

# Rethinking Psychology: A Review of Contemporary Education and Practice in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the current state of psychology in Nigeria, focusing specifically on its role in modern education and practice. It presents a thorough review of existing literature, highlighting the necessity to reconsider the field of psychology to tackle the unique challenges within the Nigerian context. The contemporary landscape of psychology education and practice in Nigeria is undergoing significant transformation, influenced by both global trends and local needs. This review assesses the current state of psychology as a discipline within Nigerian academia and professional practice, identifying key advancements, challenges, and areas for future development. The curriculum in Nigerian universities is evolving to include more context-specific content, aiming to produce graduates better equipped to address local mental health issues. Despite these advancements, several challenges persist. The stigmatization of mental health issues in Nigerian society remains a major barrier to effective psychological practice. Rethinking psychology in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that addresses educational reform, professional development, and societal attitudes toward mental health. By embracing these changes, Nigeria can better meet the psychological needs of its population and contribute to the global discourse on culturally informed psychological practice. This paper provides valuable insights into potential opportunities for improvement and offers recommendations for enhancing psychology education and practice in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Rethinking Psychology, contemporary education, professional practice, challenges and future development.

## INTRODUCTION

Psychology plays a crucial role in understanding human behavior, cognition, and emotion, providing essential insights for personal and societal well-being. In Nigeria, the discipline has become increasingly significant across various fields, including education, healthcare, counseling, and organizational development. However, the evolving Nigerian society presents unique challenges and opportunities, necessitating a critical examination of the current state of psychology and strategies to enhance its

effectiveness. This paper explores the role and evolution of psychology in Nigeria, highlighting its impact on various sectors and proposing strategies to address contemporary challenges.

The primary objective of psychology is to study and comprehend the complexities of human behavior, cognition, and emotion. This is particularly important in Nigeria, given the country's diverse cultural, social, and economic landscape. Nigerian psychologists strive to unravel the intricacies of behavior and mental processes within this multifaceted context, applying their findings to improve individual and community well-being. By addressing the unique psychological needs of Nigerians, psychologists can significantly contribute to the country's overall development and the well-being of its citizens (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Psychology in Nigeria extends its influence across various sectors, demonstrating its versatility and importance in addressing societal needs. In education, psychologists play a critical role in enhancing learning outcomes and emotional well-being among students. They study learning processes and develop strategies to improve academic performance, address issues such as bullying and learning disabilities, and foster healthy teacher-student relationships. By providing support and interventions tailored to the unique challenges faced by Nigerian students, psychologists help create a more conducive learning environment (Eyo, 2018).

In healthcare, psychologists provide essential services in mental health care, helping individuals cope with stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological conditions. They are involved in public health initiatives aimed at promoting mental health awareness and reducing the stigma associated with mental illnesses. Their work is crucial in bridging the gap between physical and mental health, ensuring a holistic approach to healthcare (Atilola, 2015). Counseling psychologists support individuals and groups facing various life challenges, including family conflicts, career decisions, and trauma. Their role is vital in fostering resilience and promoting mental health within the community. Through individual and group counseling sessions, they help people navigate their difficulties and build coping mechanisms to improve their quality of life (Oladeji, 2017). Industrial-organizational psychologists apply psychological principles to enhance workplace productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational culture. They assist organizations in navigating change, improving leadership, and managing human resources effectively. By addressing issues such as job stress, employee motivation, and team dynamics, these psychologists contribute to the overall success and well-being of organizations (Ogunyemi, 2019).

Despite these significant contributions of psychology to various human endeavors, the field of psychology in Nigeria faces several challenges that hinder its full potential. Limited resources, inadequate funding for research, and a shortage of trained professionals are primary obstacles. Additionally, there is a pressing need to integrate indigenous knowledge and practices with contemporary psychological theories to address culturally specific issues effectively. The current educational framework for psychology also requires updating to better equip professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet societal demands (Nwoke, 2020).

To address contemporary challenges and enhance the effectiveness of psychology in Nigeria, several strategies must be considered. Enhancing the quality of psychology education and training programs is essential. This involves updating curricula, providing advanced training opportunities, and encouraging research that addresses local issues. By improving educational standards, Nigeria can produce a new generation of psychologists equipped to handle the unique challenges of the Nigerian context (Omigbodun, 2018).

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to integrate indigenous knowledge and practices with contemporary psychological theories to address culturally specific issues effectively. The current educational framework for psychology also requires updating to better equip professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet societal demands (Nwoke, 2020).

Collaboration between psychologists and professionals from other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and public health, is crucial. Such interdisciplinary approaches can lead to a more holistic understanding of complex issues and more effective interventions. This collaboration can enrich psychological practice and expand the scope of its applications (Ebigbo, 2015). Incorporating indigenous psychological practices and theories is another vital strategy. By acknowledging and integrating traditional methods, psychologists can offer interventions that are more culturally relevant and accepted within local communities. This approach ensures that mental health and behavioral issues are addressed within a framework that resonates with the local population (Nwoke, 2020).

Raising awareness about the importance of mental health and the role of psychology through public education campaigns and advocacy is also essential. Increased public understanding and acceptance of psychological practices can help reduce stigma and promote the utilization of psychological services. This, in turn, is crucial for the growth and impact of the discipline (Atilola, 2015). Rethinking psychology in Nigeria involves a comprehensive approach that considers the unique cultural, social, and economic contexts of the country. By addressing current challenges and leveraging opportunities for growth, psychology can continue to play a vital role in enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities. The integration of indigenous knowledge, improved education and training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and increased public awareness are key strategies that can drive the evolution of psychology in Nigeria, ensuring it meets the needs of its people effectively.

In education, psychological principles are applied to improve teaching methods, learning environments, and student outcomes. Educational psychology helps in understanding how students learn and what strategies can be employed to enhance learning. This is particularly important in diverse and multicultural societies where tailored educational approaches can bridge learning gaps and promote inclusivity (Slavin, 2018). Additionally, the application of psychology in educational settings is still evolving. School psychologists are few, and their roles are often poorly defined. There is a need for more comprehensive training programs and clearer professional guidelines to enhance the impact of educational psychology on the Nigerian educational system (Ogundele & Ajaegbu, 2019).

Psychology aids in the development of social policies that are informed by an understanding of human behavior. This includes policies on crime prevention, community health, and social welfare. For instance, developmental psychology provides insights into the needs of children at different stages, informing policies that support child development and protect their rights (American Psychological Association, 2020). In Nigeria, the field of psychology is still developing, and its integration into various sectors such as education, healthcare, and social services is ongoing.

In terms of practice, clinical psychology is one of the most developed areas, yet it faces significant challenges. There is a critical shortage of licensed clinical psychologists, which limits access to mental health services, especially in rural areas (Abdulmalik et al., 2019). Efforts to integrate psychological services into primary healthcare are underway, but more support is needed to train and retain professionals in this field.

While psychology holds significant potential for contributing to societal development in Nigeria, there are substantial hurdles to overcome. Strengthening psychological education and expanding professional practice are essential steps toward leveraging the benefits of psychology for the betterment of Nigerian society.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the key psychological principles and practices that can be integrated into the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning in the Nigerian context.
2. To explore innovative strategies that stakeholders can develop to adapt psychology effectively to the Nigerian context, considering cultural and societal factors.
3. To analyse the current state of capacity building, research collaboration, and policy reform in the field of psychology in Nigeria.
4. Propose recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of psychology as a discipline and its relevance in addressing societal challenges.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN NIGERIA

The early development of psychology in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial period when Western education and scientific methods were introduced. Initially, psychology was part of the broader curriculum in philosophy and education departments in Nigerian universities during the 1940s and 1950s (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991). The first significant step towards establishing psychology as an independent discipline came with the creation of psychology units within education and social science faculties. Psychology first entered Nigeria informally through teacher-training institutions and later through higher education institutions, where students studied psychology as part of their primary disciplines. Prior to the formal establishment of psychology as a distinct field in Nigeria, some Nigerians traveled overseas to study psychology, mainly for their second and third degrees (Oguntuashe, 2010). Aspects of psychology were used in service courses in education, psychiatry, nursing, and sociology before the establishment of a formal Department of Psychology.

The formal academic establishment of psychology in Nigeria occurred in 1964, with the founding of the first degree-awarding Department of Psychology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This department began operations on Monday, September 21, 1964, with eleven students and was staffed by two American professors and two Nigerian assistant lecturers. Since its inception in 1964, psychology in Nigeria has experienced significant growth. The Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME, 2013) reported that there are twenty-eight fully accredited Departments of Psychology in Nigerian universities, recognized by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Additionally, psychology is taught in polytechnics, schools of nursing, colleges of education, and theological institutions.

The development of psychology in Nigeria has been significantly shaped by several key milestones and influential figures. One of the pioneering figures in this field was Professor Thomas Adeoye Lambo, often regarded as the father of modern psychiatry and psychology in Nigeria. During the 1950s and 1960s, Lambo's work at the Aro Psychiatric Hospital in Abeokuta was instrumental in integrating traditional African healing methods with Western psychiatric practices, thereby laying the foundation for culturally relevant psychological practices in Nigeria (Lambo, 1960).

A significant milestone in the professional development of psychology in Nigeria was the establishment of the Nigerian Association of Clinical Psychologists (NACP) in 1978. The NACP aimed to promote the professional development of psychology and advocate for the recognition of clinical psychology as a vital component of healthcare (Ebigbo, 2020). Today, under the leadership of Professor Abikoye Gboyega, the current president of NACP, the association has grown to over 3,000 members, marking a significant advancement in the field.

The institutionalization of psychology in Nigeria was further solidified with the founding of psychology departments at major universities such as the University of Lagos and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in

the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1970s and 1980s, psychology programs began to emerge as distinct academic units, offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. However, these programs faced challenges including limited resources, insufficient research funding, and a shortage of trained faculty (Abikoye & Afolabi, 2015).

The 1990s and early 2000s saw a gradual expansion and diversification of psychology education in Nigeria. Universities began introducing specialized programs in areas such as clinical psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, and educational psychology. This period also witnessed an increase in local psychological research and publications, contributing to the growth of the field (Olley, 2013). In recent decades, the practice of psychology in Nigeria has continued to evolve. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of mental health services, leading to efforts to integrate psychological services into primary healthcare systems. Despite ongoing challenges such as the shortage of professionals and inadequate infrastructure, initiatives to train more clinical psychologists and improve mental health literacy are gaining momentum (Abdulmalik et al., 2019).

The digital age has brought new opportunities and challenges for psychology in Nigeria. Online platforms and telepsychology services are emerging as viable means to reach underserved populations, although issues such as internet accessibility and digital literacy remain obstacles (Okeke, 2021). In conclusion, the history of psychology in Nigeria is marked by significant progress and persistent challenges. From its early beginnings within broader educational curricula to its current status as a distinct and evolving discipline, psychology in Nigeria continues to grow and adapt, driven by dedicated professionals and changing societal needs.

## **CURRENT STATE OF PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

Psychology programs in Nigerian universities offer both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, focusing on the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. These programs aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of human behavior, cognition, and emotion through theoretical and applied learning. Psychology essentially explores who we are, why we are the way we are, and what we can become. The field encompasses numerous distinctive branches, each addressing questions and problems from different perspectives. Despite their unique focuses, all branches share the common goal of studying and explaining human thought and behavior.

The curriculum in these programs typically includes core courses in various areas of psychology such as developmental, clinical, social, cognitive, and industrial-organizational psychology. Additionally, students are trained in research methodologies, statistical analysis, and ethical practices to prepare them for professional and academic careers in psychology.

However, the quality and scope of psychology education in Nigeria face several challenges. There is a significant disparity in resources and facilities among universities, which affects the overall quality of education. Many psychology departments are underfunded, leading to inadequate research facilities and limited access to modern psychological tools and technologies. The shortage of qualified faculty members also hampers the ability to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date education in psychology (Ebigbo, 2020).

Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to enhance psychology education in Nigeria. Some universities have begun to update their curricula to include more contemporary topics and to integrate practical training opportunities. Collaborative efforts with international institutions and professional organizations are also helping to improve the standards of psychology education in the country.

The current state of psychology education in Nigeria reflects both the progress made and the ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. By continuing to invest in educational resources, faculty development,

and international collaborations, Nigeria can further strengthen its psychology programs and produce professionals capable of addressing the diverse psychological needs of its population.

### **Curriculum Structure**

Psychology programme in Nigerian Universities typically include a mix of core subjects and electives, designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field as contained in the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS)

However, in 2023 the National Universities Commission introduced a new academic curriculum referred to as Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS), which is a set of guidelines that students need to meet in order to graduate from a particular academic programme or institution. This curriculum is designed to ensure that students have a well-rounded education and possess a minimum level of knowledge and skills in different subject areas. The establishment of CCMAS varies depending on the institution or programme. Each institution or programme may have its own specific version of CCMAS.

The structure of CCMAS typically consists of a list of required courses or subject areas that students must complete. The specific courses or subject areas included in the CCMAS may vary from institution to institution. In addition to the required courses, the CCMAS may also include guidelines on the minimum grades or performance standards that students must achieve in order to fulfill the requirements. This ensures that students not only complete the required courses but also demonstrates a satisfactory level of understanding and proficiency in each subject area.

By adhering to the CCMAS guidelines institutions ensure that students are exposed to a diverse set of subjects and disciplines, which will help them develop critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. It will also help in engendering interdisciplinary learning and encourage students to make connections between different subject areas. It is the expectation of the educational policy makers that the CCMAS will ensure quality education that prepares students for future academic and professional endeavors

Accreditation and quality assurance in psychology education in Nigeria are crucially overseen by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and professional bodies such as the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA). The NUC establishes minimum academic standards and conducts regular accreditation visits to ensure compliance across aspects like curriculum content, faculty qualifications, and infrastructure requirements. On the other hand, the NPA focuses on promoting ethical practices and fostering continuous professional development among psychologists.

The universities offering psychology programs in Nigeria play a significant role in the discipline's development. Their comprehensive curricula equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to address a wide range of psychological issues, both within Nigeria and on a global scale. This structured approach ensures that graduates are well-prepared to contribute effectively to the field of psychology across various sectors such as education, healthcare, and social services.

### **CHALLENGES IN PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

Psychology departments in Nigerian universities face several significant challenges that hinder effective teaching and research. These issues span infrastructure, funding, faculty availability, and the regulatory environment, collectively impacting the quality and development of psychology education.

**Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many psychology departments suffer from inadequate facilities, including outdated or non-existent laboratories and limited access to modern research tools. Libraries often lack

updated resources, hindering both student learning and faculty research efforts. The absence of well-equipped laboratories for experimental psychology and practical components severely limits hands-on learning opportunities crucial for comprehensive education (Gire, 2004).

**Funding Constraints:** Insufficient financial resources allocated to universities lead to budgetary constraints affecting various aspects of academic operations. Limited funding restricts faculty development initiatives, impedes significant research projects, and reduces support services for students. This financial shortfall also impacts the procurement of educational materials and technological tools essential for a modern education environment, exacerbating the challenges posed by outdated infrastructure.

**Faculty Shortages:** There is a critical shortage of qualified faculty members in psychology departments across Nigeria. This issue is exacerbated by the phenomenon of brain drain, where skilled professionals seek better opportunities abroad. The resulting high student-to-teacher ratio limits personalized education experiences, mentoring opportunities, and research supervision. Moreover, the shortage of faculty perpetuates a cycle where the quality of education diminishes, affecting the preparedness of students for careers in academia and professional practice (Omotola, 2021).

**Regulatory and Institutional Challenges:** The regulatory framework for psychology in Nigeria, overseen by bodies like the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) and the National Universities Commission (NUC), faces significant challenges. The NPA struggles with limited resources and historical minimal government interaction, impacting its ability to effectively regulate the profession and promote ethical standards. This lack of a robust credentialing system has allowed unqualified individuals to enter the profession, undermining psychology's societal relevance and professional integrity (Olasupo, 2016).

**Perception and Utilization of Psychology:** There is a prevailing perception of psychology as irrelevant to societal needs in Nigeria, affecting its recognition and value. The NPA's limited capacity to harness and disseminate research further hampers the discipline's contribution to national development. This disconnect results in government and private sectors often seeking expertise abroad rather than tapping into local psychologists' capabilities, perpetuating the underutilization of domestic expertise (Omotola, 2021).

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

To address the challenges facing psychology education in Nigerian universities, concerted efforts from various stakeholders are essential, as highlighted by Olasupo (2016) and Omotola (2021). Improving infrastructure requires prioritized funding to upgrade laboratories, acquire modern research tools, and enhance library resources. This investment is crucial for fostering comprehensive research and practical learning experiences within psychology departments.

Additionally, investing in faculty development programs is imperative to attract and retain qualified professionals. This approach can help mitigate the effects of brain drain by providing incentives for skilled psychologists to remain in Nigeria and contribute to academia. Collaborative initiatives with international partners, such as faculty exchange programs and joint research projects, can further enrich educational opportunities and knowledge exchange.

Public-private partnerships offer another avenue to bridge funding gaps in education. Private sector involvement can improve facilities, support research endeavors, and provide scholarships, thereby enhancing the overall quality of psychology education. Policies that promote and facilitate these partnerships are vital for sustainable improvements in educational infrastructure and program quality across Nigerian universities.

In conclusion, by prioritizing investment in education, fostering partnerships, and supporting faculty

development, Nigeria can significantly enhance its psychology education and research capabilities. These efforts are crucial for advancing the discipline, addressing societal needs, and contributing to national development.

## **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

This paper explores various aspects of psychology, which encompasses multiple specialized areas of practice:

Clinical psychology focuses on assessing and treating mental health disorders. Clinical psychologists employ psychotherapy and psychological assessments to help individuals manage psychological distress and enhance overall well-being (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). Counseling psychology, on the other hand, emphasizes personal and interpersonal functioning across different life stages. Counselors work with diverse client populations to address issues such as stress, relationship challenges, and career transitions, aiming to foster resilience and adaptive coping strategies (APA, 2020; British Psychological Society [BPS], 2020).

Industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology applies psychological principles within workplace settings to enhance employee performance, organizational effectiveness, and employee well-being (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020; British Psychological Society [BPS], 2020). I-O psychologists conduct job analyses, design training programs, and assess organizational climate to optimize workplace dynamics.

Educational psychology focuses on understanding how individuals learn and develop within educational settings (APA, 2020). Educational psychologists apply psychological theories to improve teaching methods, curriculum design, and educational policies, aiming to foster optimal learning environments and student outcomes.

Forensic psychology intersects psychology and law, where practitioners provide assessments, evaluations, and expert testimony in legal and criminal justice contexts (APA, 2020). Forensic psychologists may assess competency, evaluate witness credibility, and provide therapeutic interventions within correctional settings.

Regulatory bodies and professional associations such as the American Psychological Association (APA) in the United States, the British Psychological Society (BPS) in the United Kingdom, and the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA) oversee the practice of psychology (APA, 2020; BPS, 2020; NPA, 2020). These organizations establish ethical standards, promote professional development, and advocate for the advancement of psychology as a science and profession. In Nigeria, the NPA ensures adherence to ethical guidelines, promotes professional development, and advocates for psychological research and practice standards.

Licensing and certification requirements ensure that psychologists meet minimum competency standards to practice effectively and ethically (APA, 2020; BPS, 2020). In the United States, psychologists typically obtain a doctoral degree, complete supervised clinical experience, pass the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), and register with the Health and Care Profession Practice in Psychology (EPPP) to obtain a license. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, psychologists complete accredited training programs, gain practical experience, and register with the Healthcare Profession Council (HCPC). In Nigeria, psychologists must register with relevant professional bodies, demonstrating competence and adherence to local regulations.

Ethical guidelines are fundamental to maintaining professionalism and safeguarding clients' welfare in psychological practice (APA, 2020). Informed consent ensures that clients are fully informed about



treatment goals, risks, and benefits before participating in psychological interventions, while confidentiality obligates psychologists to protect clients' privacy and disclose information only with consent or as mandated by law.

Competence requires psychologists to practice within their areas of expertise, seek ongoing professional development, and consult with colleagues when necessary to ensure optimal client care (APA, 2020). Avoiding harm entails minimizing potential risks and promoting clients' well-being throughout the therapeutic process.

Psychology encompasses diverse fields that address various aspects of human behavior and mental health (APA, 2020). Regulatory bodies and professional associations establish standards and guidelines to ensure ethical conduct and competency among psychologists. Licensing and certification requirements further validate practitioners' qualifications, while ethical considerations underscore the importance of professionalism and client welfare in psychological practice.

This paper synthesizes the information into a cohesive narrative, highlighting the interconnectedness of psychology's diverse fields, regulatory oversight, professional standards, and ethical considerations. Psychology in Nigeria fulfills a multifaceted role, serving both specialized professions and broader societal needs. This paper explores how psychology is utilized in profession-specific and non-profession-specific contexts, emphasizing its diverse applications and impacts.

In profession-specific roles, psychology plays a pivotal role in education and training, where psychologists educate future professionals, conduct research, and apply psychological principles to enhance teaching methodologies and student outcomes (APA, 2020; NPA, 2020). Additionally, the application of psychology in educational settings is still evolving. School psychologists are few, and their roles are often poorly defined. There is a need for more comprehensive training programs and clearer professional guidelines to enhance the impact of educational psychology on the Nigerian educational system (Ogundele & Ajaegbu, 2019).

Psychologists collaborate closely with psychiatrists to provide comprehensive mental health services, contributing significantly to Nigeria's healthcare system (APA, 2020).

In non-profession-specific fields, psychology graduates contribute their knowledge to civil service, industry, banking, and law enforcement, enriching their respective fields with psychological insights (APA, 2020). Their understanding of human behavior and mental processes enhances organizational management, human resources, and law enforcement strategies, thereby contributing to societal progress and individual well-being.

However, psychology in Nigeria faces challenges due to the absence of a comprehensive legal framework, affecting professional standards, public trust, scope of practice, and recognition of practitioners (Akanbi et al., 2015; Olasupo, 2016; Obot, 2019). Addressing legal constraints will ensure that qualified professionals deliver high-quality psychological services, enhance public trust, and encourage greater utilization of mental health services (Akanbi et al., 2015; Olasupo, 2016).

In conclusion, psychology's diverse applications in Nigeria highlight its role in informing specialized professions and influencing societal practices across various sectors. As Nigeria progresses, psychology remains pivotal in addressing societal challenges and promoting a healthier, resilient society.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method employed in this study involves a comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed articles,

reports, and academic papers related to rethinking psychology through pedagogy and professional practice. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were scrutinized to provide a holistic understanding of the subject matter. Data synthesis techniques were used to arrive at most of our observations, offering valuable insights into the current status of psychology as a field of study and professional practice in Nigeria.

## **TELEPSYCHOLOGY: EMERGING AREA OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE**

The emergence of telepsychology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of mental health care delivery in Nigeria, particularly in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This innovative approach has effectively addressed longstanding issues of accessibility and stigma associated with mental health services in the country. By leveraging digital platforms, telepsychology has created new opportunities for delivering psychological care, overcoming logistical barriers, and reaching individuals in remote and underserved areas.

One of the most significant impacts of telepsychology in Nigeria has been its ability to enhance access to mental health services. In a country where mental health resources are predominantly concentrated in urban centers, many rural areas have historically lacked sufficient facilities and trained professionals. Telepsychology has bridged this gap by enabling individuals in remote locations to receive timely and effective care without needing to travel long distances. Research by Okafor & Babalola (2021) underscores how telepsychology has empowered these populations by providing access to much-needed mental health support from the comfort of their own communities.

Geographical barriers have also been effectively addressed through telepsychology, allowing individuals to connect with psychologists regardless of their location. This convenience has encouraged more people to seek help, as they no longer face the challenges of transportation costs or the time constraints associated with traveling to urban centers for therapy. Moreover, telepsychology has facilitated continuous care for those who might have otherwise discontinued treatment due to these logistical hurdles.

The implementation of telepsychology in Nigeria has involved the use of various digital platforms such as video conferencing tools, telephone calls, and messaging apps to deliver counseling and therapy services. Eze et al. (2021) emphasize how these platforms have played a crucial role in overcoming barriers like stigma and logistical challenges, making mental health care more accessible and acceptable to a broader population.

One of the significant advantages of telepsychology is its potential to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health care. In many Nigerian communities, seeking help for mental health issues has been traditionally stigmatized, leading to reluctance in seeking professional support. Telepsychology offers a level of anonymity and privacy that traditional face-to-face therapy may not provide, thereby encouraging more individuals to engage with mental health services without fear of societal judgment. By normalizing the act of seeking psychological support, telepsychology contributes to reducing stigma and promoting mental health awareness across Nigerian society.

Telepsychology has also addressed logistical challenges such as the scarcity of trained mental health professionals and the inadequacy of physical infrastructure. By utilizing digital platforms, psychologists can extend their reach to a wider audience without being constrained by physical space. This flexibility has proven particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling continued access to care despite movement restrictions and social distancing measures. Telepsychology's adaptability during crises underscores its resilience and its potential as a sustainable model for mental health care delivery in Nigeria.

Despite its benefits, telepsychology in Nigeria faces significant challenges that need to be addressed. Issues such as unreliable internet connectivity in rural areas, limited digital literacy among some populations, and concerns about data privacy and security remain critical barriers to its widespread adoption and effectiveness. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from government, private sector, and mental health professionals to improve digital infrastructure, provide digital literacy training, and ensure robust data protection measures are in place.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper highlights the need to rethink psychology in the above context, specifically in the domain of contemporary education and practice by critically examining existing literature, identifying challenges, and offering recommendations stakeholders can work together to enhance psychology's role in addressing societal needs and promoting positive change in Nigeria. Rethinking psychology in Nigeria involves a comprehensive approach that considers the unique cultural, social, and economic contexts of the country. By addressing current challenges and leveraging opportunities for growth, psychology can continue to play a vital role in enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities. The integration of indigenous knowledge, improved education and training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and increased public awareness are key strategies that can drive the evolution of psychology in Nigeria, ensuring it meets the needs of its people effectively. It is essential to address the absence of a legal framework for the practice of psychology in Nigeria for the profession to be duly recognized and developed. This can be achieved by establishing a regulatory body, enacting relevant legislation, standardizing education and training, and conducting public awareness campaigns. These measures will improve professional standards, build public trust, safeguard practitioners and clients, foster professional advancement, and ultimately enhance mental health outcomes in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis the following recommendations are therefore made to assist the rethinking process of psychology within the space of contemporary education and practice in Nigeria:

1. Considering the relevance of psychology to national development, psychological principles, and practices should be integrated into the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning.
2. Stakeholders should develop innovative strategies to adapt psychology to the Nigerian context effectively.
3. Capacity building, research collaboration and policy reforms should be embarked upon by stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of psychology in addressing societal challenges.
4. Establishing a Regulatory Body: The Nigerian government, in collaboration with professional psychology associations, should establish a regulatory body specifically for psychology. This regulatory body would be responsible for setting standards, accrediting educational programs, licensing practitioners, and enforcing ethical guidelines (Nwoye, 2018). The regulatory body could model itself after similar entities in other countries, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) in the US or the British Psychological Society (BPS) in the United Kingdom.
5. As noted by Adebowale and Ogunlesi (2019), there should be enabling laws that define the scope of practice, educational requirements, and licensing processes for psychologists. Similarly, Stakeholders, including psychologists, educators, policymakers, and the public, should be involved in the legislative process to ensure the laws are comprehensive and inclusive (Ebigbo, 2020).
6. Education and Training: There is a need to standardize psychology curricula across Nigerian universities to ensure consistency in training (Akinola, 2017). Continuing Education mandates

ongoing professional development and continuing education to maintain licensure (Ogundele & Olanrewaju, 2019) should be enforced.

7. Public Awareness Campaigns: Conducting public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the role of psychologists and the importance of seeking qualified professionals (Babatunde, 2020) is necessary and should be advocated. This can be achieved by using various media platforms to reach a broad audience, ensuring the public understands the benefits of regulated psychological practice (Famoroti, 2019) in Nigeria.

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