



Multicultural Curriculum Education Strategies for Attaining Safe Schools: Social Studies Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The study explored multicultural curriculum education strategies for attaining safe schools from the social studies perspective. The study is an expose-facto research design. The study instrument was the Planning School Security with Multicultural Education Questionnaire (PSSMEQ). The instrument's reliability was tested using the test re-test method with Pearson r correlation coefficient, which was found to be 0.76 and was deemed reliable. The instrument was rated on a four (4) point scale. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and t-tests for the research questions and hypotheses testing. The findings indicates that teachers responded that students embrace multicultural tenets in schools; teachers embrace the suggestion that multicultural education can be integrated into secondary school education. The hypotheses also showed that teachers do not differ on multicultural tenets when planning school safety. It was recommended that the government create a conducive atmosphere for multicultural education to be integrated into the school curriculum, provide accommodation for student interchange to other regions for schooling, and encourage students to come to school to be exposed to multicultural education, amongst others.

KEY WORDS: Multicultural Education; Multicultural Education Curriculum, Educational Strategies; Safe Schools; Social Studies Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity pervades every sphere of Nigerian national life, and educational institutions are not spared. Nigeria has recently encountered significant levels of insecurity that pose a serious threat to the foundation of national security. (Ukozor, Akuh and Ahon, 2024; Akporehe, 2024). Many parents are apprehensive of impending danger to their children, and in some situations, children are afraid to attend school or completely stop school for fear of safety (Obro, 2020). Insecurity prevalent in schools includes rape, abduction, physical attacks, etc. among others (Odojin & Obro, 2024). Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was launched in May 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This is an arrangement primarily for funding to rehabilitate, provide security in schools, and provide education for internally displaced children (The Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education), 2015) and Ihekoronye & Opara, 2021). This does not seem to address the situation, as the core issues of idiosyncrasy and taken-for-granted ideas still underline the security challenges. Hence, education planners and other stakeholders must address the problem from the grassroots, and multicultural education tenets crafted into the education curriculum could be employed to salvage the challenge.

Planning is a rational, systematic, and analytical process of determining what needs to be done in the educational system. No progress can be made in the educational system without careful planning and implementation. A worked-out detailed scheme, programme, or method to achieve set objectives is planning (Asiyai & Akporehe, 2020). The goals of education in the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) succinctly says: Live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice; Promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. However, judging from the various incidences of school attacks in Nigeria, one can say that the country is far from attaining these goals. This no doubt calls for systematically planning curriculum to meet national challenges for transforming the individual and the nation by way of teaching and learning process (Ogunode, Kureh, & Kasimu, 2024).

Education is a weapon of enlightenment that could liberate a person from ignorance and religious bigotry. Education is the socially beneficial practice of teaching and learning that leads to individual growth, agency, and the elimination of ignorance and superstition (Akporehe & Uviov, 2021). Education provokes good attributes and values of individuals for national building. Education is an organized process that changes the learner's behaviour. A well-crafted curriculum of multicultural tenets will no doubt save our precarious situation in Nigeria. Hence, empirical analysis to determine if students and teachers would welcome multicultural education tenets in the curriculum at the secondary school level could form a solid foundation for the inculcation of moral attitude, integration equality, and social cohesion that would shape lives.

Multicultural means more than one culture, and culture can be described as a way of life for a people. Culture embraces food, language, religion, dressing, art, dancing, housing, marriage, and beliefs. Multicultural education instructs children to gain knowledge and understanding of ideas that will lead to mutual recognition and positive acceptance of other ethnic-cultural differences (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013; Arslan & Raşa, 2013).

Ogheneakoke, Benike and Obro (2019), opined that Nigeria is a multicultural society, and as Parekh (2020) asserted that multicultural societies reflect the interaction of several civilisations that cannot be theorised or controlled by any one of them except a feeling of belonging among all people, so fostering a stable society. Kymlicka (2007) maintained that multiculturalism provides opportunities for managing diverse society challenges and opportunities. Cultural life includes language, religion, dressing, and other things taught and practised in schools, which can bring unity. Being peaceful and in agreement with other people is a hallmark of unity (Ogheneakoke & Obro, 2018). Consequently, the goal of multicultural education is to promote national harmony and togetherness through teaching students to value and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives while also encouraging them to embrace and integrate these ideas into their own lives (Aydin, 2013). Since it is believed that every child in Nigeria attends school, formal education provides a perfect opportunity to include multicultural education into the country's educational system. Schools serve as excellent mediums for imparting cultural values through the many disciplines covered in the curriculum. Omotoyinbo (2015) harped on language policy in the Nigerian educational system to foster unity. Thus, Religious Studies, Home Economics, Creative Art, Social Studies, Fine Art, English Studies, Local Language, Literature, and so on can promote multicultural Education (Akporehe, 2021). We can minimize discrimination, which results from misinformation or lack of information, by learning more about various religious traditions and beliefs of others (Sabrina & Arzina, 2019).

Researchers Sultanova, Khomyc, and Belando-Montoro (2020) looked at nations that have already implemented multicultural education and how it was developed. Teachers who are able to effectively collaborate in diverse classrooms have access to specialised training, they discovered. Additionally, they brought up the fact that multicultural education is officially recognised as educational policy in the US and has the backing of lawmakers. Because of its importance in fostering peace and guaranteeing the safety of schools, a policy can be put in place that permits the teaching of multicultural education curricula in schools.

According to Tanner and Tanner (1980), a curriculum is a set of goals for students' education that are deliberate and purposeful in nature, with the goal of helping them develop their personal and social competence over time. Curriculum is the set of predetermined lessons that students follow in order to reach certain learning outcomes. According to Akinwande, Omotayo, and Famiwole (2024), curriculum refers to the intentionally designed learning experiences that students have in school. If multiculturalism is to succeed in reducing prejudice, a more thorough curriculum integrated into undergraduate degree programs is necessary to alleviate the unintended consequences of diverse cultures, according to Ari and Laron (2014). According to Mulenga (2018), in order to meet the evolving demands of a society, the curriculum should adapt to the current state of education.

Although Nigeria has a curriculum, more must be done to make it integrative instead of stand-alone for different subjects (Igbokwe, 2015). This is why reforms are inevitable in the face of emergent challenges like the safety of schools in Nigeria. Given the current security challenges in schools, multicultural tenets must be integrated into the various subjects to be part and parcel of them (Akporehe & Obielumani, 2013). A well-planned education programme can foster peace, self-realization, empowerment, and liberation from ignorance and superstition to develop society (Ocho, 2010). Okokoyo and Ossai (2023) assert that schools are a microcosm of society and the link between what is taught in school and what is accepted in society. Carrying deadly weapons and killing innocent civilians tendencies are reduced when children receive quality education as they will be in a better position to decide what to do with their lives.

Safe School Initiatives in Nigeria.

Worries about school safety are a fear for every well-meaning Nigerian. In 2018, Akporehe conducted a study to determine the preparedness of pre-service teachers to address security challenges. The study's findings showed that teachers were unprepared to handle security challenges in Delta State secondary schools. The Federal Government of Nigeria, worried by the spate of school attacks, instituted the Safe School Initiatives. The Safe School Initiative entails a combination of the following:

- School-based interventions;
- Community interventions to protect schools; and
- Special measures for at-risk populations

School safety initiatives are political interventions for school security. The government must show interest in the education system's security through policies. In Quebec and Canada, since 2008, a publically funded system has retained space for religious education through various religion and ethics courses, which are mandatory for students in all public and private schools. These courses are intended to be taught in a neutral overview of a diverse range of faiths and ethical positions designed to familiarize students with the values held by their fellow citizens (Obro, 2021). The research conducted by Lue and Riyanto (2019) through a literature review encompassing books, scholarly articles, and other pertinent sources revealed that multicultural learning integrated

with peace education fosters a more harmonious educational environment and contributes to the advancement of civilisation by encouraging tolerance and respect for individual differences among students.

RQs

1. Are teachers' responses to assessing students' behaviour align with multiculturalism tenets?
2. Are multicultural education strategies acceptable to teachers to prevent security challenges in school?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes towards multicultural tenets in school.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the acceptability of planning strategies for school security regarding multicultural education in secondary schools.

Methodology

The research employed an ex post facto design utilising the survey method to gather information from public secondary school educators in Delta State. The research population comprises all educators in public secondary schools within Delta State. A multistage process was employed to select a sample of 650 educators. The schools were first categorised into senatorial districts. Secondly, the schools within the senatorial districts were selected at random, and teachers were chosen randomly as well. Table 1 illustrates the allocation of educators in the research.

Table 1: Distribution of teachers used in the study.

SN	Delta state senatorial districts	No of schools	No of male teachers	No of female teachers	Total no of teachers	10% sampled size of the teachers	MALE/FE MALE
1	Delta South	116	1,131	1,937	3,068	308	114/194
2	Delta North	171	2,200	4,347	5,272	527	221/306
3	Delta Central	190	2,058	3,072	6,405	640	205/435
	Total	477	5,389	9,356	14,745	1475	540/935

To obtain the male teachers, 37% of the sampled population was used as the percentage of the total teachers in the senatorial zone (Delta South); 42% of the sampled population was used as the percentage of the total teachers in the senatorial zone (Delta North); and 32% of the sampled population was used is the percentage of the total teachers in the senatorial zone (Delta Central). This was also calculated for the female teachers,

A self-constructed instrument of 25 questions was used to collect the data. Pearson r was used to test the instrument's reliability after a test re-test on teachers who were not part of the study. A Pearson Correlation Index of .76 was obtained, meaning the instrument was reliable. The researcher administered the instrument to six research assistants. Research questions were analyzed with descriptive statistics of mean and percentages. The benchmark of 2.5 and above was considered acceptable (agreed), while less than 2.4 was deemed unacceptable(disagreed). The hypotheses were tested with a t-test.

RESULTS

RQ1: Do teachers' responses to assessing students' behaviour align with multiculturalism tenets?

Table 2: Teachers' ratings on Students' Multicultural Tenets.

SN	Items	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Students are happy when cultural issues are taught in school.	3.2509	.78588	Agreed
2	Students love it when their languages are taught in school.	3.3144	.73572	Agreed
3	Students love it when their cultural dresses are worn in school.	3.4860	.70150	Agreed
4	Students love it when their cultural symbols are learned in school	3.3794	.77250	Agreed
5	Students love it when their greetings are taught in school.	3.3185	.77122	Agreed
6	Students can be friends with anyone who speaks their language in school	3.1798	.91414	Agreed
7	Students do not harm anyone who can speak their language in school.	3.1183	.82892	Agreed
8	Students discuss questions that pertain to cultures other than their own.	3.1121	.80678	Agreed
9	Students can work with anyone who knows their culture.	3.1504	.93089	Agreed
10	Students have a soft spot for students who understand their culture	3.1319	.95506	Agreed

11	Students love it when school has a cultural day to showcase their culture.	3.0622	.89890	Agreed
12	Students do not fight a person who speaks their language	2.8872	1.0063	Agreed
13	Students do not fight a person who obeys their religion.	3.0602	.93668	Agreed
14	Students make friends with teachers who understand their culture	3.3746	.79013	Agreed
15	Students can defend one that understands their tradition.	2.9740	.92872	Agreed
Average		3.182		

The finding showed that teachers' views of students' responses to multicultural tenets are positive. The teachers' ratings agreed on all items. The mean response score was 3.182, more than the benchmark of 2.50.

RQ2: Are Multicultural Education Strategies Accepted by Teachers to Prevent Security Challenges in School?

Table 3: Mean on Multicultural Education Strategies to Prevent Security Challenges in School

SN	Items	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Strengthening of Universal Basic Education (UBE) for children to be in school to meaningfully learn multicultural education.	3.0048	.9796	Agreed
2	Multicultural education should be integrated into the school curriculum.	3.0848	1.0134	Agreed
3	Teaching the local language, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, compulsorily in schools	3.1189	.9258	Agreed
4	Multicultural education should be woven into all subjects to be the fabric of teaching/learning in the school system.	3.1887	.9201	Agreed
5	There should be a frantic effort to supervise the implementation of the multicultural dimension of the school curriculum, eg. language, religion.	3.2235	.8538	Agreed
6	Teachers should be recruited and trained to teach multicultural education.	3.1989	.8381	Agreed
7	Scholarships should be given to encourage reading multicultural education-related courses, especially language art and religious study.	3.1634	.7915	Agreed
8	Multicultural counsellors should be trained to guide multicultural issues.	3.1777	.8034	Agreed
9	The government provides accommodation for learners through boarding schools to help them interchange.	3.2365	.7047	Agreed
10	Learners should be exchanged from the South to the North and North to Southern parts of the country.	3.2433	.7878	Agreed
Average mean score		3.15		

The findings show that teachers are attuned to the strategies of promoting multicultural education. All the responses to the questionnaire items are more than the benchmark of 2.50. Item 10 has the highest mean score of 3.24, followed by item 9 with 3.23 and item 5 with a mean rating of 3.22. The average mean rating was 3.16.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes towards multicultural tenets in school.

Table 4: Independent Sample Test on Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes Towards Multicultural Tenets in School.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed		1187.240	.000	32.906	1461	.000	9.59878	.29170	9.02658	10.17099
Equal variances not assumed.				28.085	699.627	.000	9.59878	.34178	8.92775	10.26981

Table 4 shows no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the perception of students' attitude towards multicultural tenets in schools. The result reported a no significant difference in teachers perception of students' attitude towards

multicultural tenets in schools. Since .000 is less than the .05 significant level. The hypothesis was therefore accepted. By implication, both genders are of the view that students have positive attitudes towards multicultural tenets in school.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the acceptability of planning strategies for school security.

Table 5: Independent Sample Test on Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes Towards Multicultural Tenets in School.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	644.460	.000	27.17	1461	.000	5.70955	.21016	5.297	6.122
Equal variances not assumed.			23.94	763.85	.000	5.70955	.23855	5.241	6.178

Table 5 shows no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the acceptability of planning strategies for school security .000 is less than 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is therefore, accepted. This means that all the teachers are on the same page as regards planning strategies of implementing multicultural education in secondary school education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of hypothesis one shows no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the perception of students' attitude towards multicultural tenets in schools. The result reported a no significant difference in teachers perception of students' attitude towards multicultural tenets in school. Thus, teachers rated that students have positive views on multicultural tenets. This discovery aligns with Lue and Riyanto (2019), who determined that multicultural education combined with peace education fosters a more harmonious school environment and a more progressive society by encouraging tolerance and respect for individual diversity among students.

Result of hypothesis two shows that both male and female teachers are in agreement of strategies to implement multicultural education in secondary schools. Thus, teachers accepted all the views of how teachers can implement multicultural education. This finding is in line with Soner and Polat (2012) and Lue and Riyanto (2019) who reported no significant difference in teachers views on the strategies to implement multicultural education in secondary schools. The study result is further supported by Mohammed (2020) finding that the majority of the teachers agree that in a heterogeneous and diverse society, the curriculum of multicultural education becomes effective.

CONCLUSION

From the study, multicultural education tenets have a lot to contribute to remedying the school insecurity. Students welcome multicultural tenets in school and these can engender peace and social cohesion. Thus, the curriculum has to integrate multicultural tenets in all subjects taught in school to expose students to multicultural tenets. This is how school safety can be planned so that education can change students' psyche. Therefore, implementation of multicultural education should be enforced in secondary education and become ingrained into the students lives before they proceed into tertiary institutions. This is the basis of accommodating all diverse cultural aspects of the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The government should integrate multicultural education in every subject to fast-track multicultural tenets in students.
- 2 Access to secondary education should be encouraged for students to benefit from multicultural education.
- 3 The government should fund education so that interchange of students to different parts of the country can be accommodated.
- 4 Teachers should be trained in multicultural education methodologies and skills to impart multicultural tenets to students.
- 5 There should be an interchange of learners from the South to the North and North to Southern parts of Nigeria

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