Psychological strategies for achieving peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society for sustainable national development

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Psychology as a discipline has very crucial roles to play in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society faces a major challenge of building mutual confidence and trust among the country's diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities. Psychological strategies and knowledge can be explored in finding solution to the causes of violent conflicts in order to achieve peaceful co-existence among the federating units in Nigeria. This paper attempts to discuss psychological strategies for achieving peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society for sustainable national development. The paper begins by defining some fundamental terms such as peaceful co-existence, sustainable development and multiculturalism. It is observed that understanding and using psychological strategies may open the citizens to rich area of social psychological problems where psychologists can employ psychological tools of research for better understanding, prediction and control of positive and negative sides of cultural, lingual, religious and ethnic group relations. The paper also gives recommendations for achieving peaceful co-existence among the citizenry. The paper concludes that a nation devoid of peaceful co-existence will lack development in all sectors of the economy.

Introduction

Nigeria, a heterogeneous state comprised of several pluralities with a large mass of people from varied cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations, is yet to find an enduring formula for peaceful coexistence of her more than four hundred (400) ethnic groups and different religious communities (Olukoju, 1997; Enuoka, 2005; Ajiboye, 2010; Dalung, 2013). With over 400 ethnic groups distributed among Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion, ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria since independence have resulted in loss of several lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages (Enuoka, 2005; Ajiboye, 2010). Prejudice, discrimination and lack of equal opportunity to learn are the prevailing situations in the pluralistic society of Nigeria. This is evident in ethnicity, religion and culture, three concepts that are intertwined and yet different. Most of the conflicts experienced in Nigeria are blamed on these concepts, especially religion. Effective management of such diversity in the society is a challenge because this constitutes a great threat to national integration, stability, peaceful co-existence and development (Ajitoni, Salako, & Oyedepo, 2012).

The ability to achieve unity in diversity is the beauty and test of civilization. However, the conflicting trends of disunity and peaceful co-existence are challenges facing Nigeria today. The growing spate of ethno-religious crises and insurgencies that characterizes Nigerian polity has been traced to inadequacies in the knowledge of intergroup relationships (Enuoka, 2005). Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society is being faced by a major challenge of building mutual confidence and trust among the country's diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities for peaceful co-existence among its citizenry (Mefoh, 2014). Both in the past and recently, there has been a series of conflicts (intra and inter-ethnic clashes) in different parts of the country, mainly triggered by ethnic and/or religious rivalries which have led to millions of people being displaced if not dead. These unfortunate developments have generated public concern about the future of Nigerian federation as a political entity.

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Achieving peaceful co-existence requires a vision of what it looks like. How one imagines peace affects the steps taken to achieve it and the ability to implement it in diverse locations (Rutherford, Harmon, Werfel, Bar-Yam, Gard-Murray, Gros, & Bar-Yam, 2011).. A keen observer of the Nigerian nation is most likely to notice the spate of inter and intra ethnic and religious conflicts going on in the country. For example, the northern Fulani herdsmen and farmers and conflict among ethnic minorities (Adebayo, 2001). To manage the problems of ethno-religious crises and insurgencies in Nigeria, various policy frameworks towards attaining national unity have been put in place by the government. One of such policy frameworks is the federal character which has been enshrined in Nigeria's constitution since 1979 to implement and enforce the Federal Character Principle of fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts and socio-economic infrastructures among the various federating units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Lemuel, 2007 as cited by Ajitoni & Salako, 2013). In the interest of national unity, the National Youth Service Corps scheme was introduced in 1973. The unity schools were established with an aim to achieve unity in the post-civil war era in keeping with the federal character (Koseemani, 2000; Kammelu, 2001; Makinde, 2005). Several policies put in place to check ethnicity failed to yield results (Imobighe, 2003). Eliagwu (2005) stated that despite the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, place of origin or ethnic group by Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, people still face discrimination based on where they come from.

One way of producing well informed citizens who could contribute to national unity and development is by equipping people with adequate knowledge of how to work and live together harmoniously in any society. Therefore, a reorientation is seriously needed to effect a fundamental change in the thinking pattern and attitude of the people particularly in the area of peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance. Ethno-cultural and religious conflicts are social problems in Nigeria that call for relevance of psychological perspective and knowledge in the formulation of public policy towards combating the problems. Psychological paradigms and knowledge can be exploited in finding solution to overt and covert causes of violent conflicts and non-peaceful co-existence among Nigerian citizens. The current situation can improve if effective psychological strategies as tools for promoting peaceful co-existence and national unity are employed. The rationale for psychological strategies is premised on the ability of psychology to contribute to the solutions of problems resulting from human behaviour and to foster appropriate attitudes and values for peaceful co-existence among citizens (Ajitoni, 2005). Therefore, the effective use of these strategies could promote peaceful co-existence because they include a variety of themes, perspectives, discussions on social contexts that could promote national unity and sustainable development. It is important to realize that a nation devoid of peaceful co-existence will have difficulties in achieving sustainable national development in all sectors of the economy. This paper seeks to proffer psychological strategies for achieving peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society for sustainable national development.

Understanding the Fundamental Terms

Peaceful co-existence: Peaceful co-existence according to Dalung (2013) is a term derived from peace, which is a state of harmony characterized by lack of violent conflict, commonly understood as the absence of hostility. In international relations, peace is not the absence of war or conflict, but also the presence of cultural and economic understanding. Peaceful coexistence is viewed as competition without war, or a policy of peace between nations and individuals of widely differing cultural, religious, political systems and ideologies (Dalung, 2013). Peaceful co-existence is a state in which two or more groups are living together while respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts non-violently (Weiner, 1998). As a term and concept, peaceful coexistence implies living in peace together as a matter of policy or social contract among people. It is an inclusive concept that also includes mutual acceptance and empowerment for the attainment of identified common goals (Kamaruddin & Oseni, 2013). The five principles of peaceful co-existence as promoted by China include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality of members and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence (About China, 2007).

Culture of peace: Psychologists understand a culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect respect for life, human beings and their dignity. A culture of peace brings human rights, the rejection of violence in all its forms and adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity and tolerance, as well as understanding among peoples,

groups and individuals to the forefront (United Nations, 1999).

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development entails not only economic development but also equitable distribution of economic benefits such as equitable provision of basic needs, remedy of social inequities and environmental damages. Sustainable development has been considered as one of the most significant issues in political discourse for the last few decades. It includes three key aspects - economic, environmental and social sustainability. Social sustainability is often ignored in the development planning whereas environmental and economic aspects are mostly focused on. Social cohesion, cultural traditions, community cohesion, social interaction etc., are the significant factors for social sustainability (Olagunju & Alaverdyan, 2016). Therefore, a socially cohesive society is one of the important prerequisites for the social sustainability, and thus for the sustainable development.

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism, in an absolute sense, recognizes the broad scope of dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious/ spiritual orientation, and other cultural dimensions. All of these are critical aspects of an individual's ethnic/racial and personal identity, and psychologists are encouraged to be cognizant of issues related to all these dimensions of culture. Nigeria as a multicultural society is faced with the challenge of creating societies that recognize and incorporate the diversity of her citizen's and embrace an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens are committed. Multicultural education can help to accomplish this goal (Douglass & Roberts, 2000; Banks 2003). Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression, and diversity without unity leads to balkanization and the fracturing of the commonwealth that alone can secure human rights, equality and justice (Banks, 2004; Murphy-Shigematsu, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

To gain a deeper understanding of peaceful co-existence calls for a theoretical foundation that captures paradigm shift in the analysis of peaceful coexistence. Theoretical framework is a device or scheme for adopting or applying the assumptions, postulations and principles of a theory in the description and analysis of a research problem (Igwe, 2002). It involves linking the problem under investigation to the assumptions and principles of a theory (Obasi, 1999). The theoretical foundation of this paper is based on social interdependence theory – a theory underlying cooperation and competition. Social interdependence exists when the accomplishment of everyone's goals is affected by the actions of others (Johnson, 2003). There are two types of social interdependence: positive (cooperation) and negative (competition). Positive interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals (that is, there is a positive relationship among goal attainments) and, therefore, promote each other's efforts to achieve the goals. Negative interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals (that is, there is a negative relationship among goal attainments) and, therefore, obstruct each other's efforts to achieve the goals. In order to create and maintain consensual peace, relationships among different cultures and religions must be dominated by cooperation, not competition. No interdependence results in a situation in which individuals perceive that they can reach their goal regardless of whether other individuals in the situation attain or do not attain their goals. Each type of interdependence results in certain psychological processes.

The psychological processes created by positive interdependence include substitutability (the degree to which actions of one person substitutes for the actions of another person), inducibility (openness to being influenced and to influencing others), and positive cathexis (investment of positive psychological energy in objects outside of oneself) (Deutsch, 2002). Negative interdependence creates the psychological processes of non-substitutability, resistance to being influenced by others, and negative cathexis. No interdependence detaches a person from others, thereby creating non-substitutability, no inducibility or resistance, and cathexis only to one's own actions (Deutsch, 2002).

The basic premise of social interdependence theory is that the way in which interdependence and goals are structured in the society determines how individuals in multi-cultural and multi-religious society interact, and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the situation (peaceful coexistence) (Deutsch, 2002; Johnson, 2003). Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction (that is, individuals encouraging and facilitating each

other's efforts to complete tasks, achieve, or produce in order to reach the group's goals). On the contrary, negative interdependence results in oppositional or incongruent interaction (that is, individuals discouraging and obstructing each other's efforts to complete tasks, achieve, or produce in order to reach their goals), and no interdependence results in no interaction as individuals act independently without any interchange with each other while they work to achieve their goals. An important aspect of promotive interaction is the open-minded discussion of diverse views. The open-minded discussion of opposing views tends to result in effective, integrative decisions and strengthened relationships of peaceful co-existence (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 1998; Poon, Pike, & Tjosvold, 2001). The understanding of each other's perspectives and a willingness to integrate everyone's ideas into a joint decision (Tjosvold & Sun, 2002). Promotive interaction focuses participants on seeking outcomes that are mutually beneficial, which is the defining characteristic of integrative agreements of peaceful co-existence (Johnson, 2003).

Promoting Peaceful Co-existence through Psychological Strategies

Can psychology as a discipline and profession promote peaceful co-existence in a multi-cultural and multi-religious nation for sustainable development? Eyo (1999) argued that there is no advanced country today that does not capitalize on the contributions of psychology for the understanding and solution of national and international issues. Psychology and psychologists have important and considerable role to play in promoting peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development, particularly because human development is now viewed as central to national development. Psychology as a discipline that emphasizes the need to understanding behaviour has a prime place in driving change in the social, cultural, religious and political institutions of the society. The real impact of psychology in peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development in a multi-cultural/multi-religious nation would be felt through its contributions to the elimination of harmful social, cultural, religious, ethnic and political obstacles to peaceful co-existence, mental health and by improving human conditions in the society. The psychological strategies focus on human behaviour mental processes.

The purpose of this section is to advocate with governments, agencies, civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and all stakeholders to recognize and utilize the contributions of psychology to the building and preservation of peace, conflict resolution and the reduction and elimination of violence. What are the psychological strategies/paradigms for peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development? Psychological strategies for achieving and promoting peaceful co-existence and humanitarianism hav been discussed in strands of related literature (e.g., Adebayo, 2001; Akinnawo, 2010; Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, 2012; Mefoh, 2014). The strategies include the following:

1. **Psychological knowledge/research:** Extensive psychological research and intervention programs demonstrate that psychologists can play a role in achieving peaceful human development and peaceful cooperation as well as conflict resolution among individuals, groups and nations. Psychological research illustrates how the social psychology of relatedness fosters empathy, support, respect for differences, and non-violent resolution of conflicting goals. In contrast, divisive disconnection can lead to antipathy, rejection, disrespect, dominance, and hostile competition for resources (Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, 2012). In a diverse and heterogeneous society like Nigeria, there is the need to research intensively and extensively into the values, norms, socialization and bounding process, aspirations of various communities, ethnic and religious groups. Through research, the strategies that various communities, families, ethnic, cultural and religious groups employ for peaceful living and to avoid conflict in peculiar and circumstances can be understood. Research will also reveal how different Nigerian communities, ethnic groups and religious bodies react to political, economic, socio-cultural changes and frustration (Bankat & Karick, 2010). Above all, research information on the mental status, emotional, psychological and cognitive functioning of citizens will aid the control and prevention of conflict in multi-cultural and multi-religious society and thereby bring about peaceful co-existence among people of diverse cultures and religions.

2. **Promoting social cohesion and connectedness within and between social groups:** Human beings acquire social identities that create bias in favour of groups to which they belong and devaluation of groups they perceive as different – a process that fosters the formation of stereotypes and prejudice which may lead to conflict and potential violence. Research in the field of psychological science and practice shows that social experiences can be structured in ways that influence people to feel

either closer to others or more distant and suspicious. This effect is usually most evident among groups with a strong traditional bond related to a shared religious, ethnic, gender, social or cultural identity, but can develop when heterogeneous groups of mixed ethnicity, religion, genders or cultures come together under conditions of equality to pursue a commonly held ideological or pragmatic purpose. These psychological dynamics can be used for beneficent purposes of promoting social cohesion, collaborative achievements, and mutual respect for human dignity, peace, peaceful co-existence and sustainable development (Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, 2012). This is a clarion call to all stakeholders to promote peace by integrating proven psychological principles and practices, such as cooperative problem-solving, dialogue, crisis management, peace building and participatory strategies into their programs to foster a greater sense of social connection and cohesion among individuals and groups who might otherwise view each other as opponents, or even enemies. These are promising and underutilized means for defusing intergroup tensions and for building social inclusion and the common ground necessary for fostering social justice and a culture of peace. Psychologists can assist in facilitating training and program design to meet these objectives.

3.   Psychological advocacy: Psychologists can assist in mobilizing critical stakeholders towards public policies that would enhance peaceful co-existence and improved social life. In Nigeria, there are themes and socio-political stresses that do give rise to conflicts or crises among multi-cultural and multi-religious societies Psychology as has the professional responsibility to pinpoint the consequences through advocacy of attitudinal change and sustained campaigns to modify public opinions. In that way, people will learn how to communicate effectively, understand what others are saying and of course comprehend other person's actions or gestures in certain conditions or situations that can reduce inter and intra conflict and promote peaceful co-existence among citizens (Adebayo, 2001). Literacy in form of advocacy plays a significant role in shaping our world in the religious and non-religious worldviews and in influencing the relations between people and culture (Barron as cited by Yusuf, 2013). It is also crucial to promoting peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance in a mixed society. A culture of peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance encourages and fosters values, attitudes, traditions, behaviours and life style that rest on principles of human rights

tolerance and non-violence. When individuals are constantly and regularly exposed to good advocacy, the chances are that they will be more positively disposed towards other members' culture, religion and individuals in their communities (Yusuf, 2013).

4.   Attitudinal change: Nigerians must change their pessimistic attitude towards other peoples' culture and religion. The idea or belief that "things cannot work in Nigeria or Nigerian factor" should be discouraged. Peaceful co-existence and real development is achieved through internal activities rather than from external influences.

5.   Conflict resolution approaches and programmes: Considerable psychological research in the field of conflict resolution has shown that it is possible to create more peaceful co-existence among groups of diverse backgrounds and cultures. Various principles include understanding the ethos of conflict, collective memories, the nature of identity, and the "contact hypothesis" which maintains that hate dissipates when people come together to work on a common project or goal. Many programs and strategies have been developed to apply conflict resolution principles, with positive results in several contexts in replacing prejudice with tolerance and acceptance and promoting mutual understanding and constructive cooperation. Conflict resolution programmes include, but are not limited to, educational programs, dialogues, encounter models, compassionate listening, nonviolent communication, cooperative problem solving, reconciliation and forgiveness, and open space technology. Psychological knowledge can be used in finding overt and covert causes of conflicts among people. Psychology remains the best analytical discipline to understanding the salient issues about conflicts and peaceful co-existence among people of multi-cultural and multi-religious society (Mefoh, 2014). A good example here is the role late Prof Ojiji played when he was with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) as a psychologist in psychology of violence and its management (see Ojiji, 2010, for details).

6.   Minimizing economic inequality and social injustice: Adebayo (2001) posits that minimizing economic inequality and social injustice would go a long way to reduce violent behaviours in our society and promote peaceful co-existence among people of multi-cultural and multi-religious society for sustainable national development. When there is

equality and social justice among citizenry peaceful co-existence will be the order of the day thereby leading to sustainable development in the society.

7.   Psycho-cultural education: Educating people of multi-cultural and multi-religious society on their cultural and religious differences lead to peaceful co-existence among the people of the society. This will serve as a violence preventive measure. Cultural consciousness and cultural self-appraisal would assist in promoting peaceful co-existence among different ethnic groups (Akinnawo, 2010).

8.   Inclusion and compromise conflict resolution strategies: The use of inclusion and compromise conflict resolution strategies instead of imposition and confrontation strategies give more focus on the satisfaction of the needs of all persons or groups involved in a conflict. An approach such as inclusion or compromise that emphasizes the satisfaction of the needs of contestants in a conflict is more likely to mitigate the conflict and prevent the worsening of the conflict to a degree where violence may occur in contrast to an approach such as imposition and confrontation/withdraw that places the needs of all the contestants in focus (Eze & Uzuegbunem, 2010). According to Awoniyi (2013), religious fanaticism, confrontation and threat to security emerge and thrive best when the basic rights of the citizens such as food, shelter, medical care, right to work and other necessary social amenities are threatened. Findings show that inclusion and compromise were the predominant conflict resolution strategies used by university workers to foster peaceful co-existence (Eze & Uzuegbunem, 2010)

9.   Creation of super-ordinate goals: The concept of super-ordinate goals was invented by the famous American social psychologists (Sherif & Sherif, 1969) in an experiment intended to promote cooperation among warring groups of boys at a summer holiday camp. Reber (1995) defined super-ordinate goals as goals that can only be achieved by cooperation among many individuals. One of the super-ordinate goals created by Sheriff and Sheriff for the rivalling groups of boys at the summer camp was the fixing of the water supply that was deliberately cut off by the researchers. This forced the competing groups of boys to co-act to solve the problem. This strategy can also be used to promote peaceful co-

existence among people of multi-cultural and multi-religious Nigerian society for sustainable national development.

10.   Human relations: This approach or strategy entails the use of programmes designed to teach people on how to relate with one another with minimal conflict. Human relations method helps individuals to become aware of themselves and respect one another's individual differences (Adebayo, 2001). This approach of fostering and promoting peaceful co-existence among people of multi-cultural and multi-religious society is individualistic. Individuals are focused on in a bid to change their deep-seated ethnic prejudice and discrimination.

11.   Promotion of social equality, human rights, and social justice for all: Conditions of poverty, deprivation, persecution, humiliation, social inequality, displacement, and forced migration have drastic negative psychological effects on social identities, psychosocial well-being, mental health, and sense of empowerment of individuals and groups. These effects are known to endure for long periods of time, thereby undermining the development and maintenance of a culture of peace. A key function of any culture is to encode the memories and meanings of its people as a dynamic system that defines societies, their shared values, and the collective meaning of their experiences. Psychological principles can be used to effectively raise awareness, educate about, and institutionalize human rights, and to counter impulses and arguments used to justify acts of subjugation, domination, and persecution. Stakeholders can use principles from psychological science and practice in their programmes to move institutions, groups and societies toward greater equality through social, political and economic inclusion of everyone within a shared culture of peace. (Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, 2012)

12.   Protecting children and vulnerable groups from exposure to violence and other adverse events: Psychological science shows that children exposed to violence, war, natural disasters and other traumas are at elevated risk for enduring social, educational, physical, and psychological impairments to their wellbeing and social and emotional development. Additionally, they are vulnerable to repeating patterns of violence and are likely to live shorter lives, thereby maintaining a culture of violence instead of

a culture of peace. Psychologists are in a position to develop policies and programs that help children and marginalized and vulnerable groups recover from violence, war, natural disasters and other traumas, as well as provide protection from and prevention of such outcomes. Emphasis should be placed on "primary" prevention (prevention of initial inflictions of injury) and "secondary" prevention (prevention of subsequent exposures or other events that could exacerbate injury) so that culture of violence will not be maintained among individual children.

From foregoing discussion, it could be concluded that the use of psychological strategies has the potentials of helping to foster cooperation, mutual trust, and understanding. Communication that is more effective and sharing of other peoples' worldviews can ultimately lead to improved knowledge of citizens in multi-cultural and multi-religious concepts. Since the attainment of social order, peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development is exclusively a collective responsibility, all and sundry irrespective of ethnic, religious and ideological affinity should arise to the challenge of creating a society void of fear, tension and disruption. This could only be achieved based on a cohesive psychological orientation that will only be infused through a proactive approach to national integration using the psychological strategies outlined above.

Peaceful Co-existence: A Tool for Sustainable Development

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Shah, 2008). This scenario plays out only in conditions of peace and peaceful co-existence. Lack of peace or its converse, a situation of conflict, armed struggle, war and even threats of peace, are not conducive to development. Crises destabilize human settlements, economic activities, social interactions; conflicts unnecessarily raise tensions and create uncertainties. Apart from all these, conflicts destroy human lives, vital infrastructure, and natural resources. Peace, on the other hand, promotes development in several ways. Under peaceful conditions, people are more at ease and can easily activate their humanity. They can meaningfully think about their present conditions and ways of improving their future. They can be real "rational man", "economic man", "organization man", "and political man" (Shah, 2008). They can invest in economic ventures, participate in social and political activities and think about future generations. Economic activities are beneficial as they add not only to the gross domestic product but also critically affect the development of human capital which is an essential ingredient of sustainable development.

Recommendations

It is recommended that government agencies, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and all stakeholders should adopt psychological strategies in in order to better prepare the citizens for understanding of other peoples' culture, religion and development of abilities to live peacefully with others especially outside of their own culture or ethnic origins. Citizens should be assisted to appreciate the need for unity, peace, love and harmony, peaceful co-existence and the need to contribute to its entrenchment in the society. This would help to make people more sociable and tolerant of others' ways of life. Policy makers should incorporate multi-cultural concepts into their policy and make them to be in equal proportion in terms of elements of the different cultures, religions and ethnic identification. Leaders should have multi-cultural approach in their approach to national issues in Nigeria. Finally, psychologists should remain advocates in challenging and reducing all activities of citizens that can endanger peaceful co-existence in a pluralistic society through attitudinal change.

Conclusion

Peace is no doubt a sine-qua-non to progress and sustainable development. No society can really attain its economic and political heights when the ingredients of peace, harmony, peaceful co-existence are lacking. It has become imperative that all nations of the world that aspire to be great must as a matter of necessity toe the path of peace. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country that comprises different ethnic groups with its own religion, language and culture and to foster a better relation between people of different cultural and religious background is not a straightforward job. Psychology as a discipline has an eminent place in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Psychology has been the missing link in the search for solution to Nigeria's backwardness, under development and management of conflict and conflict-induced violence. It is the authors' view that understanding and using psychological strategies mwould open the citizens to rich areas of social psychological applications where psychologists can direct their

energies, tools of research for better understanding, prediction and management of cultural, religious and ethnic group relations for peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development.

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