PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN THE TEACHING OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA.

BY

DR. (MRS.) IMOH-OBONG INYANG INYANG
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AFAHA NSIT, NSIT IBOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This study is on students' perception on effectiveness of Social Studies education in the teaching of conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State. The study used survey research design and 372 out of the total of 863 NCE Social Studies students from Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, participated in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Structured questionnaire titled "Conflict Resolution through Social Studies Education Questionnaire (CRESSEQ) was used for the research. The instrument was duly validated and the reliability coefficient obtained after pilot testing was 0.85. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used in answering the questions raised by the study while t-test independent sample was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The study discovered that there is no significant difference between the views of NCE II and NCE III students on the efficacy of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State. The study recommends that the curriculum of Social Studies in the universities and colleges of education be subjected to periodic review in order to take care of the emerging issues of national importance and make it more relevant to the socio-political, economic and educational needs of contemporary society.

KEYWORDS: Effectiveness, Social Studies, Conflict Resolution, Teaching

Introduction

Social Studies is the process of education that emphasizes the relationship human beings have with the physical and social worlds. Its true nature is seen as the study of man, how he influences and is influenced by other forces, or in short how he solves his problems. It is the course of study that seeks to equip the citizens with requisite knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to confront the problems of their environment and to enable them live together in peace and harmony and to contribute to the development of their society. However, social relationship and other forms of social interaction among human beings are prone to a swing from harmony to conflict, which makes it easy to think that conflict is an inherent part of human existence. Okoli (11011) states that conflict is a necessary end. It is important to know that no matter the level of achievements, there are indications that conflicts must arise among brothers, families, societies and nation; it could be personal, social, economic, political and industrial conflict, what is pertinent now is that life cannot strive without conflict. Dabey (IMMI) stated that conflict is neither good nor bad, but intrinsic in every social relationship from marriage to international diplomacy. Whenever two or more people are gathered, there is bound to be conflict or potential

conflict. Okeye et al (IIOII) defined conflict as a clash of interests, and thus lead to disagreement between two parties over distribution or sharing of advantages or benefits. The bone of contention is not the existence of conflict but how it is handled.

Conflict as stated above, is inheritable in human and organizational relationships and will naturally occur with the passage of time. In some cases, and if it occurs at its optimum level, conflict will stimulate changes and improvements in decision making process as well as the operation of the organizational conflict is also a process exhibiting two parts; a desirable positive aspect (dialectician) which breaks conservation and ensures social progress and an avoidable negative aspect leading to destruction if not contain or reconstructed. This negative aspect is violent behavior which is the job of both the **AU** and **UN** to contain or reconstruct, or both. Therefore, conflict resolution is a necessity here and it is primarily addressed at regaining or sustaining, developed ways of life, or both. The most destructive form of conflict is war and violence caused by the power of the gun in Africa has been the most violating power on the continent that continues to cause famine, mass displacement of people, mass migration and traumatizes young/old, women and men and the impersonal environment. Conflict prevention therefore describe a whole range of developmental and crises intervention efforts (such as undertaken by **AU** and **UN**) to reconcile parties and groups with incompatible interest and to prevent the pursuit of divergent goals from degenerating into armed violence (Francis, IIOOx).

Conflict is a global issue, in Africa as it breaches the peace of the continent and disrupts the social order and development. In recent times, conflicts in Africa has been most frequent, intensive and destructive, for instance, the Rwanda, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Cote D'Voire, Mali, Chad, etc., among others are clear examples of Africa's dilemma. There are so many inter-state and intra-state conflicts as well as inter-communal clashes all over the continent (Galadina, IIOOx). In conflict prevention, conflict is avoided or the re-engagement is also evaded, and it is the conflict resolution procedure in conflict prevention that actually serves to deflate ensuring conflicts. Therefore, conflict resolution has made necessary the allied processes of peace-keeping (stopping wars) peace-keeping (containing hostilities) and peace-building (preventing further hostilities of recurrence of war).

Nigeria, like other nations of the world has experienced and continues to experience conflicts with serious consequences on the people. Since independence to the present moment, Nigeria has witnessed numerous conflicts (civil war and civil disturbances) during which many lives and valuable assets were lost. As the nation is moving towards democratization, more conflicts have been witnessed and are expected, what is required is high sense of maturity and patriotism in managing emerging conflicts. It is against this background that the researcher intends to find out students' perception on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine perception on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

(i) Determine the perception of students on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question

The following research question has been advanced for this study:

(i) What is the perception of students on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis is formulated and tested at 0.0x level of significance:

H_{oi}: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of students on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

The design for this study was survey design. According to Olayiwola (IIOIO), this research design permits the gathering of information through the use of questionnaire and interviews, from a population based on appropriate sampling techniques. The population of the study consists of all **NCE II** and **NCE III** students of Social Studies, College of Education, Afaha Nsit in Akwa Ibom State as at IIOIC/IIOID academic session with a population of DLIII. The study used IICII students as sample size.

The study utilized MX percent confidence level and margin error of x percent in sample size determination using sample size table by Research Advisors (IIOOL) as a guide. The study used structured questionnaire titled "Conflict Resolution through Social Studies Education Questionnaire (CRESSEQ), as a means of data collection.

The questionnaire was designed based on four-point modified Likert Scale in which respondents were required to respond to each item in terms of degrees of agreement and disagreement and there were thirty (IIIO) items. The respondents were expected to react to each item on a four point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) V, Agree (A) III, Strongly Disagree (SD) II, and Disagree (D) I. The instrument was duly validated by experts. The pilot study was carried out on thirty (IIIO) degree students of Social Studies in the University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State. And a coefficient of 0.DVC was realized. This is supported by Danjuma and Muhammed (IIOII) who assert that an instrument is considered reliable if its reliability co-efficient is between 0.LV and I.

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used in the analyzing of data. Descriptive statistics involves the use of frequencies and percentages, which were used to compute the bio-data variable of the respondents. The study used mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions raised by the study. In addition, t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses. According to Ekeh (IIOOIII), t-test was used for determining the significant differences between two means. The hypotheses were tested at 0.0X alpha level of significance and MX percent confidence level.

Results

Research Question I: What is the perception of students on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: Perception on the effectiveness of Social Studies teaching conflict resolution skills

Level	N	Mean	Mean diff	Std. dev	Std. dev. Diff
NCE II	IMO	DL. CIIILD		L. XIIIVCV	
NCE III	IDII	DL. IIIIILIII	0. XOOX	X. IIIIILIID	I. IIODVL
Total	372				

Details of descriptive statistics in table I shows the cumulative means perception of the efficacy of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State.

The cumulative mean of the respondents are DL.CIIILD and DL.IIIIILIII for **NCE II** and **NCE III** students respectively. It can be said that the mean and standard deviation differences are 0.XOOX and I.IIODVL respectively, which are very small in value and negligible.

Test of Null Hypothesis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of students on effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Mean difference between **NCE II + NCE III** students in teaching conflict resolution skills.

Level	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig.	Decision
NCE II	IMO	DL. CIIILD	L. XIIIVCV	IIICO	0. DOD	I. ML	0. VIIO	Ho_{II} Retained

NCE III	IDII	DL. IIIIIL.III	X. IIIIIL.IID					

Calculated t< ı.ML, calculated p> 0.0X

Results of the independent t-test statistics in table II shows that there is no significant difference between the perception of **NCE II** and **NCE III** students on the effectiveness of Social Studies Education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State. The calculated p-value of 0.VIIO is higher than the 0.0X alpha level of significance while the t-calculated value of 0.DOD is less than the t-critical value of ı.ML, at Df IIICO. Consequently the null hypothesis is hereby retained.

Discussion of Findings

The result of data analysis for the study discovered that there is no significant difference between the perception of **NCE II** and **NCE III** students on the effectiveness of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills in Akwa Ibom State. Ololobu (IIOIO) stated that, among the general aims of Social Studies education is the development of an understanding of the environment in learners. Further, Okonkwo (IIOOV) opined that Social Studies education develops in the learners the demonstration of flexibility and willingness to accept necessary changes within a system for the good of all. In a related development, Aibangbe (IIOOV) stated that Social Studies education develops in the learners the ability to adapt to their changing environment.

Social Studies education, through its objectives and curriculum contents promote social awareness and critical judgment as well as constructive effective thinking in learners. This view is stressed further by Okonkwo (IIOOV). He stated that Social Studies education exposes learners to the problems in the society and equip them with necessary skills needed for their survival. In a related development, Aibange (IIOOV) asserts that Social Studies education raises a generation of individuals, who can think critically for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate all those values specified under the nation's broad national objectives. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (IIOOD) identified; reflective thinking goal development of critical thinking, enlightened patriotism. According to the above scholar, it can therefore be affirmed and concluded that conflict resolution skills can be taught effectively in Social Studies education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research it concludes that **NCE** Social Studies students of College of Education in Akwa Ibom State affirmed the potentiality of Social Studies education in teaching conflict resolution skills

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

(i) The teachers should pay attention to Social Studies objectives and contents that relate to conflict resolution whether or not their locality is involved violence.

(ii) Social Studies education teachers should endeavour to attend seminars, workshops, conferences and in-service training in conflict resolution as peace, dialogue and reconciliation of differences is the bed rock of our philosophy.

Dr. (Mrs.) Imoh-Obong I. Inyang

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