised by the number and calibre of people who sought
their services. I was told that all people of all ages, education, religion, political orientation, ethnic group and race and social economic status were always seeking help. People sought assistance for various reasons. This included political ambitions, need to acquire a spouse, need to secure spouse, need to be prominence (famous or rich), those without a child/ren, promotion and improved child performance in school. There were also the so called ‘usual needs’ such as seeking healing, people who wanted to drive out spirits and persons who wanted to deal with their enemies (who included spouse, family, colleagues, neighbours, business partners). The reasons why some of the needs are called 'usual' are because they are considered normal (customary) or everyday needs as different from exceptional needs such as those seeking political ambitions, certain types of unique illnesses and those seeking to have a child.

I want to comment on superstitions because it is difficult to define the meaning of superstition what one belief in as different from another. One of my colleagues who read through this paper did ask me about some of my definitions and pointed out that I need to be careful with meaning. ‘who is defining, for instance, who defines this is superstition and this is a fact’. Often at times we need to re-define our own beliefs.

Case XI   Tradition and Modernity

It is very interesting that traditional communities have been able to adapt to several situations and circumstances and not completely disoriented as such. Amongst the most successful aspects of life has been the rite of passages, particularly initiation into adulthood (circumcision) and marriage. Male circumcision for instance is conducted using modern medicine in several communities. In addition, male circumcision is medically encouraged for various reasons, especially in the fight against HIV / AIDS. However, female genital mutilation (FGM) has been a challenge as many societies have cling to the tradition despite evident on the contrary and the detriments of FGM. Nonetheless, the Religious Enabled Alternative Rite of Passage (REARP) is worth discussing since it presents an alternative to FGM. The new method of initiation does not involve shedding of blood when initiating girls into adulthood but inculcation of values and norms (religious and cultural, life skills). ROPES that stands for Rights of Passage Experiences involves a week-long camp that is
designed to assist children between the ages of 13 - 14 transition from childhood into young adulthood. ROPES was developed out of a need to give young people guided transition from childhood to adulthood. This practice is congruent with modernity and ensures that the growth and development of young people is not left to chance.

The Rights of Passage Experiences (ROPES) is a Religious Enabled Alternative Rite of Passage (REARP) that incorporates need to impart life skills and at the same time bring an end to female genital mutilation. The programme is being adopted by many people as it is purposeful and programmed.

Case XII  Life skills and life skills education

Life skills are an important aspect of life. Children in traditional societies were inculcated with life skills. This is because traditional societies adopted various skills as interventions to cope with life and living. In traditional societies, people were taught various things. For example, if a snake was to coil itself on the body, one was to break a stick. This is because the snake would interpret the sound to mean breaking of the bones and the snake would uncoil thus giving the victim a chance to escape. The importance of such is noted in that one had to have the stick beforehand, not after a snake has already coiled. Similarly, boys in particular were warned not to collect young cats. This is because the so called cat could be a lion's offspring or the young of a leopard. Leopards are very protective of their young ones and hence the heavy warning. The imparting of life skills may be noted in the film, ‘The Gods must be crazy’ where the boy carries a stick and places it on his head when he sees a hyena. The hyena is unlikely to attack him as he looks bigger.

The importance of life skills and life preparedness (rather than in preparedness) is important now and in future.

Case XIII  Settling Deals, Trade-offs, New Horizons, Countless Context Counts

It is very interesting to write a paper on traditions. This is because every society and community has their own traditions. The convention in aeroplanes is for first class (premium) to sit in the front seats and business and economy in the next rows. I have a
friend of mine who prefers the back of the plane and argues that he is safer there. A lady friend too will not sit next to the window and says it is too dangerous. For me, I like the view outside and I am highly contented to sit anywhere on the plane. So, what are our traditions and culture – traditions are good, just as they can be limiting. When can we negotiate – I am completely against female genital mutilation. Should a girl be forced into marriage that she is not a part of (forced relationship) – this is a human rights issue, not a cultural inclination since the decision involves her, her life and health and her whole future. I am convinced and highly promote girls and boys education and human rights (education, health, democratic human rights). This is because girls and boys, males and females are human beings and thus we must esteem humane values and standards more than civil liberties. Perhaps traditions and customs (including religion) can also be negotiated, discussed, seek logical decisions and conclusions; we can invite consultation. Let’s try in a few instances, twins and albinos are people and should never be killed – I think that is an assertion based on human rights, not a negotiation. Okonkwo in Case I should not have been banished for seven years, instead, the sentence could have been reduced to seven months, a fine and a cleansing ceremony performed – can we as human wrestle with the gods (when, how?). Needless to say, Obi in Case II should amalgamate positive norms and values that include integrity and accountability.

In my own viewpoint, the new world order has different meanings and implications for various aspects. While it is possible that certain people may resign to fate, there are obviously many others who are able to rise above frustrations and disappointments. Some people are able to keep their thoughts and hurts, feelings and problems to themselves simply because they feel no one can understand them. Yet others are able to share and find a place in this expanse world. This is the new world dispensation and counselling and other psychological services must be a part of us, and not apart from the individual in their own community that they are a part there of.