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## Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum in Inculcating the Culture of Peace in Nigerian Students

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By

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### Abstract

*The world is experiencing increasing spate of violent crimes in which youths are involved. Experts have argued that what happens in schools translates into the larger society, and since the school curriculum comprises all the experiences a learner acquires in school and for the fact that Nigeria has been bedeviled by violent crimes perpetrated by youths the researchers investigated teachers' perceived adequacy of secondary school curriculum in inculcating the culture of peace in Nigerian students. One hundred and two (102) secondary school teachers in six state-owned secondary schools in the metropolitan city of Awka, Anambra state in Nigeria were randomly sampled for the study. The researchers developed and validated a 22-item questionnaire which was used to collect data. Three research questions and six hypotheses were formulated. Research questions were answered using mean, and the null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Major findings indicated that teachers agreed that to an extent that the secondary school curriculum is adequate in inculcating the knowledge, values and skills for peace culture in Nigerian students. t-test analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in the perception*

*of male and female teachers on the adequacy of secondary school curriculum in inculcating the knowledge, values and skills for peace culture in students. However, t-test analysis revealed significant differences in teachers' perception on the adequacy of the curriculum on values and skills when their qualifications were considered.*

**Key words:** Peace culture, secondary school curriculum, conflict resolution, conflict sensitive education.

Newspapers and magazines pages, radio announcements, discussions in social gatherings and social networking sites are today replete with gory and heart destabilizing stories of violent and wanton destruction of lives and properties which seem unending. There are stories of civil wars, political conflicts, religious conflicts, nuclear threats, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, militancy, and violent protests. Mallum (2002) noted that since 1945 the world has continued to experience spates of violence, conflicts and wars, as evidenced in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Uganda, Burundi, Liberia, Zaire, and the Middle East, among others. Instances abound even as we set out to write this article – the Syrian and Libyan civil wars, political crisis in Egypt, ethno-religious conflicts in Iraq and Nigeria, nuclear threat between the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea and South Korea, etc. As Akudolu (2012:159) pointed out, 'the world is experiencing great technological breakthrough that ushered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but these advancements are coupled with rising incidences of physical, economic, political, psychological, and ecological violence at personal levels and as well as communal, national and international levels'.

Nigeria and many other African nations have not been spared of these conflicts. To Okoro (2010) African society has been ravaged with conflicts that it has consequently created in the modern minds of an average African a mentality construct that war/conflict is an indispensable social phenomenon. Conflicts in Nigeria have been exacerbated by the show of intolerance among the very many ethnic groups of over 400. These ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have led to the loss of no fewer than three million lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages (Salawu, 2010), and the formation of ethnic militias such as: the O' dua People Congress (OPC); the Bakassi Boys; the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth Congress(IYC); and the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and others including but not limited to the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC) the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); and the Ohanaeze N'digbo (Daily Trust;'20/8/2002! p.16 as cited in Salawu, 2010). Isichie and Bolaji (2009) corroborating the above scenario lamented that 'every aspect of the country's institutions is conflict-ridden, ranging from civil unrest, politics, inter-religious violence, ethnic violence, agitation against oppression and infringement on fundamental human rights, corruption, economic crisis and

unpatriotic and undemocratic principles in governance'. Salawu, (2010) noted that before the present democratic dispensation, Nigeria has tasted acts of Violence which include the maitatsine religious disturbances in parts of Kano and Maiduguri in the early 1980s; Jimeta-Yola religious disturbances (1984), and Zango Kataf crises in Kaduna State (1992) the Kafanchan College of Education Muslim-Christian riots; Kaduna Polytechnic Muslim-Christian skirmishes (1981 1982); and the cross vs the crescent conflict at the University of Ibadan (1981-1985), the Bulumkutu Christian-Muslim riots (1982); Usman Danfodio University Sokoto (1982); and the Muslim-Christian Clash during a Christian procession at Easter in Ilorin, Kwara State (1986). Presently there is the case of Boko Haram crises in the northern states of Yobe, Adamawa, Bornu and some other northern states, the Fulani crises in Jos, the Omotaba crisis in Nasarawa State, the Aguleri Crisis in Anambra State, the Izza crisis in Ebony state, just to mention but a few. These have claimed many lives and properties worth millions of naira.

Conflict exists in all human organizations and has been described as all forms of opposition, disagreement, and friction between two or more parties, manifesting itself in the forms of arguments, protests, demonstration, aggression and other destructive behaviours (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). To Crawford and Bodline (1996) conflict arises from a discord of needs, drives, wishes, and/or demands, and in itself is neither positive nor negative. They stressed further that the response to conflict is what transforms it into either a competitive, destructive experience or a constructive challenge offering the opportunity for growth. Mallum (2002) stated that 'literature searches in this area reveal a global awareness and realization that appropriate solutions to eradicating societal violence and resolving conflicts peacefully lie in the process of developing within children, right from home through school, skills for resolving conflict by non-violent means'. The world is desperately in need of peace but fear, marginalization, dominance, differing philosophies, beliefs and traditions, corruption etc have been a cog in the wheel of progress in this. However, Okoro (2010) has it that fear of heading for destruction and the realization that peace is the only precondition for human development have led the modern world to come up with diverse methods of handling peace which include conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation, peace enforcement, peace-making, peace keeping, and peace building. Begum (2012), opined that the kind of knowledge and experience inculcated to students in schools today will exert great influence on the visualization of a peaceful world in the future. Conflict-sensitive educational systems tend to promote interpersonal cooperation, culture of equity and equality, and reduction of educational hegemony. Constructive response to conflict has become essential and unequivocal in schools for the cultivation of a safe and prospering future for the world (Crawford & Bodline, 1996; Begum, 2012).

Korb (2011) argued that the answer to some conflicts in society could be traced to our schools which are the principal institutions of learning in modern time, and perhaps that what happens in schools is internalized by students and transferred to the general society. In line with this, Seitz (2004) pointed out the need for an unbiased observation of the ambivalent influences which education can have on the genesis and dynamics of violent conflicts as a necessary step to demystifying the apparent peace-building power of education, and that it is only recently that significant importance has been attached to the negative influence of educational structures and processes on societal conflict situations. This destructive potential on the part of education, according to Seitz, is not only seen when education is abused for the purpose of propagating war propaganda or when teachers agitate or incite one ethnic group against another or against ethnic minorities, but that the educational institutions themselves are shaped to a considerable degree by structural violence.

Peace is considered as a condition in which there is no social conflict and individuals (absence of fear, conflict, anxiety, exclusion, deprivation or suffering and violence) and groups are able to meet their needs, aspirations and expectations in a structurally functional society (George Genyi, 2013). Begum (2002) noted that the current consensus among peace theorists is that 'peace is not a state of being to be found somewhere in the future or at any time, but a reference to processes and qualities regarding our relationships with self and others, manifesting themselves in perception, reaction, affection, and action'. Bliss (2008) asserted that for peace and non-violence to prevail, that there is the uncompromising need to foster a culture of peace through education by revising the educational curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes and behaviours of a culture of peace, including peaceful conflict-resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non-violence. To develop a more conflict-sensitive educational programme, Seitz (2004) emphasized that the following factors should be taken into consideration:

1. Educational facilities and structures have to be as inclusive and integrative as possible, i.e. allow for equal access for all population groups, and also reflect the social and cultural diversity of society in the curriculum.
2. Educational programmes should adopt a democratic and participatory learning culture so as to allow for a constructive way of dealing with conflicts, and at the same time be embedded in a democratic educational environment which allows all the societal powers to participate in shaping the education system accordingly.
3. Educational facilities have to take into account the plurality of human societies to a greater degree and allow for the development of multiple and inclusive identity concepts, which appreciate differences and heterogeneity and which are able to contain differing opinions with tolerance and empathy.

Peace education is defined as the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth, 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 (UNESCO, 2002 in Begum, 2012). Peace education is viewed as a life affirming approach to human interaction and has its major focus on teaching children and citizens non-violent resolution skills (Mallum, 2002). These non-violent resolution skills will inculcate in our students the culture of peace (a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations, [UN definition of peace culture as cited by Bliss, 2008]) which will be translated into concrete terms in our society. Akudolu (2012:159) simply puts culture of peace as a 'culture in which people act with the mindset of peace consciousness and peace becomes a part of life'. Mallum (2002) stated that peace education is built on the principle of give and take cooperation, respect for others and their opinions, leadership skills, and benevolence in civic and cultural attitudes which lay emphasis on otherness. Its curriculum may include 'skills in peaceful solution to conflicts, problem solving approach, learning of non-violent skills for daily living and social skills, peer-counselling, attitudes and skills of cooperation, understanding of human rights and children's rights, role-playing in constructive conflict resolution, non-violent classroom environment and a range of aspects which promote and facilitate peace in conflict resolution, such as understanding of cultural variations, linguistic differences, citizenship education and national, state, or ethnic loyalties' (Mallum, 2002).

In the implementation of peace education in modern societies, Akudolu (2012) identified two arms of peace education which are peace as a subject of study in schools and education for peace which is concerned with both formal and informal process of inculcating in learners the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to live in harmony with oneself and others by adopting peaceful resolutions to interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. She proposed in 2010 that in-school promotion of education for peace implies the integration of basic elements of peace education into all instructional activities in school (Akudolu, 2012). Since the school curriculum comprises all the experiences a learner acquires in school and for the fact that Nigeria has been bedeviled by violent crimes perpetrated by youths the researchers set out to investigate the perceived adequacy of secondary school curriculum in inculcating the culture of peace in Nigerian students. It investigated its perceived adequacy on the emphasis on knowledge of peace, values and attitude, and skills to maintain peace culture among secondary school students. It was also hypothesized that gender and teachers' qualification will not lead to significant differences in teachers' perception on the

adequacy of the curriculum in inculcating peace culture among secondary school students.

**Method**

The study adopted a survey research design. One hundred and two (102) secondary school teachers in six state-owned secondary schools in the metropolitan city of Awka, Anambra state in Nigeria were randomly sampled for the study. There are eighteen male teachers and eighty-four female teachers. Among the respondents, 29 have masters’ degrees in Education while 73 have National Certificates in Education and Bachelor degrees in Education. Six (6) male teachers have masters’ degrees while twenty-three (23) female have. Twelve (12) male teachers have NCE/BED while sixty-one (61) female teachers have. A researcher developed and validated 22-item questionnaire titled – ‘adequacy of secondary school curriculum in inculcating the culture of peace in Nigerian students’ questionnaire (ASSCICRSNSQ)’ was used to collect data. It has two sections. Section A sought to collect teachers’ bio-data and section B contains the twenty-two questionnaire items divided into three groups. It was structured using the 4-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and their suggestions were considered in drafting the final copy of the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty-four copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers but only 102 copies were returned which accounted for 82.26%. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test.

**Results**

**Table 1: Mean Scores of Teachers on the Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on the Knowledge of Peace**

SN	Items	Males		Females		BED/N CE	MED		
		X(%)	Decision	X(%)	Decision	X(%)	Decision	X(%)	Decision
1.	Adequacy of secondary school curriculum on emphasis on the knowledge of peace School curriculum adequately emphasized the knowledge of peace culture to	3.17	Agree	2.94	Agree	3.04	Agree	2.72	Agree

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	secondary school students								
2.	School curriculum adequately lays emphasis on the knowledge of justice	3.06	Agree	2.83	Agree	2.84	Agree	2.69	Agree
3.	School curriculum adequately emphasized the knowledge of human rights	3.17	Agree	3.06	Agree	3.21	Agree	2.72	Agree
4.	School curriculum adequately emphasized Knowledge of civic responsibility	3.67	Strongly agree	3.22	Agree	3.30	Agree	3.21	Agree
5.	Knowledge of emotional control is adequately emphasized in school curriculum	2.67	Agree	2.65	Agree	2.77	Agree	2.52	Agree
6.	Knowledge of how to resolve conflicts is adequately emphasized in school curriculum	2.95	Agree	2.61	Agree	2.97	Agree	2.52	Agree
7.	Knowledge of how to manage conflict is adequately emphasized in school curriculum	2.39	Disagree	2.56	Agree	2.71	Agree	2.62	Agree
8.	Knowledge of Intercultural understanding is adequately emphasized in school curriculum	2.78	Agree	2.59	Agree	2.93	Agree	2.38	Disagree

Table 1 shows that apart from item 7 which was rejected by male teachers all the other seven items were agreed upon by both male and female teachers. Male teachers had higher mean scores in all the items listed above. It is revealed from the result above that teachers agree that the secondary school curriculum is adequate in inculcating the knowledge of peace in secondary school students. Considering their qualifications, those with BED/NCE agreed more to the adequacy of the secondary school curriculum in inculcating the knowledge of peace than those with master’s degrees. Item 8 was rejected by those with master’s degrees.

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Teachers on the Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Inculcating the Values and Attitude to Peace**

SN	Items	Males		Females		BED/ NCE X(%)	MED		
		X	Decision	X	Decision		Decision	X(%)	Decision
	Adequacy of secondary school curriculum on emphasis on the values and attitude to peace								
1.	The value of tolerance is adequately inculcated in secondary school students	3.00	Agree	2.68	Agree	3.03	Agree	2.62	Agree
2.	The value of caring is adequately inculcated in secondary school students	3.00	Agree	2.87	Agree	2.80	Agree	1.52	Disagree
3.	Secondary school curriculum adequately inculcates the value of social equity in students	1.89	Disagree	2.06	Disagree	2.72	Agree	2.03	Disagree
4.	Secondary school curriculum adequately inculcates the value of cooperation and solidarity in students	3.06	Agree	2.83	Agree	3.00	Agree	2.72	Agree
5.	Secondary school curriculum adequately inculcates respect for human life adequately in students	3.17	Agree	3.29	Agree	3.18	Agree	2.69	Agree



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6.	Secondary curriculum adequately inculcates the value of compassion in students	school	3.00	Agree	2.59	Agree	2.90	Agree	2.45	Disagree
7.	Secondary curriculum adequately inculcates the value of empathy in students	school	2.73	Agree	2.65	Agree	2.77	Agree	2.62	Agree

From the table above, item 3 was rejected by both male and female teachers while both male and female teachers agreed on all the other six items. Male teachers also had higher mean scores than female students. Teachers perceive the curriculum as being adequate for inculcating the values and attitude of peace culture in secondary school students. On the other hand, those with BEd/NCE perceived the curriculum to be more adequate than those that have MED. Items 2,3,6 were rejected by teachers with higher qualification.

**Table 3: Mean Scores of Teachers on the Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Inculcating the Skills to Maintain Peace Culture**

SN	Items	Males		Females		BED/ NCE X(%)	MED				
		X	Decision	X	Decision		Decision	X(%)	Decision		
1.	Adequacy of secondary school curriculum on emphasis on skills to maintain peace culture	Secondary curriculum adequately emphasized students gaining the skill of active listening	school	3.67	Strongly agree	2.97	Agree	3.22	Agree	2.83	Agree
2.	Secondary curriculum adequately emphasize students gaining the skill of critical thinking	school	3.12	Agree	2.96	Agree	3.19	Agree	2.48	Disagree	
3.	Secondary curriculum adequately equips students with skill of self-reflection	school	3.00	Agree	2.65	Agree	2.90	Agree	2.24	Disagree	

4.	Secondary curriculum adequately equips students with skills of working together in groups	school	3.39	Agree	2.93	Agree	3.07	Agree	2.48	Disagree
5.	Secondary curriculum adequately equips students with problem-solving skills in students	school	3.28	Agree	2.89	Agree	3.16	Agree	2.55	Agree
6.	Secondary curriculum adequately equips students with efficient communication skills	school	3.39	Agree	2.85	Agree	3.10	Agree	2.48	Disagree
7.	Secondary curriculum adequately inculcates in students cross-cultural skills	school	2.67	Agree	2.53	Agree	2.67	Agree	2.24	Disagree

Table three shows that both male and female teachers agreed on all the items with male teachers having higher mean scores. Also those with higher degrees disagree with items 2,3,4,6 and 7. Those with higher qualification disagree that the curriculum is adequate in inculcating the skills for peace culture in secondary school students.

**Table 4: T-Test on Male and Female Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on the Knowledge of Peace**

Source of variation	N	X	SD	Df	t- cal	t- crit	P> 0.05
Male	18	2.98	0.83	100	0.77	1.984	Not significant
Female	84	2.81	0.75				

The table shows that at 0.05 level of significance, the t-cal 0.77 is less than the critical value 1.984, hence the hypothesis is accepted which shows that male and female teachers' perception on the adequacy of the secondary school curriculum on the knowledge of peace do not differ significantly.

**Table 5: T-Test on Male and Female Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on the Values and Attitude to Peace Culture**

Source of variation	N	X	SD	Df	t- cal	t- crit	P> 0.05
Male	18	2.84	0.84	100	0.59	1.984	Not significant
Female	84	2.71	0.81				

The table shows that at 0.05 level of significance, the t-cal 0.59 is less than the critical value 1.984, hence the hypothesis is accepted which shows that male and female teachers' perception on the adequacy of the secondary school curriculum on the values and attitude to peace culture do not differ significantly.

**Table 6: T-Test on Male and Female Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on the Skills to Maintain Peace Culture**

Source of Variation	N	X	SD	Df	T- Cal	T- Crit	P> 0.05
Male	18	3.22	0.83	100	1.86	1.984	Not significant
Female	84	2.83	0.81				

Male and female teachers' perception on the adequacy of the curriculum in inculcating the skills to maintain peace culture does not differ since the t-cal is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 7: T-Test on Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on the Knowledge of Peace Based on their Qualifications**

Source of variation	N	X	SD	Df	t- cal	t- crit	P> 0.05
BEd/NCE	73	2.97	0.71	100	1.67	1.984	Not significant
Med	29	2.67	0.85				

The table above shows that teachers' qualification does not lead to significant differences in teachers' perception on the adequacy of secondary school curriculum in inculcating knowledge of peace in secondary school students since the t-cal (1.67) is less than the table value (1.984) at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 8: T-Test on Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on Values and Attitude to Peace Culture Based on their Qualification**

Source of variation	N	X	SD	Df	t- cal	t- crit	P> 0.05
B.Ed/NCE	73	2.91	0.67	100	3.31	1.984	significant
M.Ed	29	2.38	0.78				

At 0.05 level of significance the t-cal (3.31) is greater than the t-crit (1.984) which shows that teachers' perception on the adequacy of curriculum on the values and attitude to peace culture differed as a result of their qualification.

**Table 9: T-Test on Teachers' Perceived Adequacy of Secondary School Curriculum on Emphasis on Skills to Peace Culture Based on their Qualification**

Source of variation	N	X	SD	Df	t- cal	t- crit	P> 0.05
B.Ed/NCE	73	3.04	0.74	100	3.56	1.984	significant
M.Ed	29	2.47	0.74				

At 0.05 level of significance the t-cal (3.56) is greater than the t-crit (1.984) which shows that teachers' perception on the adequacy of curriculum in inculcating the skills to maintain peace differed as a result of their qualification.

## Discussion

Efforts are made in schools to mold students into responsible citizens that will help in sustaining the progress of their nation. The ever-increasing violent crimes in our society demands that curriculum is assessed to see if it is adequate to inculcate peace culture in secondary school students. Education for peace demands the integration of basic elements of peace education into all instructional activities in school (Akudolu, 2012). In assessing the integration of knowledge of peace in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum, secondary school teachers (both male and female) agreed that such elements like justice, human rights, civic responsibility, emotional control, constructive conflict resolution and intercultural understanding are adequately taken care of. Male teachers did not consider the curriculum as being adequate in the knowledge of conflict management. When their qualifications were taken into consideration, both those that have graduate and first graduate/National Certificate Examination agreed the curriculum is adequate in inculcating the knowledge of these basic element. This is in agreement with the opinions of Mallum (2002) and Akudolu (2012) that curriculum for peace must be able to inculcate the elements of peace culture in students. Using t-test

no significant differences were found in teachers' perception on the adequacy of the secondary school curriculum on the knowledge of peace as result of gender and qualifications.

Looking at the adequacy of the curriculum in inculcating values and attitude to peace culture, teachers also agreed that it is adequate in inculcating values and attitude that will promote peace culture in secondary school. However, teachers disagreed on the adequacy of the curriculum to inculcate the value of social equity. Those with graduate degrees disagreed on the adequacy of the curriculum to inculcate values and attitude to peace culture. t-test revealed no gender significance but a significant difference in teachers' perception when their qualifications were considered. This implies that one's qualification can affect how he/she perceives the school curriculum.

Furthermore, teachers perceived the curriculum as been able to equip students with the skills to maintain peace culture. When their qualifications were considered, those with higher qualifications disagreed that the curriculum is adequate in equipping students with the skills to maintain peace while those that have BEd/NCE agreed that the curriculum is adequate. This might have been caused as a result of the fact that assessment of the curriculum may demand better understanding and training, and the fact that conceptualization of peace education has been very difficult.

## **Conclusion**

To most secondary school teachers, the curriculum is seen as adequate in inculcating the culture of peace to students. However, more qualified teachers disagreed in its adequacy in the aspects of values, attitudes and skills. This points to a kind of gap in the implementation of the curriculum since these aspect may not just come easy by teaching of concepts but a more practical and affective approach. Efforts should be made to see that the implementation of the curriculum is improved upon.

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