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Enhancing Peace and Security in Nigeria through Teacher Preparation

ANTIABONG O. EKONG

*Dean, Faculty of Education,
University of Uyo, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State.*

And

THERESA M. UDOFIA

*Department of Science Education,
University of Uyo, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State.*

Abstract

The Nigerian society has been experiencing serious crisis that threatens the peace and security of the nation. This paper discusses the enhancement of peace and security in Nigeria through teacher preparation. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The population consisted of all final year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. A total of 99 final year students in the Department of Science Education were purposively selected as sample for the study. This consisted of 49 Biology, 29 Chemistry, 10 Integrated Science, four (4) Physics and seven (7) Mathematics students who participated in the study. The researchers' developed instrument with a four-point rating tagged "Peace and Security through Teacher Preparation Questionnaire (PASTPQ)" was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three lecturers in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. The reliability index of 0.85, 0.82 0.88 using Cronbach alpha were obtained for sections A, B and C respectively. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Results of data analysis revealed that teacher trainees have an in-depth knowledge of indicators of peace and security. The findings further revealed that the participants agreed with how teacher preparation would be implemented to enhance peace and security as well as how teacher preparation could be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it is recommended among others that more emphasis should be laid on teacher preparation activities as mechanism for enhancing peace and security in the society by teachers' educators and other stakeholders.

Key words: Enhancing, Peace, Security, Teacher preparation, Implementation, Utilization.

The overall mission of University education is to bring about positive transformation in knowledge, skills and attitude of the citizens. Teacher education therefore is in the forefront in this regard. The development of any nation depends intensely on University Education as a major agent in meeting knowledge and other socio-cultural demands for individuals to live meaningfully especially in this 21st century. This can only thrive in a conflict free environment. The importance of education as an instrument for promoting peace and development was stated at Jomtien's declaration in 1990 on Education for All. This declaration emphasized individuals to be equipped with basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required for promoting social justice and peaceful living.

Conflict is inherent in every human society because of diverse opinions, religious belief, deprivation of basic amenities, rich-poor divide, poor governance among others. In Nigeria, the persistent conflicts in terms of community clashes, herdsmen attacks, and political uprising resulting in lack of peace and security has almost become a permanent way of life. These are evidenced in incessant killing, kidnapping, communal fight and labour unrest which have become inherent in the country. The existence of conflicts among secondary schools and tertiary education is revealed in vices such as incessant strikes by academic and non-academics staff, stealing, riot, cultism, and bullying, drug abuse, stubbornness and high rate of materialism. According to Enoh (2014) when one is deprived of education, the products of science become dangerous weapons thereby enhancing human social vices, disrupting peace and security. As observed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is also in the minds of men that defenses of peace must be constructed. It is evident by this statement that education has great potentials for transforming and sustaining peace in the individuals and the society at large.

Peace and security are intertwined because wherever there is peace, security is always assured. These variables have become prominent problems encountered within the workplace, home and society at large in recent times. Peace according to Vankovska and Wiberg (2002) is when people, regardless of creed and race are able to live together and have relative prosperity, education, health, employment, equality before the law, free elections and be free to speak their minds. Any agent or biological factors that negatively affect these components of peace is a threat to peace. Peace is a condition that guarantees social justice, stability and development in any society. Peace describes a situation in which all human beings are endowed with human dignity and human life.

Oche (2001) viewed security as freedom from or absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of a nation; ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values, socio-political and economic objectives as well as meeting the legitimate aspirations of the people. In another perspective, Stan (2004) referred to security as the search to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflict whether the threat originates from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-economic conditions. Security is achieved when there is peace. It plays a decisive role in clearing the pathway to peaceful coexistence and development. Therefore, security is a dynamic process and a condition of transforming conflict and bringing peace in the society. Thus, security be it at school, place of work, society and the country at large is very crucial. It has to do with freedom from danger or

threats that may harm or prevent any developmental activities in the society and the nation at large.

Education according to Bisong (2002), is a strong instrument for developing a culturally and socially tolerant people who would exercise ethical and moral considerations in local and international affairs. This implies that the overall University curriculum must meet labour market, knowledge or other socio-cultural needs of the students. Teacher preparation in the University is a social responsibility of operators in promoting peace, justice and human rights for sustainable development. This could be achieved by ensuring that the programme offered in teacher preparation respond to societal challenges in terms of promoting peace, security, creating unemployment and encouraging skills development. The main objective of University education institutions is not only for factual learning by students but to train the mind to think critically which is a necessity in addressing global challenges such as poverty, conflict and climate change (UNESCO, 2009). The effective preparation of teachers therefore becomes an imperative to produce globally accepted graduate teachers in knowledge, skills and character.

Akpan (2019) opined that teaching in schools, Colleges and Universities should deliberately emphasis internal safety, and create humane, selfless and caring persons who have respects for others. This significantly demands appropriate teacher preparation for relevant knowledge and skills that would take into account the volatile nature of Nigeria and the globalized world. Teacher-preparation programs according to Hafsah (2017) provide trainees with the tools, hands-on experience and subject-matter mastery under the guidance of experienced teacher to begin a career as professional teachers. The programs emphasize mentoring teacher trainees and providing opportunities to spend time in real classrooms situation as professional teachers. All forms of teaching in the school according to Udofia (2017) aims at equipping students with generic skills, competencies and knowledge to contribute to the development of the society. In this respect, higher education especially teacher preparation in Nigerian Universities is saddled with the responsibilities of optimizing students potentials in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills to teachers trainees to become useful citizens in the society. Attitudes or soft skills like peaceful coexistence, team spirit, self-confidence, self-discipline, being passionate, social justice, tolerance, respect for life and differences among others are essential for peaceful coexistence. Consequently, the 21st century teachers' preparation ought to be adequate and of quality with practical advantages to meet up with global challenges of insecurity, cybercrime and political upheaval that threatens peace and security in the society.

According to Ekong and Udofia (2016) the emphasis on academic content delivery, examination and certification does not promote creativity, innovation and job creation among Nigerian teacher trainees. Obanya (2019) asserted that school subjects should not just be studied as mere content but as methodology for developing cognitive, emotional and imaginative intelligence for peaceful co-existence. Teacher preparation in a broad sense is a process by which teacher trainees acquire the many physical and social capabilities as demanded by the society to function effectively for self-reliance. Peace and security is enhanced when students acquire knowledge and demonstrates skills of critical thinking, good communication skills, analysis, problem solving among others. It is therefore pertinent to examine how peace and security in Nigeria could be enhanced through teacher preparation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine how to enhance peace and security in Nigeria through Teacher preparation.

Specifically, the study determined;

1. The indicators of peace and security in Nigeria
2. How Teacher preparation in Nigeria should be implemented to enhance peace and security.
3. The extent Teacher preparation could be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What are the indicators of peace and security in Nigeria?
2. How would Teacher preparation in Nigeria be implemented to enhance peace and security?
3. How would Teacher preparation be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria?

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study adopted descriptive survey design.

Population of the Study

The population consisted of all final year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo during 2018/2019 academic year.

Sample and Sampling Technique

From the target population, a total of 99 final year students consisting of 49 Biology, 29 Chemistry, 10 Integrated Science, four (4) Physics and seven (7) Mathematics were purposively sampled for the study.

Instrument

The researchers' developed instrument titled "Peace and Security through Teacher Preparation Questionnaire (PASTPQ)" was used to collect data. The instrument consisted of sections A, B and C. Each section contained 12 items. Section A was on indicators of peace and security, Section B was on implementation of Teacher preparation in Nigeria to enhance peace and security and Section C was on utilization of Teacher preparation to enhance peace and security in Nigeria. Sections A and B items had 4 points response of Strongly Agree= 4, Agree= 3, Disagree= 2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Section C had 3 points response scale of Very Highly Utilize (VHU) =3; Highly Utilize (HU) = 2 and Moderately Utilize (MU) =1.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three lecturers in the Department of Science Education, University of Uyo, Uyo.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the instruments was determined for each sections of A, B and C since the different sections did not contain related items. The reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha for Sections A, B and C yielded 0.85, 0.82; 0.88 respectively.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using mean and Standard Deviation. The criterion mean point was 2.50 for sections A and B. Hence the mean of 2.50 and above was accepted as agreed while the mean score below 2.50 was disagreed. Section C was interpreted based on the cut off points of 2.50 -3.00 = Very Highly Utilized; 1.50-2.49 = Highly Utilized and 1.00 -1.48 – Moderately Utilized. The responses for the different sections were interpreted based on the respected cut-off points.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the indicators of peace and security in Nigeria?

Table1: Indicators of Peace and Security in Nigeria. N= 99

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | Std Dev. | Rmks |
|-----|---|------------|----------|-------|
| 1 | Showing respect to constituted authority | 4.0 | .00 | Agree |
| 2 | Enabling environment for business and developmental activities in the society | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 3 | Harmonious coexistence among citizens and communities | 3.6 | .65 | Agree |
| 4 | Gingered high rate of employment activities in the society | 3.5 | .64 | Agree |
| 5 | High level of educational activities | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 6 | Freedom of movement by individuals in communities | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 7 | Reduced incidence of negative social behaviours | 3.6 | .64 | Agree |
| 8 | Smooth and rapid developmental activities in the society | 3.5 | .50 | Agree |
| 9 | Availability of quality basic amenities | 3.8 | .38 | Agree |
| 10 | A just and fair security system | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 11 | Freedom of communication | 3.5 | .64 | Agree |
| 12 | Gender balance in the government appointments | 3.2 | .84 | Agree |
| | Cluster Mean | 3.5 | | |

Table 1 presents teacher trainees rating mean scores on indicators of peace and security in Nigeria. The cluster mean rating scores is 3.5 and all the items had a mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating acceptance. This implies that the teacher trainees agreed with all the indicators of peace and security. The standard deviation (SD) of these means are very close showing that the respondents tend to have similar opinion about the items.

Research Question 2: How would Teacher preparation in Nigeria be implemented to enhance peace and security?

Table2: Implementation of Teacher Preparation in Nigeria to Enhance Peace and Security .N= 99

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | Std dev. | Rmks |
|-----|---|------------|----------|-------|
| 1 | The teacher preparation curriculum should contain elements of peace and security for teacher trainees. | 3.8 | .38 | Agree |
| 2 | By the use of modern pedagogical strategies during instructional delivery of content of peace and security. | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 3 | Integration of ICTs (mix media software) in teaching and learning of the content of peace and security. | 3.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 4 | Adequate and quality assessment techniques to be adopted for the curriculum content and content of peace and security. | 3.2 | .59 | Agree |
| 5 | Exposing teacher trainees to real life peace and security activities. | 3.7 | .51 | Agree |
| 6 | Impacting teacher trainees with right social attitude and skills to enhance peace and security.. | 3.5 | .69 | Agree |
| 7 | Focus more on psycho- productive for vocational development for self-sustainability. | 3.5 | .69 | Agree |
| 8 | Exposing teacher trainees to lifelong learning for self-reliance. | 2.7 | .64 | Agree |
| 9 | Involving teacher trainees in cross cultural interaction to acquire soft skills in line with the 21st century for peace and security. | 3.1 | .40 | Agree |
| 10 | Providing a flexible pathway to teacher trainees towards peace and security through dialogue. | 2.5 | .49 | Agree |
| 11 | Including independent learning modules in the Teacher preparation packages | 2.5 | .65 | Agree |
| 12 | By harmonious communication between the teacher trainees instructor and the clientele. | 3.0 | .76 | Agree |
| | Cluster Mean | 3.2 | | |

The findings in Table 2 show that the mean scores of teacher trainees ranges from 2.5 to 3.8. This result means that teacher trainees agreed to all the 12 items on implementation of teacher preparation to enhance peace and security in Nigeria. The standard deviation (SD) of the means of the items are relatively close which shows that the respondents tend to have similar opinion about the items.

Research Question 3: How would teacher preparation be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria?

Table 3: Extent of Utilization of Teacher Preparation to Enhance Peace and Security in Nigeria. N=99

| S/N | ITEMS | Mean | SD | Remarks |
|-----|---|------|-----|---------|
| 1 | Inclusion of peace and security course in the curriculum of teacher preparation. | 2.8 | .80 | VHU |
| 2 | Equipping teacher trainees with knowledge of managing challenges | 2.6 | .40 | VHU |
| 3 | Teaching for acquisition of skills for safety activities. | 2.8 | .44 | VHU |
| 4 | Teaching teacher trainees positive moral values for peaceful coexistence. | 2.6 | .38 | VHU |
| 5 | Increasing awareness on benefits of peace and security through teamwork among teacher trainees. | 2.7 | .40 | VHU |
| 6 | Enhancing peace and security by organizing school leadership organizations. | 2.3 | .64 | HU |
| 7 | Promoting effective mentorship among teacher trainees. | 1.4 | .48 | MU |
| 8 | Enhancing personal qualities befitting of would be teachers . | 2.4 | .28 | HU |
| 9 | Encouraging teacher trainees attendance at workshops to enhance peace and security. | 2.5 | .50 | VHU |
| 10 | Promoting gender equality in instructional situation to instill tolerance and togetherness thereby enhancing of peace and security. | 2.6 | .48 | VHU |
| 11 | Exposing teacher trainees to series hands-on-minds-on experiences. | 2.7 | .96 | VHU |
| 12 | Using ICT in instructional delivery and assessments. | 1.3 | .62 | MU |

The result presented in Table 3 has shown that the respondents are of the opinion that all the 12 items could be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

The result of data analysis as presented in Table 1 shows that all the 12 items were agreed upon as indicators for peace and security in Nigeria. The result such as showing respect to constituted authority; harmonious coexistence among citizens and communities; having enabling environment for business and developmental activities; high level of educational activities that would ginger high rate of employment activities in the country are strong indicators of peace and security. The finding agrees with the statement of Vankovska and Wiberg (2002) that peace is realized when people, regardless of creed and race are able to live together and have prosperity, education, health, employment, equality before the law, free elections and be free to speak their minds. The reason for this is that peace and security promotes politically and socially healthy environment for people to live and do business. Teacher preparation is therefore a mechanism that could be used to enhance peace and security in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that teacher trainees agreed upon all the 12 items on how teacher preparation could be implemented to enhance peace and security in Nigeria. The result confirms that teacher preparation programme can be used to instill

positive altitudinal change, mental alertness about peace and security and social inclusion and adaptability for harmonious co-existence. The finding agrees with the assertion by Akpan (2019) who stressed that teaching in secondary schools, Colleges of Education and Universities should deliberately emphasis internal safety, and create humane, selfless and caring persons who have respects for others. The finding also agrees with the opinion by Besong (2002) who held that education is a strong instrument for developing a culturally and socially tolerant people who would exercise ethical and moral considerations in local and international affairs. Fundamentally, these authors therefore note that Teacher preparation is not only concerned with cognitive development but as a tool that provides flexibility in thinking, quality reasoning, development of innovative skills necessary for addressing peace and security issues in the society.

The findings from research question 3 on the extent of utilization of teacher preparation in enhancing peace and security in Nigeria indicate that the 12 items responded to by teacher trainees could be utilized to enhance peace and security in Nigeria. This support the assertion by Akpan (2019) that teaching in secondary schools, Colleges of Education and Universities should deliberately emphasis internal safety, and create humane, selfless and caring persons who have respects for others. Obanya (2019) asserted that school subjects should not just be studied as mere content but as methodology for developing the three domains of educational objectives that is cognitive, emotional and imaginative development for peaceful co-existence. A possible explanation of the opinion of the respondents of the study is that teacher preparation to a great extent will provide accelerated information about social, political and economic activities that will transform and promote healthy social, political and economic life. This of course will result in reducing social vices like political thuggery, robbery, cultism, kidnapping, cybercrime, communal fight and other related crimes and insecurity in the society and Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

The role of teacher preparation in enhancing peace and security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Teacher preparation programs need to be effectively implemented and utilized to bring about peace and security in Nigeria. This could be achieved by exposing teacher trainees to real life peace and security activities in addition to psycho-productive development for self-sustainability thereby diverting individuals from negative thinking and actions that would threatened peace and security in Nigeria as a Nation.

Recommendations

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

1. Peace and security should be included as a core content in Teacher preparation curriculum by Teacher Educators in Nigeria.
2. The University Faculties of Education should emphasize psycho-productive skills development to ensure individual occupational engagement of the teacher trainees to divert individuals from negative thinking and actions that would threatened peace and security in Nigeria.

3. More emphasis should be laid on teacher preparation activities as mechanism for enhancing peace and security in the society by teachers' educators and other stakeholders.

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