

African Research Review

An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia

Vol. 6 (3), Serial No. 26, July, 2012

ISSN 1994-9057 (Print)

ISSN 2070--0083 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrrrev.v6i3.16>

Strategies for Integrating Peace Education into Social Studies Curriculum for Junior Secondary (Basic 7-9) Schools in Nigeria

(Pp. 218-231)

Ezeoba, Kate Oge - Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, School of Education, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study sought to identify strategies for integrating peace education concepts into the Social Studies curriculum for junior secondary schools in Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were used. The entire population of two hundred and twenty-six respondents comprising 190 graduate of Social Studies and 36 graduates of curriculum studies spread across secondary schools and three tertiary institutions in Anambra State were used as the sample for the study. A 20-item questionnaire structured on a 4-point scale was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings identified strategies like the integration of peace education contents such as cultural similarities, human rights, global challenges, hostage taking, imperatives of evolving democracies, value systems, inter tribal marriages, Nigerian local languages and natural resources and resource problems in Nigeria and religion concepts into the social studies curriculum. The findings also identified co-curricular and instructional strategies for use in teaching the identified peace education concepts. It was recommended that the identified peace education concepts could be added to the Social Studies curriculum and the thematic approach

should be used in restructuring the Social Studies curriculum was to reduce curriculum overload while integrating the peace education concepts.

Introduction

Global trends have indicated that peace is an indispensable issue for international development. Hence peace as a concept has received international priorities in United Nations Resolution 53/25 (1998) which proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. The centrality of peace for global development was also reinforced by the United Nations Resolution 53/243, (1999) by which a global 'Declaration and Programme of Action on a Cultural of Peace' for the new millennium was adopted.

In line with these global trends, in the preamble to the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the need for peace in Nigeria was clearly highlighted. The constitution, spoke among other things of the resolution of the Nations to live in unity and peace (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Considering the supremacy of the constitution, the issue of peace is a priority for the nation. Reiterating the need for peace in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), also talks about living in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice as well as the promotion of inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.

Indeed peace education is crucial for the Nigerian educational system to achieve especially in secondary schools. Peace education has to do with training on the avoidance and management of violent conflicts, better human relationship, unity and internal co-operation among the various tribes of the country. Nsikak-Abasi and Nneji (2010) described peace education as those aspects of formal and non-formal education, in school and out-of-school aimed the elimination of groups' prejudice, stereotypes and hatred which make people prefer war to peace, violence to non-violence, exclusion to cooperation and destruction to construction. Peace education is therefore education for peaceful and non-violent co-existence. Since education was conceived as an instrument "per excellence" for enhancing peace education, Adeoluma (2006), Aguba (2006) and Aguba (2010) respectively noted that it is expedient on educational planners to make peace education an integral component of school subjects so that Nigerians can be educated on how to peacefully live together as one.

In Nigerian junior secondary (Basic 7-9) schools, Social Studies is one of the subjects through which peace could be achieved. Social Studies is a subject, which helps the individual to be useful to the society and to appropriate the culture in order to be acceptable by the society. Onipe (2008) sees social studies as education that cater for the well being of the learners in a way that enables them participate in the day-to-day activities of the community. Social Studies has been seen by several countries of the world as a more relevant liberal education which furnishes a greater understanding of mankind. Social Studies is an integrated study of man and his interactions with his environment. To Edozie and Ezeoba (2010), Social Studies is a school subject comprising a selection of themes from economics, agriculture, geography, history, political science, and moral education. It teaches learners to become aware and conscious of their immediate social and physical environment, as well as their civic responsibilities. By its very nature as an interdisciplinary subject, Social Studies education is useful for national integration, socio-economic development, as well as the development of the right attitudes and values which are needed for peace education.

Social Studies is vital for peace education and national development which has necessitated its prominence as a core subject in the present Basic 7-9 curriculum for the junior secondary level of Education in Nigeria (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, NERDC, 2007). Through the subject, learners are expected to acquire requisite skills, values, attitudes and cognition to meet the challenges of a peaceful Nigerian society and international society alike. The focus of Social Studies therefore is essentially man, the society and the environment. Its ultimate aim is to equip individuals with knowledge and understanding for peaceful relationships and living. Hence, Enu (2005) pointed out that those nations who used Social Studies as a corrective measure for reconstruction and rehabilitation of their societies placed high value in the implementation of their Social Studies curriculum so that the subject exposes them to new values and skills necessary for the sustainability of a peaceful nation.

To improve the relevance of Social Studies, the NERDC (2007) developed a new Social Studies curriculum for junior secondary schools. However, Wisdom and Imo (2010) noted that the curriculum content appears inadequate for peace education and argued for the integration of co-curriculum activities into school programmes. Earlier, Amucheazi (1980) and Enu (2005) had respectively dissatisfaction with the way in which peace education was handled in schools Social Studies curriculum, nothing that

some peace education concepts needs to be further integrated into the curriculum, if peace is to be achieved. These views suggest that the present secondary school Social Studies curriculum needs some adjustment for enhancing its relevance for peace education. It is against this background that this study investigates some strategies for integrating peace education into social studies curriculum for junior secondary schools in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The Nigerian Nation State appears to be in disunity. The inter-tribal disturbances in some parts of the nation, the kidnap incidences, campus cultism, political and extra judicial killings, militancy and the most recent bomb blasts that marked Nigeria's 50th Jubilee Anniversary, are indices of lack of peace in the country. One is worried that this state of affairs further reduces peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Since Social Studies is a tool for cohesion and peace, one therefore wonders how peace education could be enhanced through the Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary (Basic 7-9) schools. Through what strategies then can peace education be integrated into the Social Studies in Nigeria? This question constitutes the problem of the study.

Research questions

Two research questions that guided the study are:

1. What concepts could be added to the present junior secondary (Basic 7-9) Social Studies curriculum as a strategy for peace education?
2. What strategies could be adopted to enhance peace education through the junior secondary Basic 7-9) Social Studies curriculum?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. They are:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of curriculum studies graduates and those of social studies graduates on the concepts that could be added to the junior secondary (Basic 7-9) social studies content for enhancing peace education.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of curriculum studies graduates and those of social studies graduates on the strategies for enhancing peace education through the junior secondary (Basic 7-9) social studies curriculum.

Research methods

Research design

This study was a descriptive a survey. Descriptive survey is used to collect data from a sample of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. This design is appropriate for this study because the data for the study were collected from a sample of graduates of social studies and graduates of curriculum studies in order to investigate how social studies curriculum can contribute to enhancing peace education in Nigeria.

Population and sample of the study

The population of study consisted of 190 graduates of Social Studies and 36 graduates of Curriculum in the six education zones of Anambra State earlier mentioned. The total population was 226 (two hundred and twenty-six respondents). The researcher studied the entire population because their number was small. Thus the whole population which was 226 (two hundred and twenty-six) constituted the sample the sample of the study.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument for data collection was a 23-item questionnaire titled "Enhancing Peace Education through the Social Studies Curriculum (EPESSC) developed by the researcher. The instrument was separated into three sections. Section A comprised four (4) open-ended questions that elicited information on the biodata of respondents. Sections B and C contained 20 items that sought information on the strategies for increasing the possibility of enhancing peace education through secondary school social studies curriculum. The items were structured on a modified 4 point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validation of instrument

The questionnaire was validated by two experts in social studies at the Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe. They were provided with the topic, statement of the problem, research questions and hypotheses to enable them ascertain enough information to validate the instrument. Proper modifications were carried out based on the comments of those who helped in the validation.

Reliability of instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the split-half method. In doing this, the researcher administered copies of the instrument on a sample of 5 graduates of social studies and 5 graduates of curriculum Studies, from secondary schools in Delta State. Their responses to sections B and C of the instrument was separated into two parts; one part contained 10 odd number items and the other 10 even number items. The Correlation Coefficient of A and B was determined using the Pearson product Moment Correlation Technique. The correlation co-efficient obtained for the instrument was 0.83, which was considered satisfactory for the instrument.

Method of data collection

The researcher used research assistants in administering copies of the instrument on the respondents. The research purpose, method of administering the questionnaire and the nature of respondents were clearly explained to the research assistants. In each place visited each day, the researcher and the assistants give the respondents a copy of the JSS (Basic 7-9) Social Studies curriculum to study and copies of the questionnaire to respond to. They allowed the respondents two weeks to study the curriculum and respond to the copies of the instrument. Thereafter, the questionnaire copies were retrieved for statistical analysis. At the end, only 219 copies were well completed and used for statistical analysis. This represents 99.90% completion and return rate.

Method of data analysis

Data collected using the questionnaire instrument were analysed using mean scores to answer the research questions. The questionnaire items were weighted thus: strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point). The cut-off point for accepting an item was 2.50 which was obtained by $(4+3+2+1) \div 4 = 2.50$. Therefore, the acceptable level of mean was 2.50 and above for agree while those that obtained below 2.50 were regarded as disagree. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 significance level.

t-test was used because the data were interval and there were only two mean groups to be compared.

Presentation of analysis of data

Table 1: Mean Scores of Graduates of Curriculum Studies and Social Studies on Peace Education Concepts for Addition to JSS Social Studies Curriculum

	Items	GCS (N=33)		GSS (N=186)		AVERAGE	
		\bar{X}_1	Decision	\bar{X}_2	Decision	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2
1.	Museum Studies.	1.87	Disagree	1.92	Disagree	1.90	
2.	Cultural similarities among Nigerians.	3.27	Agree	3.03	Agree	3.15	
3.	Human rights in Nigeria.	3.06	Agree	2.86	Agree	2.96	
4.	Nigeria and global challenges.	2.61	Agree	2.89	Agree	2.75	
5.	Communities as peace promoting institutions.	3.93	Agree	3.51	Agree	3.72	
6.	Hostage taking as a threat to peace.	3.63	Agree	3.82	Agree	3.73	
7.	Imperatives of evolving democracies to peace.	3.69	Agree	3.99	Agree	3.84	
8.	Nigerian value systems.	3.45	Agree	3.10	Agree	3.27	
9.	Nigerian monuments and legacies.	2.97	Agree	3.44	Agree	2.21	
10.	Peace prospects of inter tribal marriages in Nigeria.	3.18	Agree	2.65	Agree	2.92	
11.	Nigerian local languages as instruments of peace.	2.54	Agree	3.14	Agree	2.84	
12.	Natural resources and resource problems in Nigeria.	2.93	Agree	3.69	Agree	2.00	
13.	Religion as an instrument of peace.	4.00	Agree	3.88	Agree	3.94	

Key: GCS = graduates of curriculum studies; GSS = Graduates of Social Studies

In table 1, only item 1 obtained mean rating below 2.50 in the columns for graduates of Curriculum Studies and graduates of social studies. This indicates that both categories of respondents agree that museum studies could be added to the present social studies curriculum content to enhance peace

education. The rest of the items had average mean ratings above 2.50 indicating that the respondents agree that these concepts could be added to the social studies curriculum to enhance peace education.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Graduates of Curriculum Studies and Social Studies on Strategies for Enhancing Peace Education through Social Studies Curriculum

Items	GCS (N=33)	GSS (N=186) Decision	\bar{X}_2	AVERAGE	
	\bar{X}_1			Decision	\bar{X}_1 & \bar{X}_2
1. Integrating peace concepts under existing themes in Social Studies (thematic approach).	3.15	Agree	3.67	Agree	3.41
2. Setting out separate themes for peace concepts.	2.30	Disagree	1.18	Disagree	1.74
3. School inter-state excursions and fieldtrips should be encouraged.	3.57	Agree	3.60	Agree	3.59
4. Students should join and participate in cultural societies.	3.18	Agree	3.73	Agree	3.46
5. Government and private bodies should organize inter-state Social Studies debate competitions on peace education concepts.	3.27	Agree	3.85	Agree	3.56
6. Annual inter-state essay competitions on peace should be organized for social studies students.	3.54	Agree	3.51	Agree	3.53
7. Use of innovative teaching methods such as:					
a: Inquiry Method	3.70	Agree	3.69	Agree	3.70
b: Project method	3.91	Agree	3.27	Agree	3.59
c: Role Plays	3.72	Agree	3.33	Agree	3.53
d. Computer-Assisted Instruction	3.91	Agree	3.56	Agree	3.74
e. Games and Simulations	3.54	Agree	3.46	Agree	3.5

f.	Entertainment education	3.63	Agree	3.70	Agree	3.67
g.	Peer teaching	3.03	Agree	3.47	Agree	3.25
h.	Futures wheel	4.00	Agree	3.77	Agree	3.89

Key: GCS = graduates of curriculum studies; GSS = Graduates of Social Studies.

Apart from item 2, the other items in Table 2 have mean scores above 2.50 in the columns for Curriculum Studies and Social studies graduates. This shows that in the respondents' opinions, these 6 items are among the strategies to be adopted to increase the possibilities of enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum content.

Table 3: t-test on Concepts for Addition into Social Studies Curriculum for Peace Education

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Curriculum Studies graduates	33	2.88	0.37	217	0.14	1.96	Not significant
Social studies graduates	186	2.87	0.36				

In table 3, the t-calculated is 0.14, while the t-critical is 1.96. At 0.05 level of significance and 217 degrees of freedom, the t-calculated is less than the t-critical value. The decision is to accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Curriculum Studies graduates and those of social studies graduates on other relevant concepts that could be added to the present social studies curriculum for enhancing peace education.

Table 4: t-test on Strategies for Enhancing Peace Education through Social Studies Curriculum

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Curriculum Studies graduates	33	3.54	0.57	217	-0.09	1.96	Not significant
Social studies graduates	186	3.55	0.57				

In table 4, the t-calculated is -0.09, while the t-critical is 1.96. At 0.05 level of significance and 217 degrees of freedom, the t-critical is greater than the t-calculated. This warrants the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Curriculum Studies graduates and those of social studies graduates on other strategies that could be adopted to increase the possibilities of enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum.

Discussion of the findings

In response to research question one, this study found that the respondents agreed that some peace education concepts could be added to the social studies curriculum for enhancing peace education. These concepts are: cultural similarities among Nigerians, human rights in Nigeria, Nigeria and global challenges, communities as peace promoting institutions, hostage taking as a threat to peace, imperatives of evolving democracies to peace, Nigerian value systems and Nigerian monuments and legacies. Others are peace prospects of inter tribal marriages in Nigeria, Nigerian local languages as instruments of peace, natural resources and resource problems in Nigeria and religion as an instrument of peace. These topics represent as it were, some of the dominant problems and issues in the Nigerian nation which could be conveniently learned by students since the issues are relevant to peace education in a plural society like Nigeria. Without doubts, these concepts are peace education oriented and ought to be included in the social studies curriculum.

In null hypotheses one, there was no significant difference between the responses of graduates of social studies and graduates of curriculum on the concepts that could be added to the present social studies for enhancing peace education. The respondents shared similar views that the identified concepts

should be added. One can see that the identified concepts cut across local, cultural and world peace issues. One can also argue that the need for adding these concepts to the social studies curriculum is not based entirely on the fact that the social studies curriculum lacks some peace education concepts, but also on the need for including rich and extensive concepts relevant to the Nigerian socio-cultural environment. This is in line with the postulation of Wisdom & Imo (2010) that the teaching of social studies in schools must aim at building local and international cohesiveness and peace within and among nations. The finding of this study supports Enu (2005) who stated that the role of social studies as a subject for achieving international unity warrants that the subject should be regularly expanded to accommodate persistent threats to peace education. In Nigeria such threats include abuse of human right, hostage taking, demise of local languages and conflicts of resource control in Nigeria. There is a possibility that the inclusion of these concepts to the social studies content would go along way in fostering peace education in Nigeria.

Some strategies which the respondents agreed could be adopted for enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum are encouraging inter-state excursions and fieldtrips, government should organize inter-state social studies competitions on peace education concepts, schools should form cultural associations and annual inter-state essay competitions should be organized for social studies students. Use of methods of teaching such as inquiry, project, role plays, entertainment education, futures wheel, computer assisted instruction, and games and simulations are also among the strategies in this respect. It was also found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of Curriculum Studies graduates and those of social studies graduates on other strategies that could be adopted to increase the possibilities of enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum. The respondents unanimously agreed on these strategies.

A close look at these strategies reveals that they cover co-curricular and methodological issues. They comprise several techniques, strategies and methods which the social studies teachers can employ in order to guarantee effective teaching and learning of peace education concepts in the curriculum. This finding is in line with Onipe (2008) and Wisdom and Imo (2010) who noted that various curricula and co-curricular activities are needed for the enhancement of peace education. Given the above listed strategies, one will reason that the best possible ways of increasing the

possibility of enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum is to educationally equip learners with the requisite knowledge and equip the social studies teachers with sufficient motivation to enable them usher in desirable reforms in the social studies curriculum for enhancing peace education. It is therefore imperative that educators, policy makers, and members of civil society make the case and ask for the support of reforms in the social studies curriculum from the widest range of institutions and governments.

Conclusion

Peace education is not the sole aim of teaching social studies. However, the present social studies curriculum for secondary schools in Nigeria needs to be enriched with some relevant concepts for enhancing peace education. Strategies identified for increasing the possibility of enhancing peace education through the social studies curriculum both largely on reforms in integrating peace education concepts under themes, curriculum review, innovative teaching methods, teacher motivation and text book review. Therefore, in the Anambra State perspective, relevant social studies content for the achievement of peace education in Nigeria should be possible by integrating relevant peace education concepts, innovative pedagogy, the use of thematic approach in curriculum content structuring.

Recommendations

In view of these findings, it is recommended that:

1. The present secondary school social studies curriculum content could be reviewed to reflect the identified concepts that are relevant to peace education.
2. The use of thematic approach in restructuring the social studies curriculum content is also crucial. This will help to reduce overloading the social studies curriculum content while integrating the contents that are relevant to peace education.
3. Training and retraining of social studies teachers should be refocused and intensified to enable the teachers acquire the skills to use appropriate methods and techniques to effectively teach peace education concepts in the social studies curriculum content.
4. Social studies teachers could also use the identified co-curricular instructional strategies to enhance peace education through the social studies curriculum.

5. Schools, PTA, and other corporate bodies should fund and encourage school excursions, essays competitions on peace education issues, formation of cultural societies and field trips for social studies students in secondary schools.

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