

PSYC 444

PSYCHOLOGY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Session 2 – The Role of Psychology in National
Development

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Session Overview

At the end of the session, the student will be able to

- Discuss the role psychology plays in nation building.
- Acquire demonstrable skills and competences needed to improve their own wellbeing.
- Provide practical examples of how psychology helps in solving problems we encounter in our society.

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- The Role of Psychology in National Development.



Reading List

- Mehryar, A.H. (1984). The role of psychology in National Development: Wishful thinking and Reality. *Int. Journal of Psychology*, 19, 159-167
- Moghaddam, F.M., Bianchi, K., Daniels, K., Apter, M.J., & Harré, R. (1999). Psychology and National Development. *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 11, 119-141.



Topic One

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The Role of Psychology in National Development

- Psychology plays enormous role in National Development. As a human-centered discipline, it influences every segment of human engagements in society. Apart from affecting and changing the behaviors and attitudes of individuals, it also affects the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions and societies. The following are some of the possible roles of the discipline in addressing the outlook of nations in their developmental pathways:



The Role of Psychology in National Development

- **Education**—Psychological principles, concepts, and theories have been proven to contribute to National Development. Principles of learning, understanding of individual differences in development, as well as an appreciation of both biological and environment influences on learning have all led to the introduction of intervention programs necessary for behavioral and attitudinal change. The school feeding programs, introduced in Ghana some few years ago, resulted from psychological theories.

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- **Poverty reduction**—Psychological studies show that being engaged in decent work in itself promotes psychosocial empowerment by developing a sense of ownership, optimism, and confidence in one's ability to be effective in dealing with challenges. Society is able to reduce poverty when individuals are equipped to be productive and resourceful members of their families, communities and society. Through access to education, empowerment, and equal opportunities, the gap between the poor and rich reduces.

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- **Attitudinal restructuring/change**—Development has often been viewed at the macro level. This is evidenced in the usage of economic and political variables in the determination of development. However, individuals in any society hold the stability of those societies, as well as the general health of the economy. Proper attitudes demonstrated by individuals such as discipline, punctuality, respect for societal norms and values, perception of leaders, among others are sine qua non in holding the “spirit” and “soul” of societies together.

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- **Mental health care and social protection--** The psychological and social science literature increasingly supports that poor mental health is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, which normally comprises conditions of isolation, lack of education and economic opportunities and resources, inadequate access to health and mental health care and other social services, especially in rural and deprived communities.

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- These multiple stressors interact to cause anxiety and depression which have negative impacts on the ability of individuals to cope, resulting in the persistence of poverty. Additionally, poverty may result from environmental migration due to climate change and natural disasters, which are associated with mental health issues for the affected populations such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, child abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence.

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- **Organizational/institutional effectiveness—** Psychological interventions employed at the work place have contributed in the promotion of efficiency and effectiveness at those institutions. Motivational theories and concepts such as goal orientation and cognitive evaluation theories have in most cases contributed to enhanced organizational performance and increased job satisfaction. The net effect has resulted in organization's profit margins and economic growth.

The Role of Psychology in National Development

- **Conflict Resolution**—Through the understanding of individual differences, personality characteristics and group dynamics, individuals are able to resolve disagreements and conflicts that threaten their collective good and successes. The knowledge that we differ in several respects and aspects of our endeavors allows us to accommodate each other and live in harmony.

Sample Questions

1. Evaluate the role of psychology in national development.
2. To what extent does attitudinal change promote national development?

