

PROMOTING PEACE AND SOCIAL STABILITY THROUGH CULTURAL VALUES IN NIGERIA: THE SOCIAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

Essien E. Essien, Ph.D and Amina Peter Adams

Department of Social Science Education

University of Calabar, Calabar

ABSTRACT: *Conflict, insurgency, terrorism and crime had become the prominent super war agents, waging dynamic war against Nigerian territorial integrity and economic boom. This study sought to examine how peace and social stability through cultural values in Nigeria from the social studies perspective. To achieve this, two research questions were raised to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Data used for the study were generated through a questionnaire titled "Promoting Peace and Social Stability through Cultural Values Questionnaire" which was administered to 70 Social Studies Educators purposively selected from the study area. Their responses to the questionnaire were coded to identify recurrent themes and patterns and were tested using the simple percentages, means and statistical frequency. The result of the analysis showed that in respect to the first research question, a mean percentage 'Yes' responses 74.69% and 'No' responses of 25.31% Where as in respect to research question two a mean percentage 'yes' response of 78% against the mean percentage 'no' response of 22% was obtained. The implication of this is that cultural values significantly influence the promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria. , it was therefore concluded that the peace and stability of the Nigerian society can be promoted if cultural values are revived, promoted, taught and applied in the country and recommended that administrative leadership of Nigeria should be broaden to include traditional leaders and priests in the governance of the Nation.*

KEY WORDS: peace, social stability, Nigeria, culture, cultural values, social studies perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Day after days, the society keeps changing, new ideas emerges, new areas of specializations are evolved and new technology are invented while in the same vein, old ones die gradually until totally wiped out. It is this systematic but irregular pattern of changes which characterized the human society that has crafted this new age of existence identified with decayed norms and values which the ancestors of all the ethnic or cultural groups have struggled hard to impart to their children and to posterity of their lineage.

However, Murhiti (2006) remarked that this era is enwrapped with a continuous rise in the advancement in War craft, artificial intelligence, visual human interface, bio-engineering and other forms of complex technological, scientific and epistemological advancements and scholarships; which have place humans in a state of quasi-self-sufficiency, breeding a complex world of advanced chaos and conflict between man and man, man and his environment as well as man and other cosmic and metaphysical forces which have formed the basis of human ethics and judgment for long a time.

Nigeria, a socially dynamic, pluralistic and polytheistic country, the most populated in her continent and third in the world. Located at the brim of the Atlantic Ocean, she extends northward to the border of the Republic of Niger and Chad and spread from the edge of the Republic of Cameroon to the Gulf of Benin, east-to-west. Nigeria is a land of rich cultural heritage, making up of over 250 ethnic groups with rich cultural values. However, Nigeria has continued to experience a continuous rise in the ladder

of global rating in terrorism, conflict and social instability in recent times, with little hope of returning to absolute tranquility (Odia, 2014).

From the 1966 May and July massacre of easterners in the northern part of the country, to the 1967-1970 sardonic Nigerian civil war, to the calamities exhibited by Niger-Delta militants and most recently, the various manifestations of the Boko Haram insurgency in the north east/ herds men-farmers clashes, social conflict and social instability in Nigeria has continued to evolve and re-evolve from one complexity to the other taking various forms of inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-party rivalry (Enu, 2016).

The question then, is what is the trend of Nigerian instability? The answer is obvious, and Nigeria continues to pay for this through infrastructural decay and economic melt-down whose burden is on the shoulder of the ordinary citizens. Is Nigeria growing less tumultuous than before? The answer is no. It is glaring that Nigerian instability is on the rise at direct proportionality with the advent of technological advancement and importation of foreign cultures and lifestyle into the Nigerian society. The researchers are not trying to court martial civilization as the initiator, promulgator and perpetrator of the disastrous cascade of events that characterized the unstable nature of the modern Nigerian state. However, it is undeniable civilization has slain the life-tree of cultural values of the indigenous Nigerian people and have destroyed the link between the present Nigeria and the peace, stability and contentment enjoyed by her ancestors (Okediji, 2015).

How then can this broken link be repaired? The possible solution lies deep in the heart of the true identity of the Nigerian people. Reviving, reshaping, propagating and re-establishing those intrinsic cultural values of the different tribes, nations, kingdoms, and empires that were married to form the modern Nigerian state. Peace and social stability form a part of the fundamental needs of every sovereign state. This is because; the economic, social, technological and political growth of any country is reliant upon the social solidarity that exists among the different people that live in the country despite their social strata and factions (Ohakamike and Agwu, 2016). However, for decades, Nigeria has been doomed to facing serious peace and security challenges, which have emanated from different forms of ethno-religious and political rivalries. The different ethnic nationalities have consistently wedged one form of violent confrontation or the other against the federal government, hence, peace has become elusive. Beginning with the Niger-Delta militancy in the South-South to the most recent Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and the widespread farmers-herdsmen clashes (Enu, 2016).

The consequences of these crises are however particularly damaging to civilian populations, displacing them within their own mother land, depriving them of security and stability, and preventing them from achieving self-fulfillment and self-realization. However, the more this instability that rages the more people get affected and consequently, the more new forms and pattern of social crises are birthed. The resulting insecurity and instability that follows from these circumstances – lack of basic needs, harsh surroundings, and oppressive governments – forces many to turn to violence in defense of their right to survive (Amamio, 2012). This tragedy has signaled the necessity and urgency to resolve the problem of war, crises and social instability in Nigeria and have called for the attention of several researchers and scholars.

In this vein, Rowell (2016) conducted a study on Peace Education in Secondary Schools: A Strategic Tool for Peace Building and Peace Culture in Nigeria. The study which was prompted by the inherent incompatibility between the objectives of individuals as well as ethnic/social groups in Nigeria. Used

research questions which sought to address Normative and Ethical issues regarding peace, the absence of violence/hostility and its education in secondary schools. Two research questions and two hypotheses were addressed. Eighty Nine (89) subjects (Teachers) were selected from 124 Public and Private Secondary Schools in Delta State. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items were tested using the Cronbach alpha method with a coefficient of 0.87. The simple mean and t-test statistics was used to analyze the data collected in respect to the research question and hypothesis. The result of the analysis showed a statistical coefficient of 0.047 and 0.238 revealing respectively that there is a significant relationship between peace building and cultural harmony in Nigeria and that there is a significant relationship between peace building and peace culture in terms of the predominant culture of the society.

The researchers therefore concluded that peace and cultural harmony goes hand in hand, in order for peace education to gain academic acceptance it has to be defined in terms of the predominant culture of the society and that anti-social vices should be dispelled amongst Nigerian. And recommended that the golden rule and other ethical codes of conduct should be infused into the curriculum of secondary schools in Nigeria and that Government should advocate for cross cultural education if peace education is to gain a lasting grip in Nigerian.

In the same vein, Enu (2016) conducted a qualitative study in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample of 77 social educators purposively selected from the University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State College of Education and some selected secondary schools in the study area was used for the study. Three research questions were posed and the respondents' responses formed the primary data for the study. The study was supported by the descriptive and analytical methods. From the responses, it was revealed that social educators by working in partnership with other groups, organizing of public enlightenment and the teaching of core values can promote a culture of peace in the society.

Whereas, Okediji (2015). On his own part conducted a study on the Role of Education in Fostering Peace and Unity in Nigeria Between 1914 and 1938. Using the historical research design, the study analyzed primary and secondary sources. The findings of the study revealed that Nigeria, like other participating British colonial territories felt the impact of the First World which began in Europe in 1914 and ended in 1918. Much of the fighting took place among the central powers. The study also showed that a culture of peace, education and non-violence has been the norm in Nigeria since the post-war period.

The paper therefore seeks to understand the state and the role of education during the war and post-war period in Nigeria, to analyze the role of education in fostering peace in the education and to recommend ways of maintaining peace in the education sector in Nigeria. From the historical findings, it was therefore recommended that the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council, should formulate policies that will bring cohesion with a bid to balancing the gap between the North and the South, and that the Nigeria Union of Teachers, government should not mix educational matter with politics and education personnel should be well remunerated and given maximum encouragement to enhance productivity in the sector.

The immense need for peace and social stability in any country is undeniably undoubtable. And the link between the customs, traditions and beliefs of people and their perception of peace, social solidarity and unity in diversity remains an obvious landmark. In the line of this research, social orientation, education and mental reconditioning remain the panacea to the problem of continuous

social clashes that have engulfed the country. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the possible social algorithm necessary to achieve this.

Statement of the problem

With the massive explosion and proliferation of ethnic based criminal and terrorist movements in Nigeria in the *status quo*; the Northeast overwhelmed and contended by the Boko-Haram, the Southeast drugged by the ethnocentric indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), the Niger-Delta region has been offset by the avengers movement as the likes of other ethno-religious fraternal movements, the peace and national decorum of the country is unseated. Conflict, insurgency, terrorism and crime had become the prominent super war agents, waging dynamic war against Nigerian territorial integrity and economic boom. Events of bombing, communal clashes and terrorism of different dimensions have formed the front lines of broadcast and dailies in the country.

Over two thousand (2000) persons are internally displaced within the country and housed in camps whereas several others have lost their lives to incidents of terrorist activities (AU, 2017). National peace and social stability has therefore become a scarce commodity which is immensely thirsted for by the Nigerian people. Several modalities have been put in place to no avail. The National Youth Service Corps and the National character Commission have failed in their purpose to restore peaceful coexistence. This study therefore seeks to examine promoting peace and social stability through cultural values in Nigeria: the Social Studies perspective.

Objectives of the study

This study examined promoting peace and social stability through cultural values in Nigeria: the Social Studies perspective. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Establish the prominent factors militating against the promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain whether cultural values significantly influence promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.

Research question

To achieve the aim and objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the prominent factors militating against the promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do cultural values influence promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Data used for the study was generated using a questionnaire titled "Promoting peace and social stability through cultural values questionnaire". The items were administered to 70 Social Studies educators purposively selected from the study area; 23, from the University of Calabar, 21 from the Cross River state college of Education Akamkpa, and 26 from the federal College of Education, Obudu. Their responses to the questionnaire were coded to identify recurrent themes and patterns and were tested using statistical means and simple percentages, items by items.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research question one

This research question state that, what are the prominent factor militating against the promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria? The question seeks to evaluate respondents' perception of major factors militating against the promotion of peace and social stability. Data generated with respect to this research question were analyses descriptively using simple frequency table. The result of the analysis is as presented in table 1.

Table 1

Presentation of social educators' responses on factors militating against promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.

S/N	Item Reponses	Yes		No	
		No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
	Decay in peace and social stability in Nigeria is militated by:				
1.	Advent of modern civilization	39	55.71	31	44.29
2.	Importation of foreign culture	56	80	14	20
3.	Religious intolerance	47	67.14	23	32.86
4.	Decay of indigenous cultural values and norms	57	81.43	13	18.57
5.	Loss of national patriotism	66	94.29	4	5.714
6.	Ethnocentrism	61	87.14	9	12.86
7.	Failure of government to fulfill campaign promises	40	57.14	30	42.86
	Gross total	366	522.9	124	177.1
	Gross average	52.28571	74.69	17.71429	25.31

The result of analysis presented in table 1 shows that 39 (55. 71%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the decay in peace and social stability in Nigeria is caused by the advent of modern civilization, while 56 (80%), 47 (67.14%), 57 (81.43%), 66 (94.29%), 61 (87.14%) and 40 (57.14%) agree that decay peace and social stability in Nigeria is militated by importation of foreign culture, religious intolerance, decay of indigenous cultural values and norms, loss of national patriotism, ethnocentrism and failure of government to fulfill campaign promises respectively. The result also showed a mean percentage 'Yes' responses 74.69% and 'No' responses of 25.31% to these factors as militating factors against the promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.

Research question two

This research question states that, to what extent does cultural values significantly influence promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria? The question seeks to evaluate respondents' perception the influence of cultural on promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria. Data generated with respect to this research question were analyzed descriptively using simple frequency table. The result of the analysis is as presented in table 2.

Table 2**Presentation of social educators' responses on the influence of cultural values on promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.**

S/N	Item Responses	Yes		No	
		No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
	Peace and social stability can be promoted in Nigeria if:				
1.	Cultural values of the pre-civic Nigerian society are revived.	47	67.14	23	32.86
2.	Culture education is inculcated into the Nigerian educational system	52	74.29	18	25.71
3.	Religious and traditional leaders take the place of the umpire in the Nigerian society.	61	87.14	9	12.86
4.	National holidays are marked to celebrate prominent traditional ceremonies in Nigeria.	48	68.57	22	31.43
5.	Nigerian cultural practices are developed and integrated	65	92.86	5	7.143
	Gross total	273	390	77	110
	Gross average	54.6	78	15.4	22

The result of analysis presented in table 2 shows that 47 (67.14%) of respondents agrees that peace and social stability can be promoted in Nigeria if the cultural values of the pre-civic Nigerian society are revived, whereas 52 (74.29%), 61 (87.14%), 48 (68.57%) and 65 (92.86%) respectively agree that peace and social stability can be promoted in Nigeria if, Culture education is inculcated into the Nigerian educational system, Religious and traditional leaders take the place of the umpire in the Nigerian society, National holidays are marked to celebrate prominent traditional ceremonies in Nigeria, and if Nigerian cultural practices are developed and integrated. The result also showed the mean percentage 'yes' response of 78% against the mean percentage 'no' response of 22%. The implication of this is that cultural values significantly influence promotion of peace and social stability in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The culture of a people forms the basis of their judgment and their cultural values, the core of their ethics. The study revealed that peace and social stability can be promoted if cultural values of the pre-civic Nigerian society are revived, Culture education is inculcated into the Nigerian educational system, Religious and traditional leaders take the place of the umpire in the Nigerian society, National holidays are marked to celebrate prominent traditional ceremonies in Nigeria, and if Nigerian cultural practices are developed. Therefore, the peace and stability of the Nigerian society can be promoted if cultural values are revived, promoted, taught and applied in the country.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that cultural education should be enhanced in Nigerian schools, that National holidays should be celebrated to mark prominent traditional ceremonies and that

administrative leadership of Nigeria should be broaden to include traditional leaders and priests more effectively.

References

- African Union (2017). Peace and Stability. Retrieved from: <http://Africanunion/peace and stability>. 20th august, 2018.
- Amamio, M. C. (2012). Role of peace education in preventing conflict. Conference paper presented in the third Committee on Humanitarian Cultural and Social Issues, Yale University.
- Awopetu, L. O. (2001). Social Studies Education in Nigeria: Its Evolution and Development. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*, 1 (2):128-131.
- Enu, D. B. (2016). Social Educators' Contribution in Educating for Peace and Security in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(36): 97-10.
- Murithi, T (2006). African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity. A conference paper presented at African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), 2016.
- Nweke, C. C. (2015). Social Stability within the Nigerian State. *UJAH UNIZIK Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3:146-158.
- Odia, A.A. (2014). Social studies as an instrument for global peace: analytical and prescriptive perspectives. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 3(5):106-116.
- Ohakamike, O. N. and Agwu, S. N.(2016). Education for Peace & Development: Education against Violence in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 21(6):22-28.
- Okediji, H. (2015). The Role of Education in Fostering Peace and Unity in Nigeria Between 1914 and 1938. *History Research*, 5(3):156-168.
- Rowell, U.(2016). Peace Education in Secondary Schools: A Strategic Tool for Peace Building and Peace Culture in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(36): 88-92
- Worldmeter (2018). The population of Nigeria. Retrieved from www.worldmeter.com on 23rd June, 2018.