



MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL NIGERIAN SOCIETY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL OPERATION

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Abstract

This study examines the importance of multicultural education in achieving cross cultural and inter-cultural education within the school learning environment and its implication on school administration in Ika South Local Government of Delta State, Nigeria. This study adopted a descriptive study design. Eight of the 21 public high schools in the Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria were identified using targeted sampling for data collection. The number of teachers in the eight schools is 201. 75 teachers (50 male, 25 female) from 8 schools were selected through sample application. This study was guided by three research questions. This tool is a researcher-designed questionnaire. The tool was tested by two researchers. Internal consistency and reliability were tested using Cronbach's alpha and 0.75 was obtained. The researchers collected the data together with two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The findings suggest that multicultural education in secondary education institutions will reduce diversity problems and strengthen school management. However, the research revealed that teachers do not have the skills to manage multicultural education in schools and that the curriculum does not provide half-school-level content for many people. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made; To integrate multicultural education into the school curriculum, to teach at all levels of education, to reduce or eliminate racism and to act as a bridge for students from many individuals and groups. A desire to build relationships, friendship and peace.

Key words: Multicultural Education, Diversity, Pluralism, Principals, Teachers.

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DOI: - 10.48047/ecb/2023.12.si5a.0356

Introduction

Nigeria is a multicultural country with a mixture of diverse ethnic groups through self-government and sovereign unification in 1914. Nigeria has a total population of about 201 million. (World Population Review 2010), with 250 ethnic groups and 527 and 1150 languages and dialects respectively (Abraham 2017). So, Nigeria is a multicultural / multicultural country just like any other society in the world. The merger in 1914 created instability and problems because there was no consensus among the different groups to come together as a unified entity. The lack of consensus has led to distinctions such as racism, racial discrimination, religious discrimination, intolerance, inefficiency in the distribution of the state's capital layer and inequality of resources, and has become an important factor in the formulation of climate and framework of nationhood of the Nigeria State.

Nigeria, like other multi-ethnic countries in the world. faces the challenge of finding solutions that affect peaceful co-existence, unity, religious tolerance, integration and so on. Nigerians are determined and united to ensure that the Nigeria nation remains united and indivisible. To do this, it needs to use various tools to achieve its integration. One of them is education. this could be seen in the national policy on education (FGN 2004) which avers that the overall philosophy and goals of the Nigeria nation are:

- Live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice
- Promote inter-Africa solidarity and world peace through understanding

The five main national goals as summarized in the 2nd national development plan (1973-76) documents as well as the nation's constitution are to build a:

- Free and democratic society
- Just and egalitarian society
- United, strong and self-reliant nation
- Great and dynamic economy
- Land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

The paper opines that these broad aims and objectives of education cannot be realized without recourse to multicultural education in a culturally pluralistic and diverse society like Nigeria.

Conceptual Views

Multiculturalism/ Cultural pluralism

Multiculturalism is a term used to describe a community of cultural plurality.

According to Udebunu (2011) Multiculturalism is a plurality of cultural without anyone dominating. Similarly, Grant and Sleeter (2006) stated that multiculturalism is based on human relation that recognizes and accept and celebrate difference. Multiculturalism defines beliefs and attitudes that recognize and respect the lives of all different groups of people in an organization or society, recognize and support their cultural differences, and encourage their social participation (Rosando in Folarin, Olanrewaju, & Ajayi 2014).

Cultural pluralism, on the other hand, refers to the integration of different cultures in a society where each group in the wider society maintains its own personal identity and behavior of the characteristics of the individual are consistent and accepted by the wider society. (Science Encyclopedia 2007). Nigeria is a multicultural nation of people united to preserve, maintain, protect and promote their national identity.

Education and Multicultural Education.

This is the knowledge we gather on the path of life. Fafunwa (2010) succinctly defines it as the entire process by which an individual develops skills, values, attitudes, and other behaviors that benefit the society and the individual. In Uriah, Amadi & Moneme (2020), Nwangu defines education as the process by which society tries to preserve and develop its knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural environment and heritage. Therefore, the main purpose of education is to reveal the social rules and values that enable people to live as full and productive members of society.

Multicultural Education is a teaching and learning approach that explores diversity and equality in schools and communities, while promoting cultural freedom in them in the most general way. It works to ensure educational justice, develop a curriculum that deepens understanding of race and combats oppression (Ayodele 2009). It helps to analyze cultural and social practices that affect education as it provides a framework for understanding diversity and the effective use of knowledge in classrooms and schools (Gollnick and Chinn 2021). A situation in which citizens of a country continue to see themselves as a people bound by common historical knowledge and values and assimilated by love and solidarity (Aluko, 2004).

Multicultural education is an important aspect of school life. Schools act as a microcosm of society as a whole and represent social and cultural diversity. It is the link between what is taught in

school and what is accepted in society. Schools provide students with opportunities to connect with differences and diversity in social encounters. In this way, they can understand and appreciate each other, thus creating intercultural interactions and relationships between different groups. This will reduce or eliminate racial conflict and create a just civil society and good learning environments where students feel safe, protected, valued and engaged in their learning. The school environment is a collaborative effort to address cultural and diverse issues. Multicultural education is therefore an important and practical platform for bridging the diverse opportunities available in schools and society. It is one of ensuring social cohesion and reducing conflict and violence. Teachers' awareness of the diverse students and their needs in the classroom, regardless of age, gender, gender, race, language, or religion, is essential to teaching, supporting, and transforming student learning. These thoughts and attitudes influence teachers' expectations and attitudes towards students (Le Roux in Alismail, 2016).

Martinex (2005) , study to establish teachers' thoughts, knowledge and levels of development on cultural issues and intercultural education is not enough to develop multicultural coding system . . For this purpose, Alismail (2016) suggests that preparing balanced materials so that prospective teachers can teach different students is important in terms of increasing teachers' knowledge, experience and skills in providing equality to students. Aydın and Tonbuloğlu (2014), in their study examining the attitudes of medical school students towards multicultural education, show education as a necessary condition for all groups and people in society to have equal rights and abilities. In this direction, Akporehe and Osiobe (2016) posited that multicultural education is an important part of the school curriculum and should be included in all subjects in order to be the basis of school education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nigeria is a complex society made up of diverse people and groups dealing with a variety of challenges stemming from the problems of many races and diversity. The Nigerian government has used education as a tool to solve these problems and challenges. Schools are small universes of the larger society and, therefore, cultural biases and injustices occur in classrooms and schools as students bring their difference and diversity to people in classrooms and schools. For this reason, it is necessary to meet the various needs of students in different institutions who will work in different

cultures and cultures. It is necessary to provide a platform for learning to work with different cultures in schools, to enable unity, justice, understanding and appreciation of the lifestyles, thoughts and feelings of others, thus building relationships. This article presents an approach that uses the importance of diverse education as a tool for school leaders to promote diversity and equality in schools by creating a good school that is warm, safe, friendly, disciplined and culturally honest. and justice, regardless of differences. This section therefore examines teachers' knowledge, understanding, knowledge, preparation, competence and the impact of multicultural education on the social and social well-being of the school environment and, thus, the Nigerian people at large.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this article is to explore the impact of multicultural education on multicultural school leaders. Specifically, the objectives are:

- 1 To determine whether multicultural education can meet the educational needs of different people and improve school management
2. Identifying the problems of administrators and teachers to be able to cope with the multicultural education in schools.
3. See what leaders and governments need to do to improve multicultural education in secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. How does multicultural education meet the needs of diverse school population and help school management?
2. What challenges do principals and teachers face when studying multicultural education in schools?
3. How do principals and governments promote multicultural education in secondary schools?

Research Method

This study aims to examine the impact of multicultural education on principals operating schools in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State. In this study, a descriptive research method was adopted. Eight public secondary schools out of the twenty one in Ika South Local Government Area were listed using the simple random sampling method. The population of the study comprises of teachers in the LGA. The sample consists of 75 teachers (50 males and 25 females), randomly selected from the eight secondary schools.

This tool is a semi-structured questionnaire called Multicultural Education and School Administration (MESA). Research equipment is verified through measurements and reliability tests. Cronbach's alpha 0.75, was used for the reliability of the scale. The researchers got approval from principals and teachers before answering questions, but school principals requested that the names of the schools they work should not be included in the study. A group of Delta High School teachers and two research assistants

distributed and collected the tools needed for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used in the analysis of the research questions, and the acceptance factor was taken as 2.50.

Presentation of Results

Research Question one:

How does multicultural education meet the educational needs of diverse school population and help school management?

Table 1: Average scores and standard deviations of female and male teachers regarding how multicultural education meets the educational needs of society

S/N	Items	Male Teachers			Female Teachers		
		N:50 X	SD	Deci	N:25 X	SD	Deci
1	Multicultural education will reduce ethnicity	2.90	0.40	Agree	3.20	0.64	Agree
2	Multicultural education will encourage positive school climate	3.02	0.42	Agree	2.88	0.57	Agree
3	Multicultural education will create unity	3.12	0.43	Agree	2.87	0.33	Agree
4	Multicultural education will bring about freedom of speech	3.12	0.43	Agree	3.0	0.57	Agree
5	Multicultural education will reduce inferiority complex	3.28	0.42	Agree	3.02	0.60	Agree
Grand mean and SD		3.08	0.42		2.99	0.60	

The data in Table 1 show the differences in teachers' views on how to teach diversity in terms of the need for multicultural education in schools and supporting school management. Both male and female teachers agree on all items with an average score above the standard average of 2.50. The overall scores of male and female teachers are 3.08 and 2.99, respectively, indicating that multicultural

education meets the needs of different students in school and support management.

Research Question 2

What challenges do principals and teachers face when studying multicultural education in schools?

Table 2: Teachers' mean scores and standard deviations of teachers on the challenges to handle multicultural education in schools.

S/N	Items	Male Teachers		Female Teachers			
		N:50 X	SD	DEC	N:25 X	SD	DEC
1	Curriculum do not provide contents for multicultural education	3.36	0.46	Agree	3.16	0.63	Agree
2	Teachers are not equipped to teach multicultural education.	3.08	0.42	Agree	3.04	0.61	Agree
3	Teachers do not understand the meaning of multicultural education.	3.10	0.42	Agree	3.04	0.61	Agree
4	Principals do not allow teachers to include multicultural education into the diary.	3.12	0.43	Agree	3.0	0.6	Agree
5	Multicultural education is not among the subjects taught in schools.	3.16	0.43	Agree	2.92	0.58	Agree
Grand mean and SD		3.16	0.43		3.03	0.61	

The data on table 2 reveals the mean scores and standard deviation of the opinions of male and female teachers on the challenges of administrators and teachers` capacity to handle multicultural education in schools. Both the male and female teachers agreed on all the items with mean scores

higher than the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean scores of 3.16 and 3.03 for male and female teachers respectively implied that teachers encounter a lot of challenges in handling multicultural education in schools.

Research Question three:

How do principals and government promote multicultural education in secondary schools?

Responses of teachers on how to promote multicultural education in Schools

S/N	Items	Male Teachers N:50			Female Teachers N:25		
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
1	By integrating the diverse culture of the students into classroom activities	3.12	0.19	Agree	3.16	0.63	Agree
2	By using different methods that accommodate different cultural beliefs	3.10	0.19	Agree	3.16	0.63	Agree
3	By using additive, transformation and social approach	3.06	0.19	Agree	3.20	0.63	Agree
4	By carrying all students in the class irrespective of cultural background	3.16	0.20	Agree	3.08	0.62	Agree
5	By integrating the principles of cultural education into the classroom	3.28	0.22	Agree	3.10	0.62	Agree
Grand total and SD		3.14	0.20		3.14	0.63	

Table 3 shows ways to promote multicultural education in schools. Both male and female teachers agreed on all items with an average score above the standard rating of 2.50. This means that teaching multiculturalism in schools can be enhanced by integrating diverse students into the classroom; using different methods to accommodate different beliefs; involving all students in the class, regardless of cultural background; integrating elements of multicultural education into the classroom.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the research on Question 1 showed that 75% of the teachers understood the meaning and content of multicultural education. This is in contrast to Martinex's (2005) findings on understanding of cultural issues; this shows that teachers' diverse teaching and learning experiences are not sufficient to create a different culture.

The study also showed that introducing multicultural education in secondary schools will reduce diversity issues, develop a positive school climate and improve home management. The importance of multicultural education in improving teaching and learning is recognized by Gollnick and Chinn (2021), who acknowledge that multicultural education is beneficial for leadership who uses the quality of social analysis and knowledge base to help students learn.

This study also shows that teachers cannot manage multicultural education in schools. They also noted that the curriculum does not provide secondary content for teaching a diverse education. This finding is consistent with research by Martinex (2005). Their findings show that teaching diversity

and teacher development are not sufficient to create a diverse culture.

For this reason, Akpobome and Osiobe (2016) stated that multicultural education should be an important part of the school curriculum and included in all subjects in order to be a part of the foundation of teaching in schools. Krummel (2013) suggests that instead of relying on one or two multicultural college courses, teachers should provide continuing professional development to support the classroom teaching of many people.

Conclusion

Multicultural education is still a powerful tool to transcend the different paths that exist in education and society. The findings of this study identified that achieving an egalitarian society and a positive school climate in a culturally pluralistic society calls for cross-cultural and inter-cultural relationship. This can be achieved by by adapting principles of multicultural tenets of features through integration of national life that inculcates virtues and values that imbues consciousness of oneness into the citizens in the curriculum, thereby promoting inclusiveness in the polity.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Multiculture education should be woven into the school curriculum and taught in schools at every level of the academic ladder to eliminate ethnocentrism and acts as a bridge to bring students from different ethnic groups with a conscious effort to build an enduring and peaceful co-existence.
2. Teachers should also use different methods to adapt to different beliefs

3. People's stability depends on different types of leadership, such as harmony, fairness, equity, fairness, and harmony. If the challenge of leadership is not good in schools and society, it can undermine the peace of the people and the country by warming the government and causing national depression. To overcome this hurdle, the report recommends that families, churches and other stakeholders take the lead in partnership with schools in teaching virtues and values that create moral and cultural values that emphasize peace and unity
4. Similarly principles and policies such as statism, local government of origin, federal character, quota system, zoning, power sharing and so on, that polarize the citizenry nor reflect multiculturalism should be stopped or replaced with national seduction.
5. Teachers must receive regular training to acquire the skills needed to support teaching in a multicultural classroom.

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