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PERSPECTIVES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHERS ON THE IMPEDIMENTS OF PEACE AND CONFLICTS RESOLUTION EFFORTS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Conflict is one outstanding episode that occurs in any relationship comprising of two or more individuals. In some cases, conflict emanates from sharp marginalization and restriction of a segment in the society from gaining access to resources, institutions and facilities that can make them achieve their imageries and visions of a better life that is materially enriched, ecologically improved, institutionally well-organized and technologically more advanced. This paper therefore examined various factors militating against peace and conflict resolution efforts in Nigeria. Descriptive Survey research type was adopted for the study. 50 Secondary School History Teachers in the study area were selected using simple random sampling. Two research questions were raised and answered in the study. Researcher designed questionnaire titled: Perspectives of Teachers Questionnaire on the Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Resolution Efforts in Nigeria (PTQIPCREN) was used to collect the data. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentage. The result of the study indicates that factors such as bad leadership, corruption, ethno-religions factors, undemocratic practices, lack of rule of law as well as ineffective conflict resolution management, lack of fair hearing etc are on the high percentages. This signifies that these factors are grossly significant to the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria's socio-cultural and political history irrespective of gender. The study thus recommended that Peace and conflicts resolution efforts should be handled by experts in the field of peace and conflicts resolutions, Nigerian government and concerned authorities should take it as a point of duty to always punish offenders of the law according to the laid down constitutional provisions and that ethno-religious tolerance should always be encouraged by various groups and sub groups in contemporary Nigeria among others.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict resolution, Efforts, Impediments, Peace

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Introduction

Generally, conflict resolution can be regarded as the planed and sustained effort that is aimed at settlement of peace, giving room for peace to reign between two people, two groups, two communities, two countries who are warring in battling or fighting each other for the purpose of bringing out their grievances and to call for settlement and welcome peace between both parties. Impediment according to Oxford English Dictionary (2023) means hindrance, embargo, ban that stops a particular phenomenon from existence.

The impediment on conflict resolution therefore means hindrance on the process of peaceful negotiation to restore peace during conflict. Obstacle in dispute resolution had for long being in existence, sighting one of the examples from the Concert of Europe in the year 1815 which was to create peaceful co-existence among the European Nations. The failure of the Concert became obvious as a result of the Crimean war among other issues. Hence the peaceful negotiation in Nigeria between the then military Head of State (Gen. Yakubu Gowon) and the Military Governor of the Eastern Region (Col. C.O. Ojukwu) after the second military coup in Nigeria failed, thus Nigeria entered into 30 months civil war (Achebe, 2012).

Partisan judgement, lack of power to implement punishment, lack of fulfilled promises by the mediators, various controversy and lack of general agreement, wrong perception. All these are the negative elements collapsing peaceful negotiation after conflict in the society. Nigeria in itself had faced series of intra-national conflict, pandemonium, commotion and massacre. In fact, in Nigeria there are cases in which crises are continued in some particular places because adequate measures were not taken whenever there was a time for armistice to hear the grievance of the warring communities (Aluede, Jimoh, Agwined & Omoregie, 2005).

For instance, the situation in Niger-Delta, adequate measure had not yet being taken. Thus the crisis practically continues to trend in that region. Another issue that makes conflict resolution fail is where one of the warning parties is being denied the chance to hearing its grievance, thus the party feels marginalized. For instance the post second military coup de tat in Nigeria in July 1966 and the killings of the Easterners in Northern Nigeria made the then Eastern Governor (Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu) felt the Easterners were deprived fair hearing by the Nigerian Government. Even with the outcome of the treaty of the Aburi Conference in Ghana in 1967 (Achebe, 2012).

Dosumu (2015) described conflict as the breach of peace and the manifestation of goal differences. Conflict can also be regarded as the clash of interest between two or more parties. Conflict does not take place all of its sudden. There are some situations whereby conflicts arise; hence we have reasons for conflict. Notably, there are reasons behind every situation even when conflict persists after resolution, or at the period of armistice, the objection of one of the affected parties given out after the resolution makes conflict persists.

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more people, communities, nations to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement (Google.com, 2024). In other words, conflict resolution aimed at solving the problem of lack of understanding, adoption of ceasefire approach during the heat of war/ crisis, and conflict between two warring parties for peace to reign. Of course, no society develops without peace, in order to foster development in the country; peace must be given a chance. Notably, conflict can be resolved, but in a situation

whereby the process of conflict resolution fails, hence, we say that peace is not negotiable thus the conflict persist beyond the expected period of resolution.

Failure on conflict resolution did not just start today; it is as old as man. Conflict is inevitable, since no human being leaves in isolation (no one is an island of knowledge) we therefore live together and this serves as the basis of personal differences. What pleases Mr. A might not be befitting to Mr. B due to selective perception. Everyone therefore seems to protect his own interest and it leads to clash of interest with others (Alabi, 2010).

Impediment to conflict resolution means the hindrances blockade, ban, towards peace negotiation in term of conflict. Impediment is simply what makes conflict resolution fail, what makes conflict persist after (peace negotiation) resolution. Notably, impediment to peace and conflict resolution had long being in existence. It is as old as humanity some of peace impediments shared in the past and reflected in History among the world History was the Concert of Europe in the year 1815 as a mechanism to enforce the decisions of the Congress of Vienna. Forming the composition of the Quadrupic Alliance: Russia, Prussia, Austria and Great Britain (Achebe, 2012).

The concert of Europe was one of the first serious attempts in modern time to establish an international society to maintain the peace. This made it a significant event in world, even though it only lasted for few years. The concert of Europe came up due to the fact that the European nations agreed on a symbol of peace that after the Napoleonic War that ended in February, 1812, there should be peace all over Europe, no country should threaten the peace of another.

The word conflict has been defined by various scholars and conflict has its' origin from the Latin word 'confligere' which means to strike together. The concept of conflict is dichotomy in the sense that it is two sides of a coin. There is misunderstanding from many people about the meaning of conflict. Some looked at the negative aspect without considering the positive view. Dosumu (2015) defined conflict as opposition among social entities directed against one another.

Conflict is distinguished from competition, which can be defined as "opposition among social entities independently striving for something of which the supply is inadequate to satisfy all". Based on this assertion, conflict arises as a result of disagreement for antagonists group for scarce resources. Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) perceived conflict as a disagreement between two or more parties who perceive that they have incompatible concerns. To them individuals, group, departments, organizations, countries etc, do experience conflicts whenever an action by one party is perceived as preventing or interfering with the goals, needs or actions of another. Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceived incompatible goals, scare resource, and interference from other in achieving their goals.

Furthermore, Ndun and Stella (2013) defined conflict as disagreement over social issues, beliefs and ideologies. Conflict has also been described as disagreement on the procedure of distributing power and resources in an organization. Basically, conflict is what occurs when two or more parities have divergent interests over distribution of resources or issues touching on their development. It is what can come up in the event of staff and student's interactions

In other words, Alabi (2010) described conflict, as an opportunity to change. This implies that conflict is either positive or negative. How we manage it is determined whether it

will escalate to violent or crisis and this have to depend on the information we have. In similar vein, Solaja and Adenugba (2016) argued that not all conflicts that are out of direction. Despite the fact that there is abnormality in conflict, it can become useful as well and also conflict stand as catalyst for change in the social setting. This kind of conflicts is assumed to be positive in the sense that it improved the quality of people's decision and help them build or improve a good relationship. It also stimulates creativity and innovation through which problems can be aired and tensions released. Conflict help people to understand the sensitivity of issues as they arise which enable them to know how to handle such issue in similar circumstances.

Based on the above discussion on the concept of conflict, we can observe that conflict is an inherent part of the human condition that is natural, and as such, it cannot be eliminated from society. Though conflict is destructive, but it also serves as social change in human life. The extent we manage it will however be determined by our attitude and action or mode of approaches adopted by the parties involve

The causes of conflict have been classified in various ways by Dosumu (2015):

Conflicting resources: Everyone need access to certain resources and resources are scarce. But when more than one persons or group is striving to gain access to this resources, conflict can occur. According to Ndun and Stella (2013), student amenities and other welfare services all have their claims on the limited resources at the disposal of the university. Hence, there is deprivation (relative or absolute) of the needs of all the groups within the system.

Conflicting style: Everyone works differently, according to his or her individual needs and personality. For instance, some people love the pleasure of getting things done at the last minute, while others need the structure of strict deadlines to perform.

Conflicting goal: Sometimes we have conflicting goals in our work. This type of conflict does occur as result of disagreement of institutional or personal goals. If goals are unclear or not well defined there is bound to be conflict. In the university system, attention needs to be focused on the critical point of contact between the students will not learn well unless they are actively involved in the process, and so accept responsibility for their learning activities. None involvement of students in decision making process has been one of the causes of conflict in the university system, considering the fact that most of the issues in the system is for the interest of the students. According to Aluede et al (2005) none involvement of students in decision making process has been one of the causes of conflicts in the university system, considering the fact that most of the issues in the system is for the interest of the students.

Conflicting Perception: Differences in opinions of events can cause conflicts particularly where one person knows something that the other person doesn't know. This kind of conflict is common in the society in general.

Conflicting Pressure: Conflicting pressures are similar to conflicting goals; the only difference is that conflicting pressures usually involve urgent tasks, while conflicting goals typically involve projects with longer timelines. Conflicting pressure occurs as a result of clashing short-term objectives; reschedule tasks and deadline to relive the pressure. For example, according to Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) described academic pressure as students' non-involvement in decisions that concern their welfare and they are being forced to pay a special fee.

Conflicting Role: Sometimes we have to perform a task that is outside our normal role or responsibilities. If this causes us to step into someone else's territory, then conflict and power struggles can occur.

Difference personal value: Possibly because of the concentration of the youths, probably experiencing freedom and independence for the first time, the university campuses are filled with and threatened by noise, aggressive styles of dresses, sexual behaviors, aesthetics and secret peer association (e.g. cultism). The older members-academic and administrators impose rules and regulations. The young may answer back by demanding for, and claiming, their democratic rights, ending in minor conflicts or even ghastly clashes between the students and the university authority.

Unpredicted policies: When rules and policies change at work and you don't communicate that change clearly, there will be confusion and conflict can occur. It is important to state categorically here that all the above stated and highlighted causes of conflict are so much applicable to Nigeria. Successive Nigerian governments have made efforts to resolve conflicting issues and matters especially those that related to ethnic rivalry, religious intolerance, insurgences, nepotism, and others but due to some impediments of note, peace and conflict resolution efforts in Nigeria have been an herculean task (Orhero, 2010; Solaja & Adenugba, 2016).

It is important to note at this juncture that the dilemma facing Nigeria today, after 65 years of independence; is not actually the occurrence of conflicts and crises but how to address these conflicts and crises in such a way to prevent the past ones from reoccurring and also containing the present ones from escalating and degenerating into a full scale war (Alabi, 2010). This study therefore examined the Perspectives of Secondary School History Teachers on the Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Resolution Efforts in Contemporary Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to examine the Perspectives of Secondary School History Teachers on the Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Resolution Efforts in Contemporary Nigeria. The study specifically sought to:

1. Find out the general level of perspectives of Secondary School History teachers on the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria.
2. Determine the level of perspectives between Male and Female Secondary School History teachers on the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the general level of perspectives of Secondary School History teachers on the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria?
2. What is the level of perspectives between male and female Secondary School History teachers on the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria?

Method

Descriptive Survey research type was adopted for the study. The target population of the study comprised of History teachers in both Private and Public Secondary School in Ibadan North local Government Area of Oyo state. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 50 comprising of 28 males and 22 females Secondary School History Teachers in the study area.

Two research questions were raised and answered in the study. The instrument for data collection was a 10 item researchers' designed questionnaire titled: Perspectives of Teachers Questionnaire on the Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Resolution Efforts in Nigeria (PTQIPCREN). The PTQIPCREN contained two sections. Section A seeks to collect demographic data of the respondents while Section B collects data on various aspects of perspectives on Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Efforts in Nigeria, arranged based on YES or NO. The face validity of the instrument was established by experts in History and Test and Measurement in Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate. The instrument was trial tested with 10 History teachers in the Junior Secondary Schools in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. Split-half method was used to ascertain internal consistency of the instrument. Two sets of Scores were computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability index of 0.83. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentage. The two research questions raised to guide this study were analysed using percentages.

Results

Research Question One:

Table 1: Percentage of General level of Impediments of Peace and Conflicts Resolution Efforts in Nigeria by Secondary School History Teachers

S/N	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Bad leadership	47	94	03	06
2.	Corruption	45	90	05	10
3.	Ethno-religious factors	43	86	07	14
4.	Socio-economic inequalities	40	80	10	20
5.	Weak security systems	47	94	03	94
6.	Undemocratic practices	43	86	07	14
7.	Lack of rule of law	44	88	06	12
8.	Lack of fair hearing	48	96	02	04
9.	Wrong perception	40	80	10	20
10.	Partisan judgment	42	84	089	16

Table 1 above shows that factors such as bad leadership, corruption, ethno-religions factors, undemocratic practices, lack of rule of law as well as ineffective conflict resolution management, weak security system, lack of fair hearing, partisan judgment and socio-economic inequalities are on the high percentages. This signifies that these factors are highly significant in relation to the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria's socio-cultural and political history.

Research Question 2

S/N	Items	Male				Female			
		Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Bad leadership	26	93	02	07	21	96	01	04
2.	Corruption	24	86	04	14	22	100	-	-
3.	Ethno-religious factors	25	89	03	11	20	91	02	09
4.	Socio-economic inequalities	27	96	01	04	22	100	-	-
5.	Weak Security Systems	27	96	01	04	22	100	-	-
6.	Undemocratic practices	26	93	02	07	21	96	01	04
7.	Lack of rule of law	28	100	-	-	21	96	01	04
8.	Lack of fair hearing	26	93	02	07	20	91	02	09
9.	Wrong perception	27	96	01	04	20	91	02	09
10.	Partisan judgment	28	100	-	-	21	96	01	04

The results in table 2 shows that both male and female secondary school History teachers perceived that factors like bad governance, poverty, ethno-religious factors, corruption etc are significant impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in contemporary Nigeria. This development confirms the basic results in table 1 that all the highlighted factors above contributed immensely as impediments to peace building efforts in Nigeria.

Discussion

From the results presented in tables 1 and 2, there is a clear indication of notable impediments to peace and conflicts resolution efforts in contemporary Nigeria. The study also revealed that male and female secondary school History teachers perceived that the above highlighted impediments to peace and conflict resolution efforts in Nigeria were significant. This is because there was a significant relationship of the responses of male and female Secondary school History teachers.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the assertion of Achebe (2012) that partisan politics, lack of power to implement punishment, unfulfilled promises by the mediators, wrong perception, lack of general agreement and various controversies were the elements responsible for peaceful negotiation after conflicts resolution efforts in any society. The result also support the findings of Dosumu (2015) that failure on peace and conflicts resolution efforts did not just start today, it is as old as man, irrespective of human gender and that the views of males and females mediators on the causes of conflicts and problems of conflicts resolution therein are similar.

On this note, it is important to state categorically that conflict is bound to occur in any human society and that efforts at peace and conflicts resolution are always limited with some

notable factors like corruption, bad leadership, weak security system, lack of rule of law, partisan politics, lack of power to implement punishment, lack of fair hearing, wrong perception and ethno-religious factors among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Going by the results presented, analysed and discussed, it is concluded that the perspectives of secondary school History teachers on the impediments of peace and conflicts resolution efforts in contemporary Nigeria are significant. This development reveals that there are some notable impediments to peace and conflicts resolution efforts in Nigeria. It is important to note at this juncture that, those perceived factors have greatly limited peace and conflicts resolution efforts in contemporary Nigeria. The fact that peace and conflicts resolution efforts require some processes and technicalities, the perception of male and female secondary school History teachers are similar, to the extent that the level of similarity was highly significant and germane. The following recommendations are therefore made:

- Peace and conflicts resolution efforts should be handled by experts in the field of peace and conflicts resolutions.
- Nigerian government and concerned authorities should take it as a point of duty to always punish offenders of the law according to the laid down constitutional provisions.
- Ethno-religious tolerance should always be encouraged by various groups and sub groups in contemporary Nigeria.
- The acts of corruption should be discouraged in all forms and that Nigeria's political leaders at all level of governance should always lead by good examples fairness.
- The security apparatus and architecture together with the security personnel should be well catered for by the government and all the stakeholders in the Nigeria's security sector. This will go a long way to help perform their duties effectively and efficiently thus reducing and / or eliminating the act of violence and intolerance of all forms.

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