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## Lecturers' Perception of the Use of Teacher Education Curriculum Content for Conflict Resolution

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### Abstract

*The Nigeria nation, in this present democratic dispensation has been faced with galaxy of conflicts most especially in the Niger–Delta Region and North-Eastern Region. These conflicts ranged from ethnic, socio–political, economic to personal conflicts. these prevailing conflicts in facets of human life in Nigeria could ascribed the neglect of teacher education. To this end, this paper surveyed lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution in Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey research. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Thirty-one (31) teacher education lecturers were used for the sample. Data collected were gathered and analysed using the t-test statistical method. The result of the study showed that male and female lecturers' generally accepted that teacher education curriculum contents could be used for conflict resolution in Nigeria. Based on the result the study recommended inter-alia that teacher education curriculum content such as self-control, self-sacrifice, transparency, cooperation, accountability, selflessness, equity, exemplary leadership, social justice and patriotism should be inculcated in the would-be teachers; and the curriculum of teacher education should be reviewed to include the study of national and international conflicts management.*

In recent times, much attention has been given to the need for stability, peace, unity and peaceful co-existence. Every day in the world, thousands of people die from violence both in armed conflict and non-armed conflict situations. Every day throughout the world, thousands of people die from hunger and other poverty related causes. Every day in the world, people are either physically or emotionally attacked as they differ from the rest of the ethnicity, religion, sex or gender. Every day natural resources are depleted without regards for the needs of future generations. The Nigerian state especially in this present democratic era has been faced with a number of conflicts most especially in the Niger–Delta Region and North-Eastern Region. These conflicts ranged from ethnic, socio–political, economic to personal conflicts (NYSC, 2002). Some have argued that these prevailing conflicts in facets of human life in Nigeria could be ascribed to the neglect of teacher education. To this group, teacher education programme/curriculum should be drawn on the basis of problems of the society cutting

across all areas of the human life with the hope of achieving peaceful co-existence and national integration (Mezieobi and Domike, 1996).

A number of researchers have recommended the introduction of conflict resolution in teacher education curriculum content in Nigeria (*Ireyefoju, 1992, Otite & Albert, 1999, Karekezi, 2003 and Sote, 2004*). Even if the teacher education curriculum content has conflict resolution issues this is not enough. Conflict resolution issues training has to begin in the teachers' education programme and training so that systemic reform is maintained. A study by Shumba, Manokore, Silitshe, Sango, Dhlomo & Mdondoro (2005) undertaken at Mutare Teacher's College in Manicaland and it concentrated on how the teachers' education was addressing issues on growing up and sexual maturation. The study found little evidence of the college imparting knowledge on interpersonal relations which is one aspect of conflict resolution. Another study was undertaken by Makoni (2015). It was undertaken at two teachers' colleges in urban Mutare. The findings of the study were that teachers' education programmes are not offering courses in peace education, peace education would benefit a nation, peace education is implementable at pre-service teacher education and the need to develop an appropriate peace education curriculum that reflects the needs of citizens.

Makoni (2015) recommended that teachers' education curriculum content include conflict resolution in their teacher education curriculum content/programmes in order to build prospective teacher capacities to establish infrastructure for positive peace in their future classrooms, the immediate communities and the society as a whole. Conflict resolution needs therefore, to be made compulsory for all prospective teachers. Conflict resolution and Peace education in teachers' education curriculum content can initiate a culture of peace on a systematic basis, starting in teachers' training curriculum content and emanating in the schools and communities (Ssenkumba, 2010). For conflict resolution education to succeed in schools several school structures have to support its implementation and dissemination (Hantzopoulous, 2011). Conflict resolution is considered to be essential in determining how teachers learn and succeed in the real classroom and school situations (Pandey, 2011).

Conflict resolution is indeed central to the task of conflict prevention and peace building in Nigeria. The issue of conflict resolution is of serious concern to the Nigerian nation and its people, because it brings about positive social change and understanding of the community, and the country at large. Conflict resolution implies intervention in a conflict situation in such way as to contain it. It is what is done when one identifies and deals with conflict in a reasonable manner through the use of skills such as effective communication, negotiation and problem solving so as to bring about development, peace and progress.

Conflict resolution aims to transform mindset, values and behaviours that produce and exacerbate conflict. Academic institutions and civil society organizations in various parts of the country have long been educating for conflict resolution in teacher education curriculum content/Programmes (Jasmin, 2014). Education for conflict resolution and peace is most meaningful when students can relate to the

concept, as these are very much part of their lives as our country and the world can no longer afford the consequences that aimed at structural violence creation. Building a culture of peace is an urgent task and educating for peace is a great pathway to get there. Therefore, the inclusion of conflict resolution in Teacher Education curriculum content/programme will go a long way in bringing back peace and unity in the society and the nation at large.

Education as we all know is an instrument used in informing, educating, enlightening, awareness creation and above all total development of the entire humanity. Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human right and fundamental freedom, it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (NTI, 2000).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Recommendations from researchers like Makoni (2015), Tumbo & Moyo (2013) hold that conflict resolution issues are supposed to be introduced in schools but for this to happen effectively this has to be introduced in teachers' education curriculum content in order to build prospective teacher capacities to establish infrastructure for positive peace in their future classrooms, the immediate communities and the society as a whole. Conflict resolution needs therefore, to be made compulsory for all prospective teachers. Conflict resolution and Peace education in teachers' education programme can initiate a culture of peace on a systematic basis, starting in teachers' training programme and emanating in the schools and communities (Ssenkumba, 2010). For conflict resolution education to succeed in schools several school structures have to support its implementation and dissemination (Hantzopoulous, 2011). Conflict resolution is considered to be essential in determining how teachers learn and succeed in the real classroom and school situations (Pandey, 2011).

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of Teacher Education**

Teacher Education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community (Singh, 1990). Teacher education is a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein.

According to Martin (1994) teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively. Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills (Mohanty, 2003).

### **The Concept Conflict**

Various authorities understand conflict from diverse perspectives as demonstrated by the definitions advanced by a number of experts in education. Differences in viewpoints are inevitable, and often enriching. Unanimity is more unlikely when we consider that, in addition to natural differences such as male and female, there are those brought about by a range of other dimensions: status, power, wealth, age, the role assigned to our gender, belonging to a specific social group, and so on (Fisher, AbdiLudin, Smith, Williams & Williams, 2007). These indicators of position in society often mean that people want different things from the same situation, sometimes these goals clash, or are incompatible. When such happens, there is bound to be a conflict.

Rue & Byars (2003) contend that conflict is an overt behaviour that results when an individual or group of individuals think a perceived need of the individual or group has been blocked or is about to be blocked. This definition stresses the importance of basic needs like physiological needs, security needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1991). Fisher et al., (2007) say that conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups), who have, or think they have, incompatible goals.

Conflicts are a fact of life, inevitable and often creative. Conflicts occur according to the definitions given above, when people pursue goals which clash. Disagreements and conflicts in schools are usually resolved without violence, and often lead to improved situation for most or all of those involved. Conflicts arise from imbalances in relations. That is, unequal social status, unequal wealth and access to resources and unequal power (Fisher et al., 2007).

### **The Meaning of Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is applying ways of resolving disputes that will leave the previous disputing parties restoring their previous relationships. Conflict resolution is the process of resolving a dispute by providing each side's needs and adequately addressing their interests so that the disputing parties are satisfied with the outcome. Conflict resolution aims to end conflict before it starts to lead to physical fighting (Lam, 1988).

Conflict resolution implies managing disagreements before they lead to aggression or violence. Conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation (CPMRT) is understood as a systematic way of trying to deal with conflict in a professional way which is not corporal (Tumbo & Moyo, 2013). Conflict may be resolved through diverse ways including analysis, negotiation, mediation;

conciliation, facilitation, arbitration and judicial settlement (Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Robbins, 2001). Conflict resolution is a broad term that refers to many ways of resolving disputes. It creates a relationship not characterised by hierarchy but one marked by equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth (Morton, 1991). It is aimed at addressing the causes of conflict and seeking to build new lasting relationships between hostile groups.

The major principle of conflict resolution is to separate people from the problem, focusing on interests not positions, investing in options for mutual gain and using objective criteria as the basis for decision-making and the problem solving process that is negotiation, mediation and consensus- decision making (Crawford & Bodine, 1996).

### **Empirical Review of Related Literature**

Researchers like Crawford and Bodine (1996) and Coleman and Duestch (2001) refer to two approaches of the process curriculum and peaceable classrooms as useful approaches to conflict resolution. The process curriculum is characterised by devoting a specific time to teaching the foundation abilities of conflict resolution, principles of conflict resolution and one or more of problem-solving, processes of conflict resolution as a separate course, distinct curriculum, or daily lesson plan (Crawford & Bodine, 1996). The Peaceable Classroom approach is a whole classroom methodology that includes teaching students the foundation abilities of conflict resolution, principles of conflict resolution and one or more aspects of problem-solving namely negotiation, mediation and consensus decision-making. Conflict resolution is incorporated in the core subjects of the curriculum and into classroom management strategies (Crawford & Bodine, 1996). These two approaches imply having conflict resolution in the school curriculum.

Coleman & Deutsch's (2001) report of schools and districts in the United States of America advocate for conflict resolution concepts and skills into the teacher education curriculum content either as a course that stands alone or as a unit within existing programmes. The curricula provided lessons and activities for pre-schoolers to University level focused on such themes as, understanding conflict, communication, dealing with anger, co-operation affirmation, bias awareness, cultural diversity, conflict resolution and peace- making.

The Zimbabwe Report of the Presidential Commission, Nziramasanga commission into Education and Training (1999) recommended the introduction of Civic Education in schools. This material could also be included in the teacher education curriculum.

Anu (2000) shows that teachers in their perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution agreed that teacher education curriculum content no doubt could be used for conflict resolution. Abdulaziz and Nathan (2001) also found out that lecturers in most Nigeria tertiary institutions are disposed to the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict management. The lecturers' acceptance cuts across gender (males and females). Whether this is true of Delta State teacher education lecturers was the focus of this study. Magagula (2004)

observed in his study on the role of African High Education in conflict management that African universities contribute to conflict prevention and management by creating conflict resolution in teacher education curriculum content.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 86 teacher education lecturers in all Delta State tertiary institutions. The sample for the study consisted of thirty-one (31) teacher education lecturers. The random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument for the study was the questionnaire, made up of two sections, section 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contained personal information of the respondent, while section 'B' consisted of twenty (20) items. The items in the questionnaire was rated on four points scale as follows: SA (Strongly Agree) 4, A (Agree) 3, SD (Strongly Disagree) 2, and D (Disagree). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Data were gathered were analysed using the t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

#### **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution.

**Table 1: Analysis of t-test of Male and Female Lecturers' Perception of the Use of Teacher Education Curriculum Content for Conflict Resolution**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t-cal.</b>	<b>t-Crit.</b>
Male	9	3.89	0.31	29	0.88	2.04
Female	22	3.93	0.25			

The result in table 1 presents the t-test analysis of the difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution. From the table, result shows that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution. This is because the calculated t-value (0.88) is lesser than the critical t-value (2.04). Thus, null hypothesis tested is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution.

### **Discussion of Results**

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution. The result showed that sex did not influence lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution, hence the retention of the hypothesis. This agrees with Idorenyin (1998), Abdulaziz & Nathan (2001), Magagula (2004) and Pandey (2011) who found that lecturers gender

had no significant influence on lecturers' perception of the use of teacher education curriculum content for conflict resolution. This implies that male and female lecturers' generally accepted that teacher education curriculum content could be used for conflict resolution. Thus, their views were not affected by gender.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has been able to situate or relate what could be referred to as teacher education curriculum content to conflict resolution in Nigeria by looking at such factors as teacher education, conflict, and conflict resolution. Peace is very important in the life of each and every citizen in Nigeria, there is the need to acquire the knowledge of conflict resolution in teacher education curriculum content so as to establish a culture of peace in the classroom and the society at large. In this regards, the society has to adopt the system of inclusion of Peace Education in our schools especially teacher training institutions. Conflict resolution is an indispensable component in our educational system today. The effective delivery of conflict resolution education at all levels, teacher Education programmes in particular will go a long way in bringing back peace as well as creating a peace literate society.

### **Recommendations**

1. Teacher education curriculum content such as self-control, self-sacrifice, transparency, cooperation, accountability, selflessness, equity, exemplary leadership, social justice and patriotism should be inculcated in the would-be teachers.
2. The curriculum of teacher education should be reviewed to include the study of national and international conflicts management.
3. Conflict and conflict resolution should be introduced as a course in teacher education programme in Nigeria. The lesson learnt from such studies, may help to reduce tension and to prevent and manage conflict.
4. The government should organise workshops, seminars, conferences, and in-service training for lecturers on conflict resolution and the use of desirable generalizations that will help- bring about peaceful co-existence.

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