



## **Morale of Personnel of the Nigerian Army for Counselling Practice: A Study of the Impact of Deployment and Welfare**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This explore the impact of deployment and welfare on the morale of the personnel in the Nigerian Army for counselling practice. Four research questions and hypotheses guided this study. The design employed for this study is a correlational survey research design. The sample of this study consists of 850 personnel of the Nigerian Army. A questionnaire titled "Military Deployment, Military Welfare, Military counselling, and Military Personnel 'Morale'" was used for data collection. The face validity of the instrument was carried out. The psychometric properties of the instrument were determined through expert judgment and factor analysis. These tests yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75 for the Military Deployment (MD), 0.73 for the Military Welfare (MW), and 0.84 for the Military Personnel Morale (MPM). Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, coefficient of determination and regression at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that: there is a positive significant correlation between deployment and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army, there is a positive significant relationship between the welfare and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army, there is a positive significant relationship between military counselling and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army, there is a positive significant relationship between leadership styles and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army and there is a positive significant relationship between religious beliefs and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that government should invest in comprehensive training programs that not only focus on skills development but also prioritize confidence-building and resilience training to bolster morale among military personnel, government should ensure that deployment conditions prioritize the well-being of personnel, including access to adequate support systems, communication channels, and resources to mitigate the challenges associated with deployments and government should expand and improve welfare programs to address the diverse needs of military personnel, including healthcare, housing, financial support, and family assistance programs, to enhance overall well-being and morale.

**Keywords:** Morale, Nigerian Army, Deployment and Welfare

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### **Introduction**

The problem of insecurity is intricate and multidimensional, affecting people, societies, and countries all over the globe. It covers a wide variety of issues, such as social unrest, political upheaval, economic instability, and physical safety. Throughout human history, insecurity has been a persistent problem. Innumerable misery and disruption have been brought about by wars, battles, and invasions throughout cultures. Insecurity has also been a result of colonisation, the rise and fall of empires, and territorial conflicts in many areas. To successfully combat the issue of insecurity, all members of the nation's security establishment must be prepared to carry out their duties. Forest (2012) states that in order to address the underlying causes of insecurity and quell criminal organisations' violent operations, the Nigerian government used a multifaceted strategy. To combat the threat on several levels and fronts, these strategies include the use of economic, military, and alternative conflict resolution techniques as well as counterviolent extremist tactics. Unfortunately, despite the Nigerian Military receiving a substantial budget, all military actions carried out by security agencies were not very successful. Furthermore, Onah (2014) suggested that some of the factors contributing to the persistence of the insecurities brought on by the violent crimes of criminals are systemic flaws in Nigeria's political environment and the government's failure to address the underlying causes and symptoms of insecurity.

There is always a driving factor behind the tactics used and the objectives reached in every military counterinsurgency that is effective. In the framework of this investigation, morale serves as the driving factor. The ability of a group's members to maintain their conviction in a cause or organisation, especially in the face of adversity or difficulty, is known as morale, or esprit de corps. A condition of mind that either promotes or inhibits activity is called morale. The most successful battle leaders have long known that soldiers' morale is a direct reflection of their physical, mental, and moral state. These circumstances in turn had a direct bearing on the soldiers' bravery, self-assurance, self-control, zeal, and readiness to bear the costs and sufferings of military service. In a variety of situations, troops with a strong morale may function and even triumph over great obstacles. Failure may result from low morale, even in situations when success seems certain. Fundamentally, warriors that are in high morale are able to conquer fear.

An essential component of a military force is morale. Because each depend on the other and are largely predicated on loyalty to a cause, military and civilian morale are almost linked. However, there is a certain morale that is exclusive to the military. The soldier's attitude towards duty is where it all

starts. It begins with the soldier having self-control. It is a spirit that takes on a dominating role in both the collective and the individual. The physical comforts or sufferings experienced by the soldier may play a role, but it seldom determines whether his morale is high or low. "A seasoned fighting force capable of defending the nation is welded by a cause that is known and believed in; knowledge that substantial justice governs discipline; the individual's confidence and pride in himself, his comrades, and his leaders; the unit's pride in its own will." (Lutfi, et al., 2019). These fundamental elements are complemented by astute welfare and recreation measures and brought to life by a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

As a result, the concept of morale in the light of this research was defined using Hardy's (2010) three dimensions, which hold that morale is made up of emotional, goal, and interpersonal morale. Affective dimensions include affirmation, acknowledgment, and a focus on the inherent worth of the person. The goal component of morale is influenced by the prospects for the future, especially the direction in which things are going. Interpersonal morale, on the other hand, is the drive towards other people. Prior to the 20th century, military leaders prioritised the physical health of their troops above their morale. An army's morale may be deemed sufficient for the work at hand if it was relatively well-fed, had appropriate clothes and housing, and could anticipate receiving regular pay (Alexander, Sarki & Kaka, 2021). From the horrible fatalities of World War I's trench combat, modern ideas of army morale emerged. According to several military historians, fatalities attributable to stress were almost unheard of in the past. The development of mass armies, weaponry, and general staff leadership elevated the scope and severity of combat, placing tremendous demands on a soldier's mental toughness. As such, military and medical authorities paid close attention to soldier morale.

The ability to win the battle depends on both the quantity of men and the calibre of the weaponry. But more ethereal elements have a larger role in the essence of military triumph. These elements consist of a soldier's determination, enthusiasm, and morale. In World War II, Belgium, Holland, and France surrendered due to the absence of these intangible elements. A fundamental and essential component of military engagement success is morale. It is a vital cornerstone for military success and survival. Therefore, it is important to prioritise and sustain army morale both in times of peace and during times of conflict. The truth is, a brilliant plan of battle in the tactical sense can be a complete failure if morale is bad, while a poor plan can be made to work well if morale is good.

Low morale among military troops nationwide has been observed, despite the fact that morale is crucial in the battle against instability nationwide. It seems that this has bound and limited the options available to Nigerian securities. Virile recordings of Nigerian military men expressing their discontent have surfaced very lately. Nigerians' anticipated desire has not been satiated by the war on insecurity. The latest wave of banditry, abduction, and Boko Haram/ISWAP strikes has given the criminals more confidence to conduct attacks against a military facility in the nation.

The military forces in Nigeria seem to have a poor morale. All signs point to the need for immediate intervention as certain causes are weakening Nigerian troops. According to a 2020 report by Nigerian News Direct, 356 troops nationwide recently submitted their voluntary retirement to Lt Gen Tukur Buratai, the Chief of Army Staff, claiming "loss of interest" as their cause for disengagement. On July 3, 2020, the troops whose request was granted informed the Army Chief of their choice. According to reports, troops leading the nation's defence against instability are becoming more concerned about the rising death toll. Terrorists shot and murdered Major K. Yakubu, the acting Commanding Officer of the Army, in the Borno State districts of Doron Naira and Magaji. The Army suffered additional disheartening setbacks in addition to this instance. According to reports, a bombing in Gorigi, close to the Allargano Forest region in Borno State, in March 2020 claimed the lives of 47 troops. The explosion was allegedly enabled by a terrorist cell.

The Premium Times (2022) also reported that a total of 65 police officers were killed by criminal components in 2022's first half (January to June). In addition to the law enforcement officers who lost their lives, at least 92 additional security personnel also perished during that time. 81 troops, two representatives of the penal service, and two civilians. The following are the complete definitions of the acronyms for two Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) officials, five Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) officers, and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) officers. According to three sources on Saturday, 30 Nigerian troops were murdered in an ambush when gunmen assaulted a mine in the Shiroro region of Niger state earlier this week, as reported by Reuters (2022) on July 3, 2022.

Even on their own, these fatalities are likely to lower military personnel's morale, which will probably result in lower output. Speaking on military morale, Buratai (2016) blamed sabotage, poor morale, and commanders' lack of commitment for the most recent round of operational failures in the fight against insecurity in the nation. The statement's scathing conclusion on his soldiers brought up a number of important issues: Why, when the consequences of their actions are so obvious, are the soldiers refusing to carry out "assigned tasks"? Why do they not seem to be "enough committed" to the important mission of ending the insurgency?

What is the cause of the force's apparent ongoing issue with indiscipline? What can be the cause of the military personnel's poor morale? In addition to the deaths of their coworkers, there might be other contributing causes. Therefore, the researcher's goal is to look at the connection between military personnel's deployment, welfare, and morale in Nigeria.

Posting, or deployment, is another element that will be taken into account in the research. The military has been called upon in Nigeria due to instability for a number of domestic operations, including abduction, armed banditry, and terrorism by Boko Haram. This is not an unusual trend since working in the military is known to include regular deployments for specialised duties, some of which may be domestic or worldwide. Deployment may cause a person to feel empty and insecure, and it may also make their dependents more vulnerable. The wife could fear her husband's propensity for adulterous relationships at his new assignment, and the kids might experience unfulfilled needs as a result of their father's absence. Additionally, they could worry that their "breadwinner" won't make it back to them alive.

According to Heubner et al. (2007), there are two possible outcomes for family members: they may be physically present but mentally absent, or they might be physically absent but psychologically absent. In either case, people's need for certainty is frustrated, and the family member may become a

barrier to normal developmental patterns. Furthermore, Heubner et al. noted that there is never complete confidence when it comes to a military member's deployment during a conflict at a time of terrorism. Families who have a deployed military member must rearrange their daily schedules to accommodate their needs in the soldier's absence.

The welfare of the soldier is another factor that is related to the psychological components of morale. Slim (2016) provided evidence about the welfare of soldiers and the positive effects that attending to their needs may have on a unit's or organization's performance and efficiency. In order to boost the spirits of the withdrawing allied soldiers in Burma during World War II, Slim distinguished three morale pillars: material, intellectual, and spiritual. He used the word "spiritual" to describe faith in the cause. Slim defined "intellectual morale" as the army's idea that it can and will triumph and that it has to have faith in its leaders and the group they are a part of. This is further enhanced by fighting success or triumph. Slim devoted a large portion of his time to addressing his organization's material requirements. He accomplished this by making sure the troops felt cared for by their leaders and the army, that they had the greatest tools and weaponry available, and that their living circumstances were optimal. The 14th Army's morale was turned into a fighting spirit by Slim via the establishment of procedures and tactics to accomplish these foundations, and this helped the Allies convert loss into triumph in Burma. His emphasis on welfare requirements emphasised how important it is to give careful thought to and maintain an organization's and its members' morale. The NZ Army's Army Ethos and Values brochure (1995) echoed this as well, emphasising the importance of excellent soldier welfare in fostering and preserving the Army's morale.

Slim (2016) experiences in Burma demonstrated how a commander's control over the welfare systems of the organisation may affect cohesiveness, morale, and efficiency. Baynes provided his perspective on this as well. He said that a unit's overall morale was directly impacted by and dependent upon factors such as rest, mail, wholesome food, enough medical attention, effective gear, competent instruction, and appropriate welfare services, especially those that assisted families at home. In addition, Baynes (2007) discussed the need of providing troops with the instruction, tools, and assistance necessary to ensure their survival during war. The comfort of troops is crucial during a conflict since it influences their morale and ability to fight.

"Nothing weakened a man more than trouble at home," according to Montgomery (2016). This brought to light a viewpoint on how crucial it is to take care of the soldier's family during his deployment as well as himself. Soldiers need to understand that there are strong and efficient support systems in place, and that their families are taken care of. Additionally, he said that troops want to know that information briefings and newsletters are used to keep their family updated. Madden thought that since it lessens psychological baggage, this had a significant effect on a soldier's morale. Assuring troops and their families that they would be taken care of, along with making sure a support plan is in place, is what it means to take care of them. Which only serves to highlight the fact that a soldier's morale is significantly impacted by taking care of their family. The welfare of his family at home is part of the soldier's responsibilities while serving overseas.

The moderating influence of military counselling on morale was also examined by the researcher. Many major pressures and traumatic events are faced by military personnel, especially those stationed in conflict zones, which may have a negative effect on their psychological health and morale. According to Adler et al. (2016) and Hoge et al. (2004), these stresses might include being in continual danger, losing friends and family, being exposed to violence, and the moral and ethical quandaries that come with conflict. Military personnel's psychological health and morale are important aspects that affect their performance, flexibility, and general efficacy in the service. Psychological well-being includes resilience, emotional and mental states, and the capacity to manage the pressures and stresses of one's line of work. Conversely, morale pertains to an individual's general perspective, drive, and determination to endure in the face of adversity.

Improvements in performance, collaboration, and dedication to the goal are all correlated with high morale. On military members, however, the events and pressures they face during combat missions may have a significant impact. Research has repeatedly shown that those who have been exposed to armed conflict have a high frequency of mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety (Hoge et al., 2004). These circumstances have the potential to lower morale and have a variety of detrimental effects, such as worse work performance, a higher risk of drug misuse, and strained relationships. Understanding the psychological effects of being in war, military organisations all over the globe have started offering counselling services to their service personnel as a kind of support. According to Cigrang et al. (2016), military counselling includes a range of therapeutic approaches intended to meet the psychological and emotional requirements of people who have been exposed to the particular pressures of military life, such as battle.

Recent research has shown the benefits of psychological therapies, like as counselling, in reducing the negative psychological effects of combat exposure (Cigrang et al., 2016). Although the literature has addressed the effect of therapy on morale, further research is necessary to fully understand the moderating function that counselling has in the link between combat exposure and morale. For military organisations, it is critical to comprehend the possible moderating impact of military counselling on morale. This information may help with the creation and improvement of treatments, preventive measures, and mental health support programmes. In the end, a deeper understanding of the relationship between combat exposure, morale, and military counselling may improve service members' general well-being, resiliency, and performance in demanding military settings. It may also strengthen the military's dedication to provide all-encompassing mental health care.

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## Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the educational system is facing a severe threat from insecurity, with attacks targeting elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions. These assaults have detrimental effects on student learning, school administration, and teacher effectiveness. Basic education is particularly impacted, experiencing disruption in school administration, learning loss, low enrollment and retention rates, incomplete basic school programs, manpower reduction, disrupted academic schedules, student fatalities, delayed development of girls, and delayed progress in basic education overall. Military

personnel who are supposed to protect lives, and property and ensure the territorial integrity of the nation appear to be helpless, partly due to low morale as observations have shown.

The fears of the increasing loss of soldiers have been reported to become a source of worry to soldiers at the forefront of the fight against insecurity across the country. What can be the cause of the military personnel's poor morale? In addition to the deaths of their comrades, there might be other reasons, such as a dearth of contemporary military gear, staying too long in one location while on assignment, and animosity between the Nigerian Air Force and Army. Therefore, the researcher's goal is to look at the correlation between military personnel's deployment, welfare, and morale in Nigeria. Thus, the correlation between the Nigerian Army's personnel's welfare, deployment, and morale is the study's main concern.

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### Research questions

1. How does deployment influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?
2. How does welfare affect the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?
3. What role does military deployment counseling play in shaping the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?
4. How does military welfare counseling impact the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?

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### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of deployment on the morale of Nigerian Army personnel.
2. There is no significant effect of welfare on the morale of Nigerian Army personnel.
3. Military deployment counseling does not play a significant role in shaping the morale of Nigerian Army personnel.
4. Military welfare counseling does not have a significant impact on the morale of Nigerian Army personnel.

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### Research Method

Correlational research design as adapted for this study. A correlation survey research design is appropriate when a researcher is interested in investigating the degree of relationship among deployment and welfare and the morale of Nigerian Army personnel.

#### The Population of the Study

223,000 Military personnel of the Nigeria Army in eight (8) Military Divisions and Twenty-four (24) Military Brigades and one hundred and ninety-two (192) Battalions located in fifty-two (52) military Barracks spreads across Nigeria in the Nigerian Army (National Défense College Nigeria (2018) constituted the population of the study

#### Sample and Sampling Techniques

One thousand soldiers from the Nigerian Army comprise the study's sample. Generally, for a population larger than 223,000, a sample size of 850 is enough. Using simple random methods and convenience sampling, the research's sample size will be determined. We will use a simple random sampling strategy to choose five states. Using a convenience sample approach, military men for the Nigeria Army will be selected from each of the selected South-South states of Nigeria.

#### Research Instrument

The instrument for the study was a questionnaire comprises four sections. Section A is Military Deployment Rating scale, Section B is the Military Welfare Rating scale and section C IS Military Counselling Rating scale, and Section D Military Personnel Morale Rating scale. each of the section consist of 11, 10,10, and 18 respectively making a total of 49 items in the entire subscales. The respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on four points scale with close-ended items as Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) points.

#### Validity of Research Instruments

The validity of the instrument was established by three (3) experts in Guidance and Counselling Department, among whom are the research supervisors. These experts assessed the instruments for appropriateness and suitability to the study, and their suggestions were affected. The content and construct validation of the instrument were done using factor analysis.

#### Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested by administering it to 100 military personnel in Ondo State. The data obtained was used to compute the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha was applied for the computation of the reliability of the instrument. The general reliability coefficient is 0.96, the reliability coefficient values obtained for the Military Personnel Deployment Rating Scale is 0.75, the Military Personnel Welfare Rating

Scale is 0.73, the Military Counselling Rating Scale is 0.74, and the Military Personnel Morale Rating Scale is 0.84. The reliability was carried out to establish the internal consistency of the instrument.

### Methods of Data Collection

The instruments were administered to respondents in all the military formations as stated in the sampling procedures for the study. The researcher and assistant visited all the Barracks in the selected Military Divisions, Brigades, and Battalions.

### Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and coefficient of determination. On the other hand, the hypotheses were tested using Linear and Multiple linear regressions at a 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Research Question 1

How does deployment influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?

**Table 1:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation( $r$ ) and Coefficient of Determination( $r^2$ ) of deployment and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

Variables	N	R	$r^2$	$r^2\%$	Decision
Deployment	850	473	224	22.3	positive influence
Morale					

Table 2 shows the  $r$ -value of 0.473 as the amount of influence deployment has on the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.224 and the amount of contribution of deployment to morale was 22.3%. The result showed a positive influence of deployment on the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

### Research Question 2

How does welfare influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?

**Table 2:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation( $r$ ) and Coefficient of Determination( $r^2$ ) of welfare and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army

Variables	N	R	$r^2$	$r^2\%$	Decision
Welfare	850	409	168	16.7	positive influence
Morale					

Table 2 shows the  $r$ -value of 0.409 as the amount of relationship between welfare and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.168 and the amount of contribution of welfare to morale was 16.7%. The result showed a positive influence between welfare and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

### Research Question 3

What role does military deployment counseling jointly influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?

**Table 3:** Multiple Correlation and Coefficient of Determination of joint influence of deployment counseling morale of Nigerian Army personnel

Variables	N	R	$r^2$	$r^2\%$	Decision
Deployment	850	506	256	25.4	positive influence
Counselling					
Morale					

Table 3 shows the  $r$ -value of 0.506 as the amount of the joint influence of deployment counseling on the morale of Nigerian Army personnel. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.256 and the amount of contribution of deployment to morale was 24.5%. The result showed a deployment counseling jointly influence the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army positively.

### Research Question 4

How does military welfare, counseling jointly influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel?

**Table 4:** Multiple Correlation and Coefficient of Determination of military welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army

	N	R	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup> %	Decision
Variables					
Welfare					
Counselling	850	411	.169	16.7	positive relationship
Morale					

Table 4 shows the r-value of 0.411 as the amount at which military welfare, counseling jointly influence the morale of Nigerian Army personnel. The coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) was 0.169 and the amount of contribution of military welfare, counseling to morale was 16.7%. The result showed a positive relationship between welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Niger

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between deployment and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

**Table 5:** Linear Regression Analysis of deployment and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	12270.96	1	12270.92	244.99	.000	
	Residual	42474.53	848	50.09			Null hypothesis rejected
	Total	54745.44	849				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 5 reveals a linear regression output of the relationship between deployment and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. The computed F-value of 244.988 and a p-value of 0.000. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.000 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between deployment and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between welfare and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

**Table 6:** Linear Regression Analysis of welfare and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	9173.04	1	9173.04	170.690	.000	
	Residual	45572.40	848	53.74			Null hypothesis rejected
	Total	54745.44	849				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 13 reveals a linear regression output of the relationship between the welfare and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. The computed F-value of 170.690 has a p-value of 0.000. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.000 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between welfare and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between military deployment, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

**Table 7:** Multiple Regression Analysis of military deployment, counselling, and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	14016.35	2	7008.18	145.74	.000	
	Residual	40729.09	847	48.09			Null hypothesis rejected

Total	54745.44	849
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Table 7 shows the multiple regression output of the relationship between military deployment, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army. The computed F-value of 145.742 and a p-value of 0.00. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.00 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between military deployment, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

#### Hypothesis 4

There is no significant relationship between military welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

**Table 8:** Multiple Regression Analysis of military welfare, counselling, and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

Model		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
	Regression	2	4628.778	86.189	.000	
1	Residual	847	53.705			Null hypothesis rejected
	Total	849				

Table 8 shows the multiple regression output of the relationship between military welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian military. The computed F-value of 86.189 and a p-value of 0.00. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.00 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between military welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

## Discussion of Results

The results of the above data presentation were discussed under the following headings:

#### Relationship between deployment and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

The first finding indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between deployment and morale among the Nigerian military personnel. Deployments significantly impact military morale due to several key factors. Firstly, they provide a sense of purpose by allowing personnel to undertake crucial missions vital to national security, fostering fulfillment and commitment. Additionally, the collaborative nature of deployments fosters strong bonds and camaraderie among units, creating a supportive environment. Professional development opportunities during deployments enhance skills and job satisfaction. Recognition and appreciation for sacrifices further boost morale, as does the inherent pride in serving one's nation and contributing directly to its defense. These elements collectively contribute to elevated morale among deployed military personnel. Furthermore, overcoming the challenges encountered during deployments, such as adverse conditions and operational risks, cultivates resilience and a sense of achievement. Successfully navigating these obstacles further bolsters morale among military personnel, as suggested by Ameh et al. (2014), Dayo Akintayo (2021), Britt and Dickinson (2006), Jeppesen and Elrond (2021), and Obialo (2018).

#### Relationship between the welfare and morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army

The second finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between welfare and the morale of the Nigerian Army. The relationship between welfare provisions and military morale is multifaceted. Adequate provisions, including decent living conditions, healthcare, and nutritious food, directly impact physical comfort and well-being, fostering a sense of value and care among personnel. Support for families through assistance programs and counseling services enhances peace of mind, allowing individuals to focus on their duties. Financial stability, including adequate pay and benefits, reduces stress and enables personnel to concentrate on their roles. Welfare programs supporting training, education, and career advancement enhance professional growth and satisfaction. Recognition through awards and public acknowledgment boosts morale, as does promoting work-life balance through flexible scheduling and recreational activities, enhancing fulfillment and quality of life. Together, these factors contribute to higher morale among military personnel. This finding is in line with the studies conducted by Odendaal et al. (2018), Degraff et al. (2016), and News Express (2015).

#### Relationship between military deployment, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.

The third finding showed there were significant correlation among deployment, counselling, and the morale of the Nigerian Army. The impact of deployment on military personnel's well-being and morale is significant, influenced by various challenges such as separation from loved ones and exposure to high-stress environments. Counselling services serve as a vital support system, offering confidential assistance to address and cope with deployment-related stressors, thus contributing to maintaining or improving morale. Moreover, counselling sessions foster resilience by imparting effective coping mechanisms, enabling personnel to adapt and thrive despite adversity. Early identification and intervention for mental health issues prevent negative impacts on morale and well-being, while promoting positive coping strategies enhances morale and job satisfaction. The provision of counselling reflects a commitment to fostering a supportive organizational culture within the Nigerian military, enhancing morale, loyalty, and cohesiveness. In essence, accessible mental health support during deployment is crucial for sustaining morale and well-being among military personnel. This finding aligns with Hoge et al. (2004), Blises et al. (2008), Avey et al. (2012), and Adler et al. (2016).

### **Relationship between military welfare, counselling, and the morale of personnel of the Nigerian Army.**

The last finding of this study showed there were significant correlation among welfare, counselling, and the morale of the Nigerian military. The reason behind this finding could be that that welfare programs aim to ensure the well-being of personnel by providing essential services like healthcare, housing, and financial support, directly contributing to physical, emotional, and financial stability, thus positively impacting morale. Counselling services are crucial for supporting mental health, addressing stressors like deployments and combat exposure, and promoting resilience. By offering a safe space for personnel to discuss concerns and develop coping strategies, counselling enhances mental resilience and well-being, closely tied to morale. Additionally, counselling sessions focus on building effective coping mechanisms, crucial for sustaining morale amidst military challenges. Welfare initiatives prioritizing mental health support, including counselling, are vital in addressing and preventing mental health issues that can significantly impact morale if left unaddressed. Overall, the provision of welfare and counselling services demonstrates a commitment to fostering a positive organizational culture and ensuring personnel well-being and high morale within the Nigerian Army. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Hoge et al (2004) and Blises et al (2008).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that several factors are significantly linked to the morale of the Nigerian Army. These include deployment and welfare. supportive deployment conditions, positively impacts morale. Adequate welfare programs and accessible counseling services contribute to well-being and morale.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should ensure that deployment conditions prioritize the well-being of personnel, including access to adequate support systems, communication channels, and resources to mitigate the challenges associated with deployments.
2. The government should expand and improve welfare programs to address the diverse needs of military personnel, including healthcare, housing, financial support, and family assistance programs, to enhance overall well-being and morale.
3. The government should establish channels for personnel to provide feedback and input on issues affecting morale, such as deployment conditions and welfare programs to ensure continuous improvement and responsiveness to personnel needs.
4. The government should implement policies and practices that support work-life balance, including flexible scheduling, time off for personal and family activities, and recreational opportunities, to prevent burnout and enhance morale.

### **Counselling Implications**

Based on the findings regarding the significant relationship between various factors and the morale of the Nigerian Army:

1. Counsellors should be prepared to assist military personnel in coping with the stress and challenges associated with deployments. This may involve providing strategies for managing separation from loved ones, navigating combat situations, and adjusting to new environments, thereby promoting resilience and well-being.

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