

ASSESSING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PEACE EDUCATION AND PEACE CULTURE AT POST PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research on the institutionalization of peace education and peace culture at post primary school level was carried out in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study sample comprised 463 out of the 3088 teacher population. Two research questions and one hypothesis were evolved to guide the study. A 26-item questionnaire titled "Peace Education and Peace Culture Questionnaire" (PEPCQ) was utilized for data collection. The reliability coefficient of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha ranged from 0.76 - 0.86. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and independent t-test statistical tools. Findings showed that peace education has been institutionalized into the school curriculum, although peace culture activities were yet to be made a vital part of the school life. Results further revealed that public and private schools do not differ significantly in the institutionalization of peace education and peace culture at post primary school level in Calabar Education Zone. Arising from the findings, it was recommended that activities to enhance peace education and peace culture should be encouraged in the school system.

Keywords: Institutionalization, peace education, peace culture and post primary school.

1. Introduction

The world is in turmoil because incidence of conflict, terrorism and violence dominates most countries of the world. There are conflicts and violence in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, Russia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Congo, Nigeria and many other countries. In Nigeria, incidence of violence has been seen in form of militancy, inter-communal conflict, kidnapping, political thuggery, terrorism, Boko Haram insurgency, cultism, vandalization of electrical installations, oil and gas pipe-lines, among others. The menace of Boko Haram, in particular, has posed a serious challenge to security of lives and property in Nigeria. The incessant attacks by Boko Haram terrorist sect through indiscriminate bombings and shootings have led to many Nigerians

being killed, and thousands of individuals have been displaced in North Eastern part of Nigeria. - Towns have been sacked, schools are burnt, and are consequently shut down. The abduction of over 200 Chibok girls in April 2014 is still fresh in our minds.

The increase in violence and conflict in the nation may not be unconnected with diversity that is rooted in poverty, unemployment, culture, politics, ethnicity, religion, poor governance, imbalance in development, high level of corruption to mention a few. The escalation in violence that has dominated the country's scene has made peace education an indispensable initiative to pursue. In support of this line of thought, Okolie-Oseme (2012) noted that the new wave of threat to national stability in Nigeria has taken a new dimension, making it necessary for stakeholders in the Nigerian project to give adequate attention to peace education. In the same vein, Webster (2012) observed that institutionalization of peace education in schools is as a response to increased militarism and mass violence in contemporary societies.

Peace education is the process of acquiring the value of knowledge and the development of attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment (Webster 2012). Also, Kester (2010) extends the definition of peace education to include the cultivation of peace building skills such as dialogue, mediation and artistic endeavours. It is a problem-posing education that attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviours on which a culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict and resolution skills, and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred culture. Ezeoba (2012) refers to peace education as involving the training of individuals and the avoidance and management of violent conflicts, good human relations, unity and internal co-operation among the various groups in a nation. Peace education teaches about non-violence, love, compassion, friendship, understanding, and reverence for human life. It is a process which aims at empowering people with the skills, attitude, and knowledge to create a safe world.

A culture of peace refers to a set of values, behaviours and beliefs based on respect for life, non-violence, tolerance, solidarity, co-operation, guarantee for human rights, the peaceful settlement of conflict, and beneficial dialogue between cultures (Boulding, 2011). To nurture a culture of peace as noted by Summerfelt and Vambteim (2008) requires citizens to contain their aggression, exhibit co-operative behaviour and resolve conflict without violence. It is a culture in which individuals act with the mind-set of peace consciousness and peace becomes a way of life and of doing things.

The culture of peace has received priority importance by UNESCO hence, the 1998 Resolution 53/125, which proclaimed the decade 2001-2011 as the decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. Also in 1999, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 53/243, on the Declaration and programme of action for a culture of peace. These two UN resolutions have underscored the importance of peace for the continued existence of mankind and development.

Researchers such as Adeoluma (2006), Aguba (2000), Kester (2010) and Ezeoba (2012) view the school as a primary space for peace education and for nurturing a culture of peace in order to enable individuals to live peacefully together. This is so because peace education is useful to

mould future generation for a peaceful society. This study aims to assess the current status of peace education and peace culture in Calabar Education Zone.

2. Statement of the problem

The Nigerian nation has of recent witnessed many incidences of violence and conflict such as cultism, militancy, kidnapping, extra judicial killing, terrorism and some other vices that have threatened the peaceful existence of our society. Ironically the youths and young people are increasingly being used in the spate of violence that has engulfed the nation without knowing the consequences of their actions. These young people are the pillars of tomorrow. Education is often thought of as a solution to conflict and violence, hence the current global emphasis on peace education and peace culture. This paper is carried out to assess the extent to which peace education and peace culture is institutionalized at the post primary school level in Calabar Education Zone.

3. Research questions

1. To what extent is peace education institutionalized in the school curriculum?
2. To what extent is peace culture activities institutionalized in the school life?

4. Hypothesis

1. Public and private post primary schools do not differ significantly in the way peace education and peace culture are institutionalized.

5. Methodology

The study which focused on institutionalization of peace education and peace culture in post primary schools adopted a descriptive survey design. The survey design was used since it attempts to study the nature of the situation as it exist. The study was carried out in Calabar Educational Zone in Cross River State. The study population comprised 3,088 teachers. Out of this, 901 were from private schools while 2,187 were from public schools. Fifteen percent of the population constituted the sample of the study. Thus a sample of 463 teachers were drawn using stratified sampling technique. Of this, 328 teachers were drawn from public schools while 135 teachers were drawn from private schools. Teachers were used in this study because they are the people who implement the curriculum.

The researcher developed a 26-item research instrument titled "Peace Education and Peace Culture Questionnaire "(PEPCQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A was on demographic data, while section B was on peace education and peace culture. The items were structured using a modified 4-point Likert Scale. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Calabar. A trial test was carried out to establish the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained ranged from 0.76 to 0.83, which was considered good for the instrument. Using research assistants who were properly briefed, 463 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents. The completed questionnaires were retrieved the same day. The data collected were properly coded and analyzed using mean and independent t-test statistical tool.

6. Results

The findings of the study based on the research questions and hypothesis are presented in the following Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Research question 1

To what extent is peace education institutionalized in the school curriculum?

Table 1

Mean scores of peace education as part of the school curriculum

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Rank	Remarks
1.	Pupils are taught to accept each others' religion.	3.53	1 st	Agreed
2.	Students are taught respect for human dignity and differences.	2.95	2 nd	Agreed
3.	Peace education is a topic in some school subjects.	2.75	3 rd	Agreed
4.	The curricula promotes civic responsibilities among students.	2.72	4 th	Agreed
5.	Love, peace and harmony are significant parts of the school subjects.	2.65	5 th	Agreed
6.	We observe and celebrate international peace day.	2.56	6 th	Agreed
7.	Peace education books are available in the school library.	2.56	6 th	Agreed
8.	Essay competitions on peace education are organized for students.	2.53	8 th	Agreed
9.	We use collaborating learning projects.	2.53	8 th	Agreed
10.	Values of compassion and equality are transmitted to students through role plays.	2.32	10 th	Disagreed
11.	Students work in groups to achieve shared learning goals.	2.31	11 th	Disagreed
12.	Peace education is taught as a subject.	1.03	12 th	Disagreed

From Table 1, results indicate that nine out of 12 items of peace education as part of the school curriculum had a mean score between 2.53 and 3.53 which is above the acceptance point of 2.50, while the remaining three items had below 2.50. These results show that peace education is institutionalized as part of the school curriculum.

Research question 2

To what extent is peace culture institutionalized as part of the school life?

Table 2
Mean score of peace culture activities

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Rank	Remarks
1.	Students are given opportunities to act plays that show the negative impact of conflict.	3.46	1 st	Agreed
2.	Conflict among staff and students is not encouraged.	3.34	2 nd	Agreed
3.	Inter-tribal friendship is encouraged among students.	2.65	3 rd	Agreed
4.	Sports activities are organized to promote peace and team-building spirit.	2.54	4 th	Agreed
5.	Guest speakers are invited to the school as part of extra-curricular activities to talk about peace issues.	2.46	5 th	Disagreed
6.	We run extra-curricular peace activities.	2.45	6 th	Disagreed
7.	We organize debates on peace related issues.	2.43	7 th	Disagreed
8.	Inter-state field trips are undertaken to enable students experience other lifestyles and traditions.	1.93	8 th	Disagreed
9.	Open-days in schools are used to promote values of peace.	1.87	9 th	Disagreed
10.	We have peace clubs where values of peace are taught	1.82	10 th	Disagreed
11.	Indigenes and non-indigenes are treated equally.	1.63	11 th	Disagreed
12.	We are involved in peace meditation programmes.	1.62	12 th	Disagreed

Results in Table 2 indicate that seven out of the twelve identified peace culture activities in the school system scored below the criterion mean of 2.50, while only four scored above 2.50, which means that peace culture activities are yet to be institutionalized as part of the school life.

Hypothesis I

Public and private schools do not differ significantly in the institutionalization of peace education and peace culture.

To test this hypothesis independent t-test statistical tool was used. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent t-test analysis of public and private post primary schools' significant difference in which peace education and peace culture are institutionalized

Variables	Institutions	N	\bar{X}	SD	t.cal
Peace Education	Public	328	38.94	5.93	1.419
	Private	135	38.07	6.02	
Culture activities	Public	328	37.04	4.99	0.111
	Private	135	36.98	5.42	

Not significant at 0.05; df = 461; critical t. = 1.965

Results of the analysis in Table 3 show that, the calculated t-value for peace education (1.419) and peace culture activities (0.111) are both less than the critical t-value of 1.965 at 0.05 level of significance with 461 degrees of freedom. This means that public and private post primary schools do not differ significantly in the way in which peace education and peace culture are institutionalized. By this result, the null hypothesis is upheld and the alternate rejected.

7. Discussion of findings

Results from the research question one showed that nine out of 12 identified aspects of peace education as part of the curriculum had a mean score of between 2.53 and 3.53, which were above the acceptance mean point of 2.50. From the result, aspects of peace education that had a mean score above 2.50 were peace education as topics in some school subject (2.75); availability of peace books in the library (2.56); love, peace and harmony as significant part of school subjects (2.65); essay competition on peace education (2.53); teaching of respect for human dignity (2.95); accepting each others' religion (3.53); civic responsibilities (2.72); collaborating learning projects (2.53) and observation of peace day (2.56). These findings suggest that peace education is institutionalized as part of the school curriculum. The finding is in line with the postulation of Adesina and Odejebi (2011) who maintained that bits of peace education can be seen in school subjects such as social studies, history, religions studies and moral education in the Nigerian school. Also, the finding supports an earlier study by Aladejana (2007) who found that some peace related topics such as social environment, co-operation, conflict, responsibility, civic obligation, culture, were evident in the social studies curriculum. This finding therefore suggests that formal peace education is integrated into the existing school curriculum.

Also apparent from this finding is the fact that peace education is not taught using pedagogical strategies such as role play (2.32) which is very significant in helping students to internalized the lessons learned. Another important aspect of this finding is that peace is not taught as a subject in the post primary school (1.03).

The study also found out from research question two, that seven out of twelve identified peace culture activities were yet to be institutionalized as part of school life. This could however be explained that peace culture activity is an emerging theme that needs to be properly integrated into the school life because of the current spate of violence that is being experienced in various parts of the world and Nigeria in particular. This finding supports Wisdom and Imo (2010) who noted that the curriculum content appears inadequate and argued for the integration of co-curricular activities into school programmes.

Result obtained from hypothesis one showed that public and private post primary schools do not differ significantly in the way in which peace education and peace culture are institutionalized. The finding may be explained by the fact that both public and private schools implement the same curriculum as given by the relevant government agency, and as such there are no significant differences.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is obvious that peace education features are an integral part of the school curriculum. However activities that promote peace culture are lacking in the post secondary schools in Calabar education zone. Thus it is hereby recommended as follows:

- (1) Peace education should be introduced as a core subject in the school curriculum.
- (2) Extra-curricular activities fostering on peace activities should be made part of the schools' programme of activities by school heads in order to instill peace values in the learner.
- (3) Appropriate pedagogical training such as role play and inquiry method should be organized for secondary school teachers. This will help the teachers to be adequately prepared to inculcate the concept of peace education and peace culture in the student

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