Influence of Funeral Ceremony on Increased Death Awareness and Reduction in The Fear of Death Among Tiv Youths

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of funeral ceremony on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among Tiv youths. A total of 499 Tiv students and staff of the University of Mkar, Mkar and College of Education Katsina-Ala in Benue State were participants. Results: shows that funeral ceremony significantly correlate with increased death awareness ($r_{(497)} = 0.177$, $p<0.01$). Two, funeral ceremony influences increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death ($r_{(497)} = 0.349$, $p<0.01$). Three, there is no statistically significant difference between Tiv males and females on increased death awareness ($t_{(497)} = 1.88$, $p = 0.060$). Four, increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death jointly predicted violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths ($F_{(2,496)} = 8.810$, $p<0.01$). Independently, death awareness significantly predicted exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among Tiv youths. ($\beta=0197$, $t=4.188$, $p<0.01$. But reduction in fear of death has a negative relationship with exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths ($\beta=-0.056$, $t = -1.199$, $p=0.231$). Humanly, Tiv people are aware that death is inevitable, though it was perceived as mysterious and an existential threat for human annihilation. But nowadays, there is a shift in the perception and attitudes to death; even funerals are now occasions everybody attends, and intoxicating substances are used excessively at these occasions till interment. Modern-day funeral ceremony in Tiv has influence on increased death awareness, and reduction in the people fear of death. But the negative multiplier effect is, it has also promoted manifestation of violent tendencies and behaviours among Tiv youths largely as alcohol is involved for the entertainment at funerals. Thus, the State government should enact laws for strict regulation of people use of alcohol and psychoactive drugs in the State.

Keywords: Funeral ceremony, Death awareness, Fear of death, Tiv youths, Violent Behaviours

Introduction

Death is as real as life [1]. You cannot die without ever living before neither can you live without dying. Life and death have differing role but they are both authentic part of human experience. In life, there is consciousness and activity. Whereas in death it is annihilation and emptiness. Çetin (2015) defined death as an end of life's vital tasks, the end of life, the end of existence, the end of living, or the ending of every living organism. By virtue of the inevitability of death and dying, no one is immune to death. Death can come to people in some expected or unexpected ways and circumstances that exposes them within its boundaries. Thus, living and dying is an existential phenomenon that must be experience by everyone at any time, someday in any way and anywhere [3].

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Death is not a respecter of any person's age, class, colour, race and status. People die every day in every part of the world. Based on the indiscriminate characteristic of death, the Tiv people are not also spared from been a casualty of the grim reaper. Tiv people have been dying much like other people anywhere across the world. Though, due to cultural differences and belief system, there is a variation in people' perception and understanding of the meaning of death, reaction to it, and behaviours towards death.

Tiv Perception of the Ubiquity of Death

Tiv people are an ethnic group in the North-central Nigeria and they are most populated in Benue State with a segment of them found in Nasarawa State, Abuja, Plateau and Taraba State in the North East. The most distinctive cultural sameness of the people is the singularity and uniqueness of the language they speak. Tiv language is exclusively unique because they speak, hear and understand themselves in communication despite some slight differences in the intra-ethnic lingua intonation and dictions. There are also very petite differences relating to the Tiv people's cultural practices. In the Tiv people cognitive domain, prior to their exposure to Christianity which was an accommodation of the western religion, increase in civilization education, travelling, interaction and with people in the global space; death has been perceived as mysterious, threatening and greatly feared. Thus, their reactions and attitudes when death occurs was always somberly.

In the context of this perception, people try to avoid death and death situations, and death occurrence was even rare. Death occurrence was not common as only illness and accident were the familiar causes of a person's death. It was mostly and usually the old people that were known to be dying. As a result of the rarity of death occurrence, when at any time someone died, the atmosphere in the family and the entire neighbourhood becomes still and frightening. The trepidation of death in the perception of the Tiv people was serious that the death of a person immediately activates an automatic stillness and restrained to socioeconomic activities within the bereaved family home and of others in the neighboorhood. Freedom of movement in and out of the bereaved family home becomes exclusively reserved for the older or elderly men and women.

Young men, women and children feel frightened and held themselves indoors and not move about not to even go to school or women going to the farms. Communication will be reduced virtually to low tones and the quietness within the vicinity was always enough for one to hear the footsteps of a passing ant. At night, it was extraordinary scary as thick shadow of darkness eclipsed the environment to make people become more frightened and inhibited with fear. The scaring atmosphere of the night and quietness was tied to the tale that, the ghost of the dead person is roving around the neighbourhood and if it encounters anyone outside in the compound or on their way to anywhere, it will kill him or her. The perception of the omnipresence and of death often aroused anxiety and fears in the mind of almost everyone. According to Sinoff, (2017) fear of death and dying indeed is omnipresence in our lives.

Fear of Death

Fear is the unpleasant feeling one has when he/she is exposed to a perceived threat or danger. In relation to the expression of this unpleasant feeling. Wong, Reker, and Gesser (1994) define fear of death as "the fear induced by thoughts of, or a confrontation with death". Apparently, the fear of death is almost every person's concern. But then, according to Portz (1971) as cited in (1) children do not comprehend the fact that every human being is mortal between the age of 7-8. But Uzun (2017) think differently and states that children begin to understand the fear of death, usually at the age of 10, know that no one who dies will come back. But Sandström (1971) believe that fear of death increases even more at the age of 11. Contrary to the view of Protz, Uzun, and Sandström, it seems that children at the early age of four years knows that there is death but perhaps they do not really understand the meaning of death and how it is experience and who can experience it. I found this from my 4-years-old daughter when on one evening, she asked me daddy can you die? I answered yes. She further asked, can mummy die, I said yes. She went on to ask again that can his brother too die. I said yes. Then she ended by asking, can she also die? But before I will answer yes, her brother 8-years-old interjected saying yes; anybody can die anytime at any age. Could her thought about death activated as a result of her witness of her grandmother's death? May be not; because Sigmund Freud had long states that humans are inherently born with a possession of death instinct which can develop and mature in a person consciousness for full understanding of the idea of death and dying.

Uzun, (2017) observed that every child is afraid of death; they can be affected by the deaths around them, from the news on television, from their experiences, even from the cartoons they watch. Many studies in personality and life-span

developmental psychology also have reported that as adults reach midlife, they become increasingly aware of their own mortality (Erikson, 1963; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; Stewart & Ostrove, 1998) as cited in (8). Actually, growing up into adulthood, fear of death becomes a major concern of people as they often contemplate the idea of dying. On entering into full adult circle, the idea of death is considered more seriously. The fear of death comes with intense anxiety experienced by most adults (1).

According to Jung, (1953) the fear of death is actually 'fear of life,' and people who are most afraid of death are those who are most afraid of life. Jung thinks that people are afraid of death because they cannot fully adjust to their life [1]. Death is feared by many people and discussions about it is always and consciously suppressed and avoided by people because it can have adverse effects on the individual's social freedom of existence. In fact, the fear and anxiety activated by the thought of death and dying makes most Tiv people to be unenthusiastic to conversations on death topics. In fact, when death is avoided (e.g. seen it as an encroachment to human existence to cut life short), it creates a profound anxiety and fear in our minds. But at the same time, it is a concept that connects people to life to makes sense of existence. Yet, people who acknowledge this truth and accept death positively can live their lives completely more meaningful and fuller [10, 11, 12, 13]. Naturally, people are aware that death is inevitable; what they do not know is how death will be and when death will come [14, 1]. The thought of dying is perceived to be terrifying that a great deal of human behaviour is actually aimed at reducing this existentially based fear [5, 1].

According to Gençöz (1998) as cited in [1] what needs to be done to defeat the fears is to understand the awareness of being able to overcome the fear as humanity and to question our way of thinking. As a result of this, there will be substantial consequences that we have faced the object, which we are afraid, gained new skills and increased our confidence in ourselves. Related to Gençöz (1998) view, a man somewhere in Nigeria despite being in good health had made all necessary arrangements to ensure that his future burial ceremony and burial is not just hitch-free but is done in the way he wants and delighted. He dug his grave, got someone who will salute his corpse and mourners [17]. Similarly, some Tiv people have done the same thing by digging and building graves to keep pending when they die; they shall be buried in it. Death is practically a very weird invincible force. Nevertheless, at whatever age we are and in

conversation, it is better we should approach it openly, plainly and simply [1]. Cultivating a positive mentality to the awareness of death will cause us to have a comprehensive understanding about death and perhaps this can reduce reasonably our fear and avoidance of death and dying.

Death Awareness

Death awareness is defined by Chaplin, John, and Goldberg (1988) as a psychological state or a mental experience triggered by both internal and external factors in which people are conscious of their mortality (Grant & Wade-Benzoni, 2009). Moor (2002) observed that when people are aware of their death, they will certainly relate themselves to it. One output of such relating includes various beliefs about how the life of a person, his/her death and after-death existence are related. Different beliefs have different ethical consequences and different impact on life. The beliefs do not have a direct influence, but they presume the actualization of awareness of death. Liechty (2002) as cited in [8] reechoed Ernest Becker (1973) assertions that awareness of death is a uniquely human capability and curse, which has motivated adoption of cultural belief systems in buffering against existential anxiety about impending death.

To defend and protect themselves against existential anxiety, people create and cling to cultural world views to have a collective understandings of reality that [1] render existence meaningful, coherent, and permanent; [2] offer a set of standards for defining what is valuable; and [3] confer either literal or symbolic immortality through religious institutions that assure an afterlife or social institutions that allow them to feel that they are connected to something larger, more powerful, and more permanent than themselves [21, 22]. Spitzenstätter and Schnella (2019) described the ways of coping with death awareness that people primarily react on the terror resulting from subtle reminders of their mortality (mortality salience, MS) by defensive, unconscious strategies. These manifest in an increased orientation toward culturally shared worldviews and in striving to boost one's own self-esteem, which in turn is seen as generally related to social values and norms. Both strategies are offered to serve as buffers to decrease existential anxiety that is triggered from confrontation with one's own mortality.

Apparently, when we are acutely aware of what death is and continue to live, and if we can grasp the consciousness that death is the reality of the people in our circle, life will become even more pleasant,

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people will be able to live in peace with each other [1]. Death awareness influences individual's thinking and decision-making from meaning-making [24]. Many studies have provided evidence to support this with core propositions of human manipulation of death awareness with a range of situational cues, including writing about one's own death, answering questions about what will happen while dying or after death, watching videos of deadly automobile accidents, walking past a cemetery, and being subliminally exposed to death-related words [1].

Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg (2003) in their study have pointed out that awareness of death has unique, surprisingly powerful effects on individuals' motivations and behaviors. Also, Wolfe and Tubi (2019) states that death awareness has the capacity to deflate people's fear and anxiety by pushing it out from their conscious thought process. In line with Pszczynski and his colleagues, Spitzenstätter and Schnella views, it will be reasonable to conceptualize that even the idea of funeral ceremony may represent an unconscious symbolic social event that has the potential to increase the Tiv people awareness about death and the fear of it.

Funeral Ceremony and Wake-Keep

Funeral ceremony is a cultural practice whereby the family of the deceased organized a memorial event and invites a network of relatives, friends, and groups to gather for the commemoration of the deceased before his or her burial. Funeral ceremony is a cultural practice of people across the world. The difference primarily is in the methods and styles it is performed by the ethnic groups. But basically, common secular motivation for funeral event includes mourning the deceased, celebrating their life, commiserating and offering emotional and tangible support to the bereaved family [26]. In Tiv, there are two recognized types of funeral ceremonies. These are societal and Christians related funerals. In both the people are there mourning, commiserating as well as providing emotional and tangible support to bereaved family. Funeral ceremony practices in olden times Tiv people did not makes it an obligation for families to performed in elaborate and flamboyant ways as it is done these days in the name of giving the deceased a befitting burial.

However, the present generation of Tiv people are always saying gone are days when a person died and only the family members and relatives comprising mainly of old men and women gathered to mourn and sympathize with the bereaved family. Thereafter is inquest by the elders to determine the cause of death

and who is behind it. They are always saying "ka avaan kpa iyaan" (eating must continue even in sorrows and wailing). Based on this idea, in modern-days' funerals forces people to task themselves to ensure they elaborately organize it starting from the wake-keeping to the actual day of the ceremony. This new mentality and conversion of funerals ceremony into a social occasion for celebration have jettisoned the old practice where only older men and women are specifically at the wake-keeping of the deceased to provide emotional support to the bereaved family. Funeral ceremonies are now open to many visitors far and near, young and old, irrespective of whether it is societal/traditional or Christians related funeral. Many years ago, children young people were barred from going close to where a person died, not to mention attending funerals. But they are seeing today freely living their homes at night and day times funerals far and near their homes. They are always there roaming about and participating in every ongoing social activities and entertainment like no other.

Types of Funeral Ceremony

There are two categories of funeral ceremonies which are fundamentally recognized in Tiv due to the divide of religion and practices. These two types of funeral ceremony are; Christians governed funeral ceremony and societal related funeral ceremony. The Christians govern funeral ceremony, all the arrangements made for it are in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the Church the person belong when he or she was alive. The Christian denomination of the person belongs (Catholic and Protestant churches) detects and regulates its conduct. In a thoroughgoing and strict controlled Christian related funeral ceremony, the wake-keep is often held in a church premises for Catholics or home of the deceased for the Protestants denomination. Thus, by the rules of the church; sale of or use of alcohol beverages for entertainment of the 'guest' as supposed mourners is restricted. Apart from the restriction of sales and entertainment of people with alcohol, every other activity other than the church programme of activities for the funeral is not allowed to take place within the premises where both the wake-keep and funeral ceremony. In compliance with this thoroughgoing arrangement, it is very rare to observe manifestation of violent acts by the attendees including the youths who are always at both the wake-keeping and funeral ceremony.

Regarding the societal related funeral ceremony, it is primarily organized in the typical traditional or societal concept which put no limitations to any type of social activities to be involved. A societal funeral ceremony

is opened to all and sundry including every Tom, Dick and Harry to attend whether invited or not, having relationship or no relationship with the deceased or the bereaved family. Usually, in this type of funeral, youth's expression of negative behaviours tendecies is probable. This type of funeral popularly tagged as societal funeral in Tiv society permits the selling of all types of alcoholic beverages that ranges from locally made gins (ogogoro) beer, palm-wine, and all sorts of intoxicants. Even local drug dealers there to stealthily selling drugs like marijuana, tramadol etc. to its users.

Usually, the type of funeral ceremony and the number of days it will last before the burial of the deceased may depends on the social status or religious background of the person when he or she was alive. By the arrangements of the societal funeral, unlike the Christians owned funeral, the night of wake-keeping is characteristically an open theatre filled with variety of social activities including traditional music dance groups. People are eating and drinking alcohol, and doing all sorts of things to get excited. The wake-keeping is a venue for business transaction by petty retailers of local and industrial food consumables. In some funeral events, young men and women execute their plans to elope into marriage. The idea of modern wake-keeping and funeral has transformed the olden days mourning custom in an occasion where during period of mourning and wake-keeping; the bereaved family is obliged to entertaining guests with food and drinks. According to Ukeh (2013) the bereaved family compelled to entertain the large crowd of friends' and colleagues. Often financing of these all comes from taking loans and levying sons-in-law huge sums of money and other things to meet with the necessities to ensure that their intention of giving the deceased a befitting burial was achieved.

Perhaps, the transformation and social colouration associated with funeral ceremonies in modern times maybe looked at to have an indirect influence on the latent and behaviours of people towards death. The modern-day style of funeral ceremony seems to have potential variables that are capable of diffusing the terror of death in people's thoughts and to extinguish their fears. This could be possible because the aura of excitement experienced at funeral ceremonies by both men and women often reflect in the mood of both the bereaved and the attendees. It is very common to observe even the bereaved family and 'guests' other than sympathizers not carrying gloomy faces portraying that they are in a milieu of an event with cascading scary shadow of ominousness. The atmosphere usually reflects the picture of people showing leisure attitudes and acts in the presence of

the corpse like 'they are saying there is nothing to be scared about death. The coffin bearers act dramatic with the boxed corpse at funeral venue to the great amusement of onlookers. The celebration witnessed at funeral ceremony in honour of the deceased gets everyone felling thrilled; a mood that apparently can condense one's negative view about death anytime.

In many funerals, the social atmosphere is electrified with affects and tempers that are likely to induce exhibition of violent tendency and behaviours. This is always seen as a result of drinking of assorted alcohol and other intoxicating substances. Violent behaviour are exhibited on the emergence of trivial arguments, or predetermine intentions to avenge or retaliation to a previous misunderstanding with someone or some persons sometime, somewhere. The minds of the intoxicated youths become charged with anger and expression of aggression, that leads to the disruption of the funeral ceremony. Sometimes, the eruption of violence leads to inflicting of injury on someone that instantly or subsequently result to his death. Some an incident of violence at funerals goes to the extent to trigger a communal clash between two communities. These clashes constantly end in destruction of lives and properties. Drawing from the observation of modern-day funeral ceremony which characterized with social variables that are capable of eliciting aggression, the authors seeks to investigate the influence of funeral ceremony on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among Tiv youths in Benue State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to appraise funeral ceremony practice in Tiv to determine its positive and negative influence on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among the Tiv youths. The study focused on achieving the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the influence of funeral ceremony on increased death awareness among Tiv youths.

2. To determine the influence of funeral ceremony of increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among Tiv youths.

3. To determine if there will a difference between men and women on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death.

4. To determine the relationship between increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death and expression of violent tendencies and

behaviours among Tiv youths.

Research Hypotheses

1. Funeral ceremony will have a statistically significant influence on increased death awareness among Tiv youths.

2. Funeral ceremony will have a statistically significant influence on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among Tiv youths.

3. There will be a significant difference on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death between men and women from the influence of funeral ceremony.

4. Increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death from funeral ceremonies will significantly correlates with Tiv youth's exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviour.

Method

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, the authors employed a survey research design for collection of data the sample of the population of interest to achieve its aim. The target population were mainly young men and women who are students and staff of two selected higher educational institutions in Benue State.

Participants

A total of 499 comprised of students and staff of Tiv origin at the University of Mkar, and College of Education Katsina-Ala in Benue State were the participants in the study. The participants' social demographic characteristics include age (18-35years), sex (male and female), marital status, education level, occupation, and religion. The sample was drawn using a convenience sampling technique which is a non-probability method for collection of data for a study. This method was found suitable because the participants being of Tiv origin irrespective of any part of Tiv District/Clan he or she

is, commonly constitute the major population of the admitted students and even staff in the two institutions. The convenience sampling method in this context was considered as the easier way to have access to the students and staff at any time and point of their presence in the school to seek their consent to participate in the study through responding to the questionnaire.

Instrument for Data Collection

A self-developed questionnaire was used for the collection of the data required for analysis and testing of the research hypotheses. A total of 499 participants responded to the 14 items questionnaire. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, consent of the students and staff was first sought and obtained. The authorization to access these students and staff from the two selected higher educational institutions to provide the required information for the questionnaire was granted by its management. The questionnaire was conveniently administered to the students on campus based on one-on-one contact with the students and staff during their free lecture time.

Data Analysis

The statistics used for data analysis were correlation, regression and Independent t-test. From results of the analysis. The findings are used for the interpretation of the hypotheses objectively. The analysis was done with SPSS version .20 and the results were presented in tables to enhance clarity and understanding.

Results

The results obtained from the analysis was presented in four tabulated formats starting with distribution of demographic variables of the research participants, followed by intercorrelation matrix, Independent t-test and linear regression.

Table 1: Distribution of Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (N=499)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	193	38.7
Female	306	61.3
Marital Status		
Married	65	13.0
Single	434	87.0
Educational level		
Degree	181	36.3
MBBS	27	5.4
NCE	78	15.6
OND	206	41.3
M Sc	5	1.0
PhD	2	0.4
Occupation		
Employed	66	13.2
Unemployed	433	86.8
Religion		
Christianity	483	96.8
Traditional	16	3.2

The table above shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants who were the sample for the data collected during the study. The participants comprised of males and females' students and staff of the University of Mkar and College of Education Katsina-Ala.

Table 2: Analysis of the inter-correlation of the independent and dependent variables

SN	Variables	Mean	Std	1	2	3	4
1	Death awareness	12.75	1.05	1			
2	Reduction in the fear death	22.72	2.62	.349**	1		
3	Funeral ceremony	14.73	1.79	.177**	.361**	1	
4	Violent behaviour exhibition	14.48	2.18	.012	.178**	.168**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above is the correction matrix designed to describe the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Firstly, Funeral ceremony significantly correlate with death awareness as ($r_{(497)}$ =0.177; p<0.01). Secondly, funeral ceremony significantly correlates with death awareness and reduction in the fear of death as ($r_{(497)}$ = 0.349; p<0.01). However, there was no significant relationship found between death awareness and exhibition of violent behaviour at ($r_{(497)}$ =0.012; p>0.05). The findings also showed that funeral ceremony significantly correlate with reduction in the fear of death ($r_{(497)}$ =0.361; p<0.01) and exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths ($r_{(497)}$ =0.178; p<0.01). Lastly, there was also a statistically significant relationship between funeral ceremony and violent behaviour exhibition ($r_{(497)}$ =0.168; p<0.01).

Table 3: Independent t-test on males and females regarding death awareness and reduction in the fear of death

DV	IV	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p-value
Death awareness	Male	193	23.00	2.61			
	Female	306	22.54	2.62	497	1.88	0.060
Reduction in the fear of death	Male	193	13.05	1.09			
	Female	306	12.56	0.98	497	5.17	<0.01

The result in table three shows that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female on death awareness (t $_{(497)}$ = 1.88, p = 0.060). Though the male (M=23.00, SD=2.61) fairly differed from the females'

(M=22.54, SD=2.62) on death awareness. Incidentally, a statistically significant difference was found between males and females on the reduction in the fear of death (t $_{(497)}$ = 5.17, p<0.01). Males have shown a higher level of reduction in the fear of death (M=13.05; SD=1.09) compared to their female (M=12.56; SD=0.98). On the whole, the findings showed that there is a statistically significant difference on death awareness and the reduction in the fear of death between men and women. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there will be a significant difference between males and females on death awareness and reduction in the fear of death was accepted.

Table 4: Multiple regression on death awareness, reduction in the fear of death and violent behavior among the Tiv youths

Variable	R	R^2	F	p-value	B	T	p-value
Anxiety (Constant)					-	9.76	0.000
Death awareness					0.197	4.188	0.000
Reduction in fear of death	0.185	0.034	8.810	0.000	-0.056	-1.199	0.231

The results in table 4 shows that death awareness and reduction in the fear of death jointly predicted exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviour among the Tiv youths (F $_{(2,496)}$ =8.810; p<0.01) with R=0.185 and R^2=0.034. Independently, death awareness significantly predicts exhibition of violent behavior among the Tiv youths (β=0197, t=4.188, p<0.01). But, reduction in the fear of death negatively predicts exhibition of violent behaviours among Tiv youths (β=-0.056, t=-1.199, p=0.231). Notwithstanding, the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Anyone can die in less than a second, or die after many decades of living. But eventually when a person died, a funeral ceremony take place to honour the departure of the deceased. It appears that the Tiv people perception and attitudes to death has been recalibrated due to the from the characteristics of modern-day funeral ceremony. The characteristics of modern-day funeral ceremony in Tiv society leaves in many of the attendees' feelings of excitement and display of aggressive pattern of behaviours than grief. The gregarious behaviours of people observed at the funeral ceremonies today especially where they are drinking alcohol and other intoxicating substances often results to expression of violent tendencies and behaviours. Thus, this section discussed the findings related to the hypotheses to explain the influence of funeral ceremonies on death awareness, reduction in the fear of death and exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths.

Hypothesis one: Funeral ceremony will have a statistically significant influence on increased death awareness among Tiv youths. This hypothesis was accepted based on the findings that funeral ceremony significantly correlates with death awareness as the statistical values showed (r $_{(497)}$ = 0.177, p<0.01). The result obtained has supported previous research which have shown that many aspects of human behaviour in social settings like funeral ceremony can modify their perception about death. The support to this finding was derived from some experts in death studies explanation that core propositions of human manipulation of death awareness is through a range of situational cues, including writing about one's own death, answering questions about what will happen while dying or after death, watching videos of deadly automobile accidents, walking past a cemetery, and being subliminally exposed to death-related words [8]. Deducing from this explanation, it is reasonable to conclude that funeral ceremony is also a situational cue that has an indirect potential influence on death awareness in both the young and older people in Tiv society.

Hypothesis two: Funeral ceremony will have a statistically significant influence on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death among Tiv youths. This hypothesis was also accepted based on the statistical of (r $_{(497)}$ = 0.349, p<0.01) which indicates that funeral ceremony has influence on increased death awareness and reduction in the fear of death. The finding confirmed the assertions of scholars like Ernest Becker (1973) whose view was reechoed by Liechty (2002) as cited in [8] that awareness of death is a distinctively human capability and curse, which has motivated the adoption of cultural belief systems in buffering against existential anxiety about impending death. Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2003) also pointed out that awareness of death has unique, and surprisingly powerful effects on individuals' motivations and behaviors.

Furthermore, Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon, 1999 and Wade-Benzoni (2006) explained that in humans' attempt to defend and protect themselves against existential anxiety, people create and adhere to cultural world views with a collective understandings of reality to a belief that allow them to

feel they are connected to something larger, more powerful, and more permanent than themselves. Similarly, Spitzenstätter and Schnella (2019) states that the people strategy to cope with death awareness is represented in the theory of Terror Management (TMT). People primarily reaction to the terror of death resulted from subtle reminders of their mortality (mortality salience, MS) by defensive unconscious strategies. This is manifested in an increased orientation toward culturally shared worldviews and in striving to boost one's own self-esteem, which in turn is seen as generally related to social values and norms. In line with Pszczynski and colleague's and Spitzenstätter and Schnella view (2019), it can be deduced that even the idea of funeral ceremony practices a route through which death awareness is gathered. And by extension it serves a buffer against existential anxiety and fear of death and dying.

Hypothesis three: There will be a significant difference in increased awareness of death and reduction in the fear of death between men and women from the influence of funeral ceremony.

Noticeably, the findings for this hypothesis on one hand shows there is no statistically significant difference between Tiv males and females on death awareness with ($t_{(497)}$ = 1.88, p = 0.060). The (M=23.00, SD=2.61) for the males differed fairly with the females (M=22.54, SD=2.62). But on the other hand, the findings showed there is a statistically significant difference between male and female on the reduction in the fear of death ($t_{(497)}$ = 5.17, p<0.01). This difference has been shown in the mean and standard deviation for males (M=13.05; SD=1.09) and for females (M=12.56; SD=0.98). The variation in the Mean and standard deviation shows that males have higher level of reduction in fear of death compared to the females.

Research wise, there is actually no available empirical evidence that was found to be directly linked to the findings obtained on this hypothesis. However, references are made to some scholastic explanations that are found suitably related to it. First is Moor (2002) view that when people are aware of their death, they will certainly relate themselves to it. One output of such relating includes various beliefs about how the life of a person, his/her death and after-death existence are related. Importantly, for many people who have a perceptive understanding that life and death are two sides of the same coin and has accepted that living and dying is an authentic part of living have a positive implication for their wellbeing [24] more than when they chained themselves in a

distress thought about the terror of death. Wong (2010) further emphasized that death attitudes actually matters. Death attitudes plays a vital role in remoulding human responses to death threat because their passive acceptance of the endless witness of bloodshed and atrocities usually betrayed a love-hate relationship with death.

Spitzenstätter and Schnella (2019) states that people primarily react to the terror of death resulted from subtle reminders of their mortality (mortality salience, MS) by defensive, unconscious strategies that serves as a buffer against their fear of death. Wong (2010) explained that humans have developed elaborate defensive mechanisms against the terror of death at the individual and cultural levels. This usually served as buffers to decrease the experience of existential anxiety aroused from confrontation with one's own mortality. Wong added that the popular appeal of violence real or seen shown in video games, or acted in horror movies provided a further proof of people morbid fascination with death. Besides, Uzun (2017) explained that when people are acutely aware of what death is and continue to live, and if they can have the realization that death is the reality of the people in our circle, life will become even more pleasant, people will be able to live in peace with each other.

In the same vein, funeral ceremony is now robed with fascinating garments of entertainment other than an occasion coated with emotional features of sorrow, wailing and lamentations is capable of erasing many people negative thought processes about death. In fact, the people leisure attitude and behaviours observed at funeral ceremonies and the levity of the coffin bearers displaying in dramatic style a boxed corpse suggest they are sending a message for others to understand that there is nothing scary about death. This could the reason for people of all ages, men and women including children are now without any frightening feeling have the courage to attend wake-keeping at night and crosses over to witness the funeral ceremony and interment of the deceased. Apparently, the social activities witnessed at funeral ceremonies gets men and women feeling thrilled; a mood that evidently seems to diffuse one's negative feeling, thought and fear of death.

Hypothesis four: Awareness of death and reduction in the fear of death from funeral ceremony will significantly influence violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths. The result related to this hypothesis shows that death awareness and reduction in the fear of death jointly predicted violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths at statistical values of ($F_{(2,496)}$ = 8.810, p<0.01). But

independently, the regression value of (β=0197, t=4.188, p<0.01) shows that death awareness significantly predicted exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among Tiv youths. This finding corresponded with Vergani, O'Brien, Lentini and Barton (2019) who deduced from the terror management theory (TMT) that evoking death-related thoughts (mortality salience, MS) in individuals or groups lead to stronger worldview defense and greater support for violence. Similarly, Chatard (2011) based on the assumptions from TMT found from students of University of Abijan that mortality salience could cause an increase in support for martyrdom and military intervention. The students who had reflected on their death, demonstrate their favorite towards people who supported martyrdom and increase support for military intervention and they might consider martyrdom themselves. Furthermore, McGregor et al (1998) as cited in [30] also reported increased aggression, following a mortality prime towards individuals who oppose one of the most prominent features of their worldview – political persuasion.

This finding has justified Solomon, and Greenberg (2003) claims that awareness of death has unique, surprisingly greater effects on individuals' motivations and behaviors (i.e. positive or negative) *sic*. Likewise, Wong (2010) states that humans have the unique mental capability of meaning-making and social construction of death knowledge. Though, Wong highlighted that death attitudes matters most because it plays a role in determining human's ability to live with death threats and their willingness to accept the ultimate sacrifice in defending their freedom in any ways they can. Apparently, many people choose aggression as the ultimate approach to defend their freedom. This account for the reason individuals or groups in Nigeria such the (Eastern Security Network (ESN) a paramilitary faction of the Indigenous people of Biafra; IPOB; Boko-Haram terrorists, Yoruba Agitators; Fulani herdsmen and Banditry, Niger-Delta militants etc.) chooses violence as means to an end.in Nigeria.

Despite, that death awareness and reduction in the fear death was found to jointly predict violent tendency and behaviour among the Tiv youths, unlike death awareness, reduction in the fear of death contrariwise showed a negative relationship with violent tendencies and behaviours exhibited among Tiv youths at the regression values of (β=-0.056, t = -1.199, p=0.231). Deductively, a negative correlation of reduction in the fear of death with exhibition of violent tendencies and behaviours among the youths

implies that, as death awareness influences the decrease in the fear of death; the decrease in the fear of death has potential influence on manifestation of violent tendencies and behaviours among the Tiv youths. The possibility of the reduction in the fear of death to influence violent behaviours in the many of the Tiv youths is that, in the olden times people were very afraid of death and dying. Consequently, the fear of death was somewhat helping to regulate people's expression of malevolent behaviours in the communities. Young people were unequivocally cautious about not to commit any kind of misdemeanor for fear of punishment and a negative identity that could endanger his or her relationship with others.

But nowadays, it seems obvious that exposure to civilization and Christianity has helped to delete the mindboggling scary tales regarding death and funeral ceremony. The awareness added to the adulteration of funeral ceremonies with social paraphernalia has manifestly altered the perception of death as nothing someone should be fearing. In effect, death awareness has paralyzed death fear and anxiety in many people's thought processes to the extent that even women and children no longer get scared at sight of human corpse(s). Perhaps, this could account for the reason why young people these days are daring to behave unconscientiously with violent tendencies. They consciously form criminal groups to solely embark on aggressive rendezvous; killing people and ripping out their body parts, raiding graves and harvesting needed body parts of buried corpse for sale or used for ritual purposes.

Be that as is may, it is noteworthy to clarify that the olden method of funeral ceremony practice in Tiv was not imbued with excitatory social activities that were capable of eliciting violent tendencies and behaviours in the attendees. But as time passes by, and due to acculturalization, old-fashion funeral ceremony which was all about expression of grief and mourning with the bereaved family metamorphosed into an occasion that became more about extravagant social entertainment and display of all manner of behaviours by the attendees. Today, funeral ceremony is separated into two types as; Christians and societal funerals. Christian related funerals have prescribed rules and guidelines that restrict the involvement of certain social and commercial activities at the venue it is holding. Hence, it is very rare to observe acts of misconduct and violence from the attendees because any activities that would elicits mischief in anyone is banned.

But this quite the opposite of societal related funeral

ceremony where there is no limitations placed for the involvement of activities the will enliven the mood of the people. Societal funeral ceremony is opened to all and sundry including every Tom, Dick and Harry whether invited or not invited, having relationship or no relationship with the deceased or the bereaved family. This unregulated nature of funeral ceremony creates room for the use of alcohol for entertainment of 'guest'. Dealers retailing in all types of alcohol and other substances brought it there for sell and even drug dealers sneakily retail hard drugs like marijuana and psychoactive drugs to its users. The youths are mostly seeing consuming these alcohols and the drugs, either smoking or snuffing it. The use of alcohol and psychoactive substances at funerals lead to disruption of the users' ability for rational reasoning and behaviour due to the induced deficit in their cognitive faculty [33]. Consequently, where negative altercations and responses in the process of communication prevails, the outcome is squabbles, insults and physical aggression against one another.

Numerous researches from across the world have produced valid findings that the reason people become aggressive when they drink alcohol is due to the way alcohol affects the brain. Drinking alcohol has effect on behaviours like increasing hostility, sexual malfeasance and acts that violates other people's freedom and cause them physical or emotional harm or injury [32, 33, 34, 35, 36]. World Health Organization (WHO, n.d.) as cited in Buddy [37] has emphasized that use of alcohol is more closely related to aggressive behaviours than any other type of psychoactive substances. Relatedly, the concept of funeral ceremony was to sympathized with the bereaved, inquest elders and honouring of the dead. Their burial was usually under a peaceful atmosphere that do not permit display of violent tendencies and behaviours in anyone present. However, increase death awareness, reduction in the fear of death as a result of the reconfiguration of funeral ceremony into social occasions where alcohol and other intoxicants are sold or used for entertainment plays a significant role in inducing manifestation of violent tendencies and aggressive behaviours in many Tiv youths.

Conclusion

Death has been known to the Tiv people as inevitable yet it was perceived as mysterious and an existential threat for human annihilation. This made death to be greatly feared and avoided even attending of funeral ceremonies was restricted to only old/elderly people in the community. The younger people, males and females were scared and always kept away from the premises of wake-keepings and funeral ceremonies.

However, nowadays, there is an observed shift in the perception, cognitive response and attitudes to death situations. Funeral ceremonies are now open access occasions for anybody to attend entering from the wake-keepings to crossover to funeral ceremony and time of interment of the corpse. Invariably, this must have contributed to the increase in death awareness, reduction in the fear of death cum the negative effect to influence Tiv youths' aggressive tendencies and behaviours due to the consistent use of alcohol and other intoxicants available. The implication is that, the customization of the original pattern in which funeral ceremony was always abouut grief and mourning by the sympathizers to a social celebration with use and of intoxicating substances has done more harm than good. Many Tiv youths today are fearless about death and death situations. And when they are under the influence of psychoactive substances, they began to manifest brutal acts that sometimes leads to inflicting harm and/or killing of someone at a funeral ceremony. people without feeling pricked in their consciences. Violence is increasingly growing and spreading in Tiv-land through kidnappings, ritual killings, cultism, militancy, robbery, political thuggery and communal clashes. These criminal acts are commandeered and by the Tiv youths in Benue States like other youths in other parts of Nigeria.

is due to our curiosity and desire for the understanding of things relating to answering the question 'why do human beings behave the way they do' and contribute knowledge about certain phenomenon that has inspired many us to get involved in research as the pathway to making discovery things in our society and how they can problem solved.

Authors Contributions

The authors involved in the research played significant roles at every stage of the study to bring it to a successful completion. Accordingly, the research idea and the topic was conceived and created by Dr RM Labe; Methodology, Dr RM Labe, Professor GT Akume, Dr MA Amande, BB Yimam, Dr PN Chia, and ST Njor; Development of questionnaire: Dr RM Labe, and Professor GT Akume; Data Collection: Dr MA Amande, and BB Yimam,; Data Analysis: JT Apaa; Resources: Dr RM Labe, Dr PN Chai, Dr LT Swende, Dr MA Amande, ST Njor, BB Yimam, JT Kiva, and Nyuitsa T; Original Draft Preparation, Dr RM Labe; Review and Editing: Professor GT Akume, Dr PN Chia, ST Njor, LT Swende, and Dr RM Labe; Supervision: RM Labe; Funding, Labe, RM, ST, Dr LT Swende, ST Njor, Dr MM Amande, BB Yimam and Dr JT Kiva.

Conflict of Interest

There was absolutely no potential conflict of interest experience among the authors.

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