

# STRENGTHENING PEACE EDUCATION AND PEACE CULTURE FOR PERFORMANCE OF POST PRIMARY STUDENTS IN PORT HARCOURT CITY, RIVERS STATE

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## **Abstract**

*Peace education and peace culture, same side of same coin are necessary tools for the academic performance of students at the Post Primary level of Education in Nigeria. It is against the background the background this study examines the need to strengthen the duo at the secondary school settings in Port Harcourt city, Rivers State. The population for the study consists of all the 12 Government owned secondary schools in Port Harcourt City, Rivers State. There are 773 teachers and 1096 students in these schools. A population census sample of 600 teachers 12 of which are principals was randomly selected for the study. A 28 item self structured questionnaire titled Peace Education and Culture in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (PECSSQ) validated by experts and reliability established at 0.76 was used to generate data for the study. Two research question and two null hypotheses guided the study. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the research question while Spearman Rank Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study include identifying peace education dimensions-peace building, peace keeping as positively affecting the peace culture of post secondary schools in Nigeria. It was recommended amongst others that training and retraining of skills to use appropriate methods and techniques to effectively teach peace education concepts.*

### **Background to the Study**

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.

A viable intervention option is the platform provided by peace education as a tested pedagogic tool of action for conflict transformation and prevention, accessible and beneficial to West African children and young people. Peace education aims at promoting a culture of peaceful co-existence and preventing the incidence of conflict situations with active responsibility. Since its development and global acceptability for psycho-social transformation of children and youths, its impact and success has been acknowledged and continually adopted across countries and communities. It has gained popularity and prominence as a character building intervention based on a human, civic, moral and spiritual value system with stress on developing peaceful living competencies in children and young people (Kracke, 2009). This paper therefore investigates on the institutionalization of peace education and peace culture in post primary school level in Nigeria.

Peace education has recently gained attention all around the world (Yilmaz, 2003). This is because of the increasing recourse to the use of violence in responding to conflict or disagreement between individuals, groups, communities and countries. The concept of peace education has attracted numerous definitions and has been seen from different point of view. For example, Gumut (2006) perceives peace education as the deliberate attempt to educate children, youths and adults in the dynamics of conflict prevention and promotion of peace making skills in homes, schools, and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. To Fisk (2000), peace education is described as a process wherein people learn ideologies, values, attitudes, more standards, sensitivities to others and new perceptions such that they are moved to take different actions from which they did in the past. On the other hand, Oshita (2006) believes that the aim of peace education becomes not just educating for peace but educating for a 'peace capacity'. Peace education is essentially a peace empowerment strategy which mainly equips individuals with the knowledge

and skills to prevent and manage conflict at intra/inter-personal or intra/inter-group levels. Thus Salomon (2002) has pointed out the main activities of peace education:

1. As a matter of changing mindsets;
2. As a matter of cultivating a set of skills;
3. As a matter of promoting human rights (particularly in the Third World Countries); and
4. As a matter of environmentalism, disarmament, and the promotion of a culture of peace.

Fundamentally, peace education aims at building the peace capacity of people so that they do not only learn to resolve their conflicts through peaceful dialogue but to also live in peace. Similarly, Momodu (2009) posit that peace education is a behavioural and attitudinal change mechanism which aims at: pre-empting conflict (build-up); preventing conflict outbreaks; resolving conflict and promoting a culture of peace. Basically, peace education aims at systematically inculcating the culture of peace in the minds of individuals with a view to deconstructing the culture of violence from their minds by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and abilities, which would assist individuals to interact peacefully and to collaborate to achieve collective as well as personal goals.

Based on the above, it is clear that peace education can be used to positively used to eliminate behaviours and attitudes that engenders conflict and violence in any social system including the secondary school system. This is because it has the potential to modify unwanted human behaviours that are inimical to peaceful coexistence by fostering the holistic social, psychological and intellectual development of human beings, with a view to helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations in life.

The term ‘peace building’ was coined by Johan Galtung in 1975 with the publication of ‘Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building’. Galtung developed many of the core concepts that continue to be applied in peace building work and definitions today, including in the UN’s 2007 definition. Core concepts from Galtung’s work include: negative peace, positive peace, structural violence, root causes of conflict and sustainable peace.

For Galtung, peace building involves addressing and removing the root causes of violence - the structural and (a later addition to his work) the cultural violence - that feeds into and enables direct violence. The goal of peace building is positive, sustainable peace. In Galtung’s words “structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur” (1976). Galtung also emphasizes the importance of local knowledge, ownership and participation in peace building.

The work of John Paul Lederach has also been important for evolving definitions of peace building. Lederach’s emphases on peace building as a process that is dynamic

and social and involves transforming relationships have been important. In 1997, Lederach wrote that peace building:

*Is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct (p. 84—85).*

Transformation is an important concept within Lederach's work and the idea regarding the transformation of conflict and the relationships between conflicting parties continues to be important for peace building definitions and practice. Many scholars, international organizations and community groups have taken these concepts and the ideas of peace building that they inform forward in their work, approaching peace building from a variety of perspectives and refining peace building in conceptual and practical ways.

**Peace Education:** Peace education has been defined as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youths and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Kracke, 2009).

**Peace Education and Peace Culture:** Peace Educators hope to create in the human consciousness a commitment to the ways of peace. Just as a doctor learns in medical school how to minister to the sick, students in peace education learn how to solve problems caused by violence. Peace education tries to inoculate students against the evil effects of violence by teaching skills to manage conflicts non-violently and by creating a desire to seek peaceful resolutions of conflict. Peace education pedagogy is interactive, with the use of dialogue, deliberation and critical learning. Formal and informal collaboration with other groups and cultures in the community is encouraged. Peace education curricula offer diverse content, form, structure, skills and attitudes that address the needs of alternative perspectives (Graca, 2000).

Culture is not individualistic but it is conformist as it deals with groups of individuals. Therefore the inclusion of culture in peace education programmes is important in order to foster cultural integration, tolerance between or among different cultures and the promotion of unity and understanding amongst people in society. Salomon (2002) echoes that "peace education is unique because it deals with relations between groups, not individuals". By and large, peace is a culture and a peoples' way of life, which can be promoted or propagated through education as a tool. Therefore, the whole essence of

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peace education is to promote the culture of non-violence as against the culture of violence in responding to conflict between or among individuals and groups.

**Channels for Propagating Peace Education:** Basically, peace education can be taught or advocated through formal and non-formal channels of education (Momodu, 2011). Thus:

1. Formal channels of peace education: These involves the various educational channels for teaching and learning which are usually employed in the teaching of basic knowledge and skills of conflict resolution, peace- building and peace promotion. Peace education is usually designed or factored into the school curriculum for onward teaching. Formal channels or media of peace education are structured in nature. These formal educational channels are educational institutions or schools like primary and secondary schools (both public and private) and tertiary institutions like colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Also included as part of these media are conferences, workshops and symposia which can also be employed for teaching peace education.

2. Non-formal channels of peace education: These involve the various nonformal educational channels and traditional methods of learning which can be employed for people to learn about peace and peace promotion. Such channels are plays, dramas, jingles, prose, posters, handbills, folklores, and stories, Television and Radio programmes, dancing and other cultural methods of learning. Non-formal channels of peace education are usually not organized and controlled in nature but can be very effective for learning about peace and peace promotion.

**Institutionalizing Peace Education in Post Primary School Curricula in Nigeria:**

The post primary school system in Nigeria is a microcosm of the Nigerian society which is replete with conflicts of various degrees and intensity. Conflict remains one of the greatest challenges confronting the success of the teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Nigeria. The need for the development of a robust and comprehensive peace education curriculum, which will address concrete issues with regards to conflict and its resolution through peaceful means, cannot be overemphasized. This is because a comprehensive approach to peace education in schools will proactively address the issue of dysfunctional conflicts in the school system, which impedes progress and development in the system. Thus, a comprehensive peace education curriculum must focus on tolerance, peer mediation, cooperative teaching and learning in the classroom between teachers and students and between or among students, and training for teachers and administrators, and parents. (Nelson, Van, & Cardella, 1999)

Clearly, a holistic peace education curriculum is indispensable in any effort geared towards propagating the culture of peace and eliminating the prevalent growing culture of violence within the secondary school system in Nigeria. The need for a

holistic and encompassing peace education curriculum has been reinforced by Bodine & Crawford (1998) who warned that those selecting peace education and conflict resolution curricula should be aware that not all that are labeled as such represent authentic programmes. Nelson, Van Slyck, and Cardella (1999) assert that peace education curricula should be designed to influence knowledge and understanding of peace and conflict, competencies necessary for peacemaking, peace building, and peacekeeping, peaceful attitudes and values, and efficacy and outcome expectancies.

The need for institutionalizing peace education in the secondary school curricula is important because the school needs to continue to embark on curricular reform culture so as to enable the various actors in the school system and the society at large to face the challenges of the increasing recourse to the use of violence as an option for responding to conflict issues. This study therefore suggests the following peace education curriculum to be mainstreamed in the curricula of secondary schools in Nigeria with a view to re-inventing the culture of peace in the minds of students' right from the secondary school level where it is believed that students acquire and manifest violent behaviours. The UNESCO Seville Statement on violence affirms that "war is not a fatality determined by genes, violent brains, human nature or instincts, but is rather a social invention. Therefore, the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace." By and large, the mainstreaming of peace education in the curricula of secondary schools will assist in the construction of peace in the minds of the students and the teachers and the administrators which will create the enabling environment conducive for learning in the system. (Bodine, & Crawford, 1998).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The interplay of intractable conflict environment and the arising negative socialization process has placed children and young people at risk of fostering various manifestations of radicalism, 'vicious' violent characters capable of further destabilising peace, security and development within the educational sector. Their vulnerability is further increased based on their critical phase of human development when patterns of interpersonal, social and civil behaviour are shaped and solidified (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (2005). This paints a grim picture for the transformation of the economy and the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigerian educational system as they face higher risk of future violent conflicts if policies and strategies are not properly implemented.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the institutionalization of peace education and peace culture in post primary schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the influence of peace building on peace culture in post primary schools in Nigeria.

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2. To examine the influence of peace keeping on peace culture in post primary school in Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

Two research questions that guided the study are:

1. What are the ways peace building affects peace culture in post secondary schools in Nigeria?
2. In what ways do peace keeping affects peace culture in post secondary schools in Nigeria?

**Research Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant relationship between peace building and peace culture in post primary schools in Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between peace keeping and peace culture in post primary schools in Nigeria

**Methodology**

The objective of this paper is to empirically investigate on institutionalization of peace education and peace culture in post primary school level in Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey. The instrument for data collection was a 16-item questionnaire titled “Peace Education and Peace Culture in Post Primary School Level In Nigeria” (PEPCPPSLQ) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management. The items were structured on a modified 4 point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Data were drawn from 12 Government owned secondary schools in Port Harcourt City local government Area of Rivers State in Nigeria using convenient sampling techniques. Six hundred (600) teachers were randomly chosen as the sample size of our study. 50 teachers from each secondary schools were respectively sampled. A 5-point Likert scale was used in questionnaire design (Walton,1975). Data obtained from the field and were analyzed using Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient

**Results**

**Table 1:** Analysis of respondents demographic information

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage %
Age	Less than 20 years	-	-
	20-29	120	20.8
	30-39	270	46.9
	40-49	168	29.2
	50 years and above	18	3.1
	Total	576	100
Minimum Educational Qualification	First school leaving	-	-
	SSCE	12	2.1
	Diploma/certificate	354	61.5
	Bsc/HND	210	36.5
	Master/Ph.D	576	100
	Total		
Working Experience	1-5years	-	-
	6-10 years	30	5.2
	11-15 years	198	34.4
	16-15 years	276	47.9
	Above 20 years	72	12.5
	Total	576	100

**Source:** Desk Research, 2016

Table 1 shows that none of the respondents are less than 20 years age group, 120 representing 20.8% are between 20-29 years, 270 representing 46.9% are between 30-39 years, 168 representing 29.2% of the respondents are between 40- 49 years, while 18 representing 3.1% of the respondents are within the 50 years and above. This means that majority of the respondents are between 30-39 years.

Also, none of the respondents indicated a minimum of first school leaving certificate or a senior secondary certificate, 12 representing 2.1% holds a diploma/certificate as a minimum educational qualification, 354 respondents representing 61.5% holds BSc/HND, while 210, representing 36.4% of respondents holds Masters/Ph.D. this analysis reveals that majority of our respondents are BSc/HND holders, meaning they are educated and will understand the questions on the instrument, thereby responding adequately to the questionnaire.

Similarly, none of the respondents are within 1-5 years working experience, 30 representing 5.2% are between 6-10 years, 198 representing 34.4% are between 11-15



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years, 276 representing 47.9% are between 16-20 years, while 72 respondents representing 12.5% are between the above 20 years working experience.

The dimensions of peace education: Peace building, and peace keeping were all correlated against the dependent variable measures of peace culture. The aim was to ascertain if there is a significant relationship between these dimensions of peace education and the measures of peace culture, the correlation values with their related significant values are shown in table 1-2 below.

**Table 2:** Decision Table for Ho<sub>1</sub>

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Indep1	3.80	1.109	576
Dep-1	3.68	1.096	576

**Source:** Desk Research, 2016

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Indep	Dep_1
Indep1	Spearman Correlation	1	.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	192	576
Dep-1	Spearman Correlation	.370**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	192	576

**Source:** Desk Research, 2016

The research hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between peace building and peace culture. As evident in the statistical testing of hypothesis one, a significant relationship was revealed to exist between peace building and peace culture, this is evident in the correlation value of 0.37 (37%). The null hypothesis one was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis one accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between peace building and peace culture.

**Table 3:** Decision Table for Ho<sub>2</sub>

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Indep1	3.70	1.117	576
Dep-1	3.60	1.230	576

**Source:** Desk Research, 2016

Correlations			
		Indep	Dep_2
Indep1	Spearman Correlation	2	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	576	576
Dep-1	Spearman Correlation	.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	576	576

Source: Desk Research, 2016

The research hypothesis two states that, there is no significant relationship between peace keeping and peace culture. As evident in the statistical testing of hypothesis two, a significant relationship was revealed to exist between peace building and peace culture, this is evident in the positive correlation ( $r^2$ ) value of 0.32 (32%). The null hypothesis two was thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis two accepted. Therefore there is a significant relationship between peace building and peace culture.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Consequent upon the analysis and findings, we therefore conclude as follows; that Peace education needs to be enriched with some relevant concepts for enhancing peace education. Strategies identified for increasing the possibility of enhancing peace education bother largely on institutionalizing peace education concepts under themes, curriculum review, innovative teaching methods, teacher motivation and text book review. Therefore, in the Rivers State perspective, relevant curriculum content for the achievement of peace education in Nigeria should be possible by institutionalizing relevant peace education concepts, innovative pedagogy, the use of thematic approach in curriculum content structuring.

In view of the above conclusions, the paper recommends amongst others that:

1. The present Post Primary School curriculum content could be reviewed to reflect the identified concepts that are relevant to peace education.
2. Training and retraining of 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.

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