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Instilling The Culture Of Peace In The Niger Delta Area Through Peace Education

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the state of peace education and peace culture in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. For an extended period, the Niger Delta region has been afflicted by persistent violent conflict and deterioration in the promotion of peaceful coexistence. The study was guided by the Vygotsky socio-cultural theory of human cognitive development. The descriptive and survey design was utilized to collect data. The study's sample size was established utilizing Taro Yamane's statistical method for responder selection. The questionnaire employed a 2-point rating system, and the obtained data was analyzed utilizing percentages. In general, the study concluded that the culture of peace is a fundamental factor in achieving genuine civilization. It also emphasized that true civilization in the Niger Delta region is characterized by both peacefulness and the active promotion of peace. The study demonstrated that instilling a culture of peace in children would foster their dedication to peace as active contributors to peaceful endeavours. School-family partnership is actively contributing to the nurturing of a culture characterized by peace and non-violence in the Niger Delta region. Hence, the study proposed that, peace education should be incorporated into the school curriculum as: an independent subject, particularly in the Niger Delta region, taking into account the unstable characteristics of the area.

Keywords: Peace Education, Peace Culture, Niger Delta, School Curriculum, Human Development.

INTRODUCTION

Education is as important as peace, and both are key to the socio-economic, cultural, and political development of society. Following the absence of peace education and the gap in the school curriculum at the basic education level in the Nigerian educational system, the changes in the structure of the family, the persistence of violent conflict and the decline in the culture of peace in the Niger Delta area, the need to assimilate peace education into the Basic Education curriculum and make it a separate teaching subject has risen. This is for the purpose of enthroning nonviolence and peace culture in the study area through effective stakeholders' collaboration between the school and family.

The family plays an integral role in the proper upbringing of the child, being a primary social institution that serves as the first academy of learning before the basic education level of the child. Despite the existence of peace education as a subject/course of study in the Nigerian educational system (i.e., at the tertiary level), the study area is being characterized by the negative reputation it has garnered so far. It calls for an urgent change in tract to create room in the Nigerian educational curriculum for a more result-oriented approach through a pedagogical shift to a basic-education-family-centered approach where peace education can be fully assimilated into the Basic education curriculum for the purpose of effective

stakeholders' collaboration between the school and family in inculcating peace culture and non-violence into individuals at the early stages of life.

The Niger Delta area, in this study, refers to the area in the Niger Basin inhabited by the six states of Nigeria's South-south geo-political zone, namely; Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, and Akwa-Ibom states, and as it forms the largest and third largest wetlands in Nigeria and the world respectively. The presence of oil and gas in the Niger Delta area since 1956 has made the area the most delicate in present-day Nigeria, owing to the fact that the area makes the goose that lays the golden egg. Therefore, it has become the center of economic and political activities that have so affected both formal and informal institutions including the family and the products of the family in the area. A well-functioning collaboration between the school and family are very important, being that the two actors are two essential stakeholders in enabling the healthy development and educational success of children and adolescents. However, this is rather a new concern, as families and schools historically had distinct roles: the school was in charge of the formal education of children, while the family was responsible for education in the extracurricular (Prost, 1982; Hornby and Lafaele, 2011; VasarikStaub et al., 2018).

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006) highlighted that education for a long-lasting culture of peace is education for life. It is not simply education for a livelihood but people being equipped with values, skills, and attitudes they need in becoming reasonable personalities who live in peace with others and as accountable citizens. The 1990 World Declaration on Education for all as cited by UNICEF (1999: p2) equally says that: Peace education must also address the prevention and resolution of all forms of conflict and violence, whether overt or structural, from the interpersonal level to the societal and global level. If the idea of peace is to precede the idea of conflict, then it has to be nurtured from the very birth of independent thought (Rajagopalan, 2009). This study is to enable education stakeholders work towards a culture of non-violence and peace culture as instrument for social change in in the Niger Delta area particularly and beyond.

Aim and objectives of the study

The study aimed at examining the state of peace education and peace culture in the Niger Delta area and the prospect for enthroning the culture of peace and nonviolence. Specific objectives of the study include:

1. Find out if peace education as a separate teaching subject at the Basic Education level can lead to effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area.
2. Examine the aspects of peace education that can become topics of learning in a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education curriculum that can be used as instrument by the state to address the growing wave of violent conflict, in the Niger Delta area.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. How can peace education be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area?
2. Which aspects of peace education that can become topics of learning in a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level in the Niger Delta area?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive design. The descriptive survey design is effective and easy to conduct and it also ensures ease in accessing information. The descriptive survey design allows the researcher to gather information, summarize and interpret data for purposes of clarification. The study adopted a combined population of School Heads/Administrators, Teacher and the Family (parents and guardians). A minimum of 400 copies of questionnaires was printed and distributed among the residents of the study area who meet the inclusion criteria for the study and random sampling technique was used in collecting data. The goal was to obtain a sample that is representative of the larger population. Primary data was collected by the researcher through questionnaire, while secondary data was collected from census data in the literature, which became relevant to the theme of the study. Such secondary sources included: past research works, seminar papers, textbooks, journals, statistical abstracts, newspapers, magazines and

parliament acts. The study adopted two major instruments of questionnaire and interview for the collection of adequate and reliable data. The instruments was scrutinized and validated by the researcher’s supervisor and other experts in Peace and Conflict Studies for moderation and approval, and inputs were made to the final draft. The test-retest method was adopted establish the reliability of the instrument. Data from the answered questionnaires in this study was be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively using percentages.

RESULTS

Answers to Research Questions

Table 4.1 Responses on how can peace education be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area.

Items	True	%	False	%
New reforms in the educational system	287	74.7	97	25.3
The review of the basic education curriculum.	183	47.7	201	52.3
A highly propogated educational planning and implementation	291	75.8	93	24.2
An effective stakeholder’s collaboration between the school and family	266	69.3	118	30.7
Availability of needed facilities	135	35.2	249	64.8
Provision of required equipment and resources	272	70.8	112	29.2

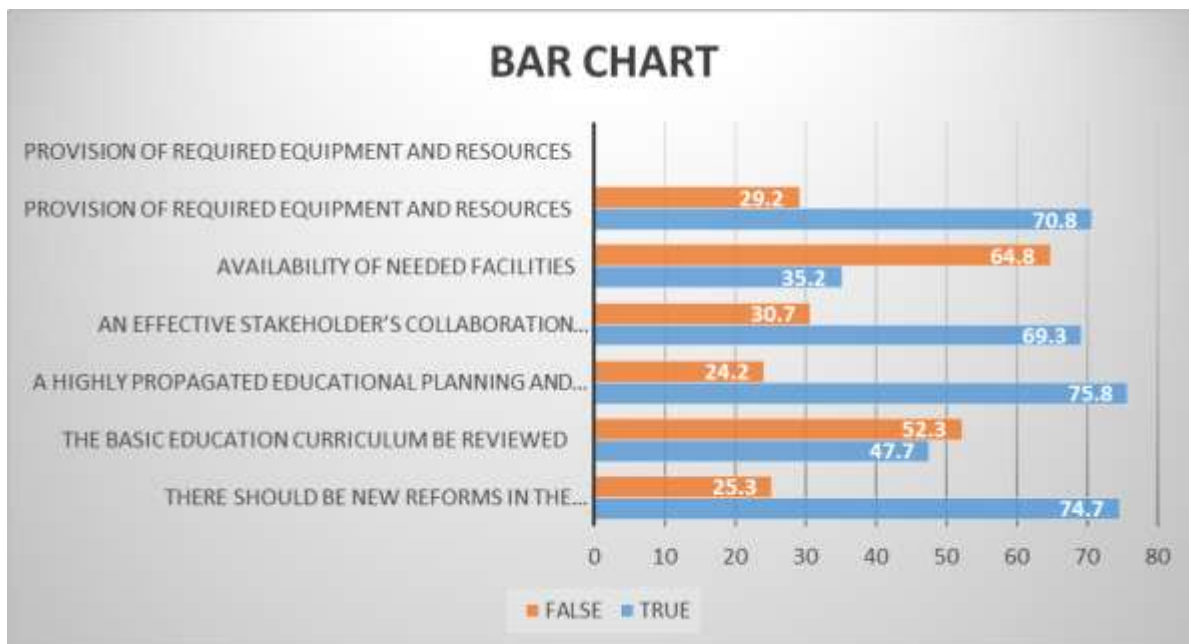


Figure 4.1: Bar Chart on how peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area.

Table 4.1 and Figure 1 above show the first research question on how peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject. Out of the 384 respondent's, 287 (74.7%) said it is true that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through new reforms in the educational system., and 97 (25.3%) does not agree, 183 (47.3%) said it is true that

peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the review of the basic education curriculum, while 201 (52.3%) does not agree. With this, we have the majority of people who does not believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the review of the basic education curriculum.

Also, 291 (74.8%) said that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through a highly propagated educational planning and implementation, while 93 (24.2%) does not agree. This shows that more participants believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through a highly propagated educational planning and implementation. In addition to this, 266 (69.3%) said that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through effective stakeholders' collaboration between the school and the family, whereas 118 (30.7%) does not agree. This shows that more respondents believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through effective stakeholders' collaboration between the school and the family. 135 (35.2%) said that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the availability of needed facilities, whereas 249 (64.8%) does not agree. This implies that we have more respondents who believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the availability of needed facilities. Lastly, 272 (70.8%) respondents said that they believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the availability of needed facilities through the provision of required equipment and resources, while 112 (29.5%) does not believe that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject through the availability of needed facilities through the provision of required equipment and resources. With this, it can be said that more respondents believed that peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject in the educational system.

Table 4.2: Responses on the aspects of peace education that can become topics of learning in a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level in the Niger Delta area

STATEMENTS	True	%	False	%
Approaches to conflict resolutions, reconciliation, negotiations and non-violence.	306	79.7	78	20.3
Tolerance, spirit of solidarity and respect for all life	327	85.2	57	14.8
Democracy and respect for human dignity	297	77.3	87	22.7
Family, sex education and Marriage	234	60.9	150	39.1
Rights, freedom and responsible citizenship	311	81	73	19
Critical thinking about prejudice and assertiveness	185	48.2	199	51.8

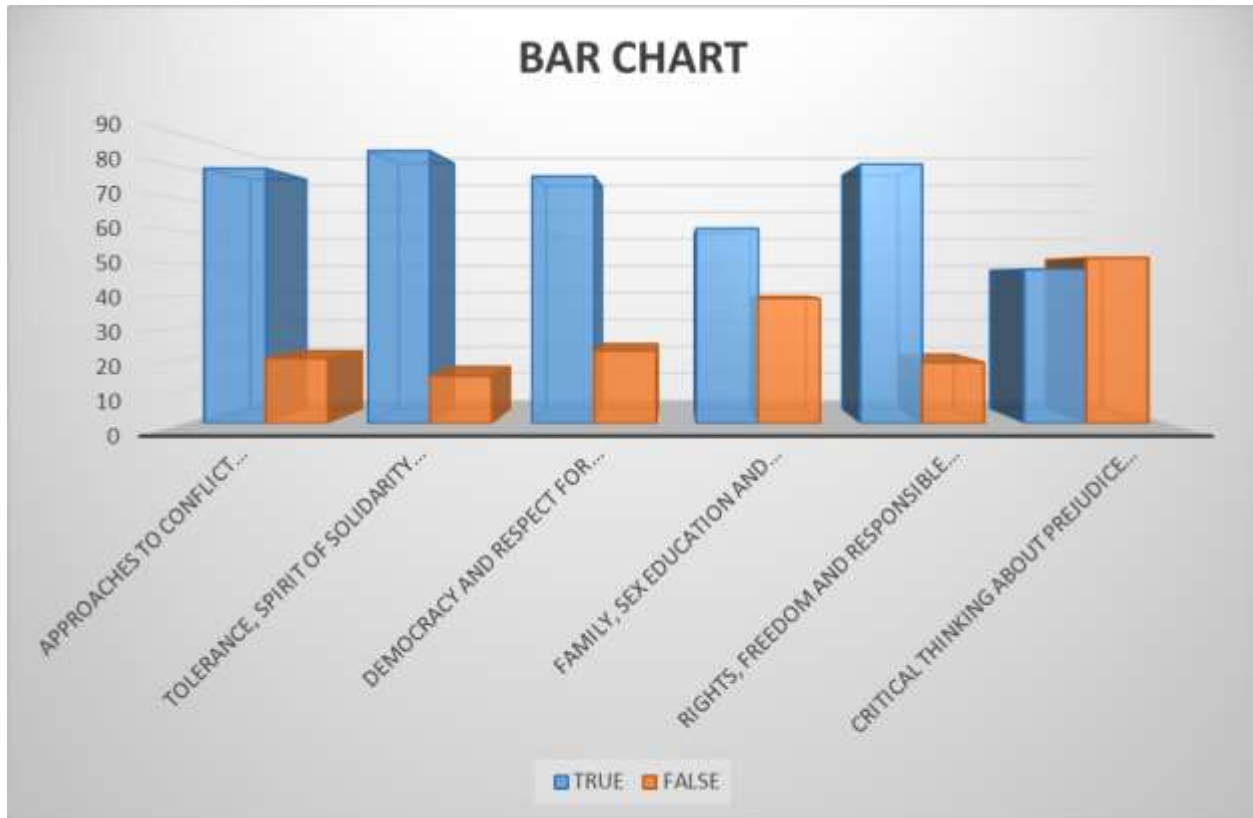


Figure 4.2: Bar Chart on the aspects of peace education that can become topics of learning in a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level in the Niger Delta area.

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 above show the responses to the second research question on the aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. Out of the 384 respondent's, 306 (79.7%) said approaches to conflict resolutions, reconciliation, negotiations and non-violence should be an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level, while 78 (20.3%) said approaches to conflict resolutions, reconciliation, negotiations and non-violence should not be an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level This shows that more participants agreed that approaches to conflict resolutions, reconciliation, negotiations and non-violence is an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. Furthermore, 327 (85.2%) said that tolerance, spirit of solidarity and respect for all life is an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level, while 57 (14.8%) said that tolerance, spirit of solidarity and respect for all life is not an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. This implies that there are more participants who agree that tolerance, spirit of solidarity and respect for all life is not an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. Moving forward, 297 (77.3%) said that democracy and respect for human dignity are an aspect of peace education to be assimilated into the Nigerian Basic Education curriculum, while 87 (22.7%) said that democracy and respect for human dignity is not an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. This

shows that there are more participants who agree that democracy and respect for human dignity are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level.

Furthermore, 234 (60.9%) stated that the family, sex education and Marriage are an the aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level, whereas only 150 (39) stated that the family, sex education and Marriage are not an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. This implies that most of the participants agreed that the family, sex education and Marriage are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level.

311 (81.0%) said that Rights, freedom and responsible citizenship are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level., while 73 (19.0%) said that Rights, freedom and responsible citizenship are not an aspect of peace education to be assimilated into the Nigerian Basic Education curriculum. This implies that there are more respondents who agreed that Rights, freedom and responsible citizenship are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level.

Also, 185 (48.2%) respondents said that they believe that Critical thinking about prejudice and assertiveness are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level. while 199 (51.8%) said that they did not believe that Critical thinking about prejudice and assertiveness are an aspects of peace education that on the aspects of peace education that can form a separate subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

How can peace education be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area?

The question on how peace education can be included as a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area, as they have been discussed by respondents A, B, and C. Peace education can be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area.

The findings in table 4.6 indicated that new reforms in the educational system, review of the basic education curriculum, a highly propagated educational planning and implementation, availability of needed facilities, the provision of required equipment and resources and effective stakeholders' collaboration between the school and the family as factors that can enable peace education be included in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level as a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum for effective peace culture and non-violence in the Niger Delta area. This is also in line with the studies of Akgün and Araz (2014) and Bendel and Ar (2011).

The study area continues to face emerging realities of violent conflict and the absence of peace culture, which is also in line with the responses of respondent A, B, and C and the results gotten from the questionnaire, which gave answers to the research question 1. According to Uzbaş (2009) and Uzbaş, et al (2012), these realities highlight the need for peace education to evolve and adapt to these changing circumstances. Therefore, peace education should not only focus on conflict resolution, but also on promoting the values of peace, justice, and tolerance.

Which aspects of peace education can become topics of learning in a separate teaching subject in the school curriculum at the Basic Education level in the Niger Delta area?

According to respondents, and as indicated in table 4.7, the aspects of peace education that should be assimilated into the Nigerian Basic Education curriculum for non-violence and lasting peace culture include: approachable means to conflict resolutions, reconciliation, negotiations and non-violence and tolerance, spirit of solidarity and respect for all life, democracy and respect for human dignity, critical thinking, spirit of solidarity, rights, freedom and responsible citizenship, family, sex education and marriage (characteristic of a husband and wife).

Table 4.7 technically agrees with the works of Akudolu (2010) who pointed out the eight keys and aspects to promoting the culture of peace as:

- a. Respect for all life: respecting the rights and dignity of each human being.
- b. Nonviolence: rejection of violence, obtaining justice by convincing and understanding.
- c. Sharing: developing attitudes and skills for living together in harmony, putting an end to exclusion and oppression.
- d. Listening to understand: giving everyone a chance to learn and share through the free flow of information.
- e. Preservation of the planet: making sure that progress and development are good for everyone and for the environment.
- f. Tolerance and solidarity: appreciating that people are different and that everyone has something to contribute to the community.
- g. Equality of men and women: ensuring an equal place for men and women in building society.
- h. Democracy: making decisions by having your say and giving others theirs.

With peace education students/learners seek to achieve a lot as previously highlighted in this paper and all gearing towards the actualization of peace and harmony, economic/social growth and progress, national security and unity, equality for all, social justice and environmental sustainability.

CONCLUSION

From the study it is concluded that, if priority is given to effective assimilation of peace education into the Nigerian Basic Education curriculum to the extent that peace education becomes a separate teaching subject, there will be the possibility of a more result-oriented stakeholders collaboration between the school and family at that level which will also result in the enthronement of non-violence and a lasting culture of peace in the Niger Delta Area.

Failure for the Nigerian education stakeholders and government to effectively utilize this process (peace education) at the Basic Education level of the Nigerian curriculum would create many more violent conflicts in the Niger Delta Area and negatively affect national development coupled with both regional and national security in the near future. This is because, it is a means of enthroning nonviolence and peace culture in the Niger Delta area and Nigeria at large. Therefore, the need to give priority to effective assimilation of peace education into the Nigerian Basic Education curriculum for a possible result-oriented stakeholder's collaboration is thus suggested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The frequency of violent conflict can be reduced through peace education as a separate teaching subject on the adversities of strategic topics, such as: sea piracy, hostage-taking, kidnapping and other forms of militancy in the school curriculum at the basic education level.
2. Suitable planning and funding of peace education in the Nigerian basic education curriculum by the government and other stakeholders is highly encouraged.

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