

Original Paper

Perceived Roles of Religious and Cultural Teachers in Implementing the Curriculum towards Achieving and Sustaining Peace in Imo State

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Abstract

The study investigated the perceived roles of Religious and Cultural Teachers in Implementing the Curriculum towards Achieving and Sustaining Peace in Imo State. The study was guided by two research questions and one hypothesis. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Multistage proportionate stratified random sampling techniques were used to draw a sample of 224 Christian religious teachers from population of 602 Christian religious teachers in junior and senior public secondary schools. Researchers developed two rating scales: Religious and Cultural Teachers Roles in Peace Achievement Rating Scale (RCTRPARS) and Level Religious and Cultural Teachers Discharge their Roles Towards Achieving Peace Rating Scale (LRCTDRTAPRS). The reliability of internal consistency of RCTPPARS and LRCTDRTAPRS are 0.86 and 0.82 respectively while reliability of temporal stability are 0.80 and 0.83 respectively. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant levels. Findings showed the sixteen specific roles religious and cultural teachers are expected to play in discharging these duties, the religious and cultural teachers have significantly performed below the expected average level. Religious and cultural teachers should endeavour to be more proactive in the discharge of their duties in these areas through effective curriculum implementation so as to enhance the realization of peaceful society for all citizens.

Keywords

perceived roles, religious and cultural teachers, curriculum, implementation, peace

1. Introduction

One of the socio-cultural problems of the society is the rampant cases of violent behaviour among youths. Some of these violence occurs in the form of physical abuse: slapping, kicking, pushing, shoving, punching, choking, and strangling; verbal abuse: calling names, racial slurs, cursing; vandalism; theft; kidnapping, assassination; bullying, rape just to mention but a few. The prevalence of these violent behaviours coupled with the high level of insecurity in our nation is very worrisome and an indication of absence of peace which is highly needed for the progress of the society.

Peace is one of the key aspirations of every society which can be built and sustained through education. Educating people about peace in schools is one of the significant ways to inculcate skills, values and attitudes needed to curb violence of all kinds prevalent among youths of our society. Teaching young people about the importance of peace and the adverse effects of violence is in fact a pathway to a culture of peace. It will help to promote nonviolence, challenge prejudice, uphold human dignity and build tolerance which are some characteristics of peace.

Some scholars in the field of religion and cultural studies have defined peace in various ways. Galtung (1996, p. 9) defined peace as an absence of violence of all kinds. This seems to be too narrow since it lacks some indicators of peace. Pandoy (2019) asserts that peace is when people are able to resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives.

According to the scholars, peace is when; everyone lives in safety, without fear or threat of violence and no form of violence is tolerated in law or in practice.

- ❖ Everyone is equal before the law, the systems for justice are trusted and fair and effective laws protect people's rights.
- ❖ Everyone is able to participate in shaping political decision and the government is accountable to the people.
- ❖ Everyone has fair and equal access to the basic needs for their wellbeing-such as food, clean water, shelter, education, healthcare and a decent living environment.
- ❖ Everyone has an equal opportunity to work and make a living regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other aspect of identity.

Peace embraces all categories of relationship among human beings. It goes from personal to peace within one's family, community, deities, obedience to prescribed laws and norms of the land and peace between communities. This is vividly captured in Mbiti (2011) interpretation of the prayer points of the Wapokomo people in Kenya. For him, God is the Author and the Giver of Peace. Peace is an expression of divine will towards all creations, humans and nature in the gift of life, tranquility, good fortune, good health with freedom to live and to work. Where there is no peace, there is no fortune, no happiness, no joy, no freedom, no strength, incentive or motivation.

The good knowledge of religious and cultural norms and values and living according to them will go a long way to build and sustain peace in the society. Also, effective Implementation of religious and cultural studies curriculum to students by the teachers the key role players will help to impact peaceful consciousness and living.

From the objective sense, Iwuoha (2017, p. 6) views religion as a complex or configuration of doctrines, laws, and rituals by which man expresses his loyalty to transcendental Being – the Absolute God. Parentte (1970), explains that definition shows a moral relationship of the creature with his creator, which is internally and personally acknowledged and individually and collectively expressed through acts of worship.

One critical component of religion as a curriculum that helps to build and sustain good relationship among men and between the creature and his creator is the area of values and morals. Curriculum is the range of subjects and contents taught in schools. Although Marsh (2009) in contrast opined that curriculum is much more than just subjects or what is confined to a school, limiting a curriculum to academic subjects. According to Mulenga (2018) a curriculum carries the beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and all that education is about. The curriculum of religion is the list of content and areas of topics taught in religion. Values and morals then forms part of the curriculum that promotes peace. The knowledge of values and morals will in no doubt help to guarantee peace in the society. According to Mbiti (2011, p. 2) values and morals in religion covers:

topic like truth, justice, love, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty, decency, respect for people and property, keeping of promises and agreements, praise and blame, crime and punishment, the rights and responsibilities of both the individual and his community, character, integrity and so on.

The author emphasized that knowledge of these aspects of religion will help people to live with one another, to settle their differences, to maintain harmony, to make of their belongings and to have relationship with their total environment.

In the same view, Ugwu (2008, p. 277) maintains that religion among others, deals with the cultural norms and values which enhances peace and development in the society. According to him they include:

- Value of human life;
- Value for good human relation;
- Value for sacred and religion;
- Value for hospitality;
- Respect for elders and those in authority;
- Value for kindness and brotherhood;
- Value for community life; and
- Obedience to state and law.

Ihebinike (2016) posits that good character is necessary for peace in the community. According to him, character formation of the citizens could be achieved through customs and traditions. According to the

author, age grade, community festivals, masquerading, moonlight gatherings and agriculture are some of the customs and traditions in Igbo land that have the potency of shaping the character of people. They are illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. Igbo Cultural Activities that Enhances Good character

Good character	Igbo Cultural Activities
Respectful	Initiation into age grade; traditional greeting manners-ndaa, ndee, dada, mama/papa even if those not your real mum/dad.
Peaceful	Masquerading and other community festivals whereby quarrelling, fighting, mourning, etc. are forbidden.
Charitable	Intentionally leaving some crops in the farmlands during harvests in favour of the poor, needy, widows.
Courageous	Traditional wrestling competitions, tree climbing competitions among young boys.
Hardworking	Agricultural seed-grants in form of fowls, goats, lamb, etc; Yam harvest competitions.
Kind	Exchange of farming timetable among peer groups in favour of their parents and elderly people.
Skillful	Carvings, paintings, traditional house decorations with “clay”, folks music etc.
Truthful	Nze-na-ozo
Loyal	Different reward systems in line with the ideology of “onye fee eze, eze eruo ya aka.
Humility	Difference reward systems in line with the ideology of “eghu ghuo ikpere ala, ya anuta ara nne ya”.

Source: Ihebinike (2016, p. 71)

The inculcation of this religious and cultural knowledge to the citizens especially the young ones can be achieved through effective implementation of religion and cultural studies curriculum by the teacher. Curriculum implementation according to (Ogar & Opoh, 2015) is daily classroom activities involving students and teacher. The teacher is known as curriculum implementer. The aim of implementing a curriculum is to bring about a desired change in the students and this is the core role of a teacher. A teacher is seen as the pivot upon which the success of all classroom educational practices that metamorphose to national development revolves (Kanno, 2012).

According to Kanno (2004, p. 11) effective teacher is one who is able to demonstrate the ability to bring about intended learning outcome and this stretches the teacher beyond his academic and professional preparation in terms of acquisition of appropriate teaching skills, good communication and organizational abilities, teacher flexibility, self-confidence, resourcefulness, cheerfulness, creativity and spirit of enquiry.

Basically, teachers teach people how to appreciate themselves, their environments and to improve on

both by enhancing their talents, energies and resources for peace and development in all ramifications. They make people to become competent and relevant in complex world. Teachers do this in various ways such as supporting their students with material resources, classroom didactics, being the historical minds, role models, students' coaches and mentors. They midwife the unseen in the other person and make it palatable and desirable to the mind being cultivated.

Generally only true teachers can indulge in this delicate function of touching the souls and minds of people and gaining positive results. The reason is not farfetched. True teachers engage their wards in self-reflection and coach them into meaning ventures that naturally they would not easily have known and accepted as their own product.

However, in a continent, where everything, including culture, a religious undertone nothing can touch and empower the citizens like a good lesson delivered in various ways by religious and cultural teachers at different aula. Religious and cultural teachers are privileged to be involved in two dominant aspects of African life. This does not just make them important and prominent as care-takers of the soul of Africa, her worldview and mode of existence. They are also inevitable for the urgently desired change in the society today, in terms of peace and development.

In support, Sayed and Novelli (2015), observed that education and teachers hold one of the keys to building successful and sustainable peace. Since almost all religions and cultures advocate for peace in the society, all religious and cultural teachers have the obligation of making these values, norms and traditions that ensures peace, one of the cores in their teaching. They have to treat it with openness, objectivity, drawing inspirations from all their sacred texts and traditions that expose peace more than any other issue.

In practice, some researchers have found that the extent to which parents and teachers motivate their students to excel in the 13-measures of affective domain that is closely related to these religious and cultural values and norms is significantly below the expected average and hence a contributory factor to high level moral decadence in the society (Ipem, Eguzo, & Alaribe, 2019). The researchers have observed that teachers especially the religious teachers tend to focus more on ensuring that students pass examination rather than teaching and helping the students to live by religious and cultural norms and traditions. Could this observation of the researchers through and through? The high level of violence in society is a clear indication that something is wrong somewhere. Could it be that the religious teachers in the school are not doing well in cherishing and upholding these values in such a way that they only know them so as to pass exam and live by them?

2. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- 1 What are the perceived/expected roles of religious and cultural teachers in ensuring that peace is achieved in Imo State of Nigeria?

2 To what extent do the religious and cultural teacher carryout their perceived/ expected roles in ensuring peace in Imo State of Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested at 0.05 significant levels.

1. The extent to which the religious and cultural teachers carryout the perceived/ expected roles in ensuring peace in Imo State is not significantly different from the expected average level (40.10).

3. Method

Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study comprises 602 Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teachers in both junior and senior public secondary schools in Imo State. Multistage proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample side of 224 CRS teachers. Researchers developed two rating scales titled: Religious and Cultural Teachers Roles in Peace Achievement Rating Scale (RCTRPARS) and Level Religious and Cultural Teachers Discharge their Roles Towards Achieving Peace Rating Scale (LRCTDRTAPRS).

RCTRPARS is structured in four point scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) (4points) Agree (A) (3points) Disagree (D) (2points); and Strongly Disagree (SD) (1point). LRCTDRTAPRS is structured in four point scale of Very High Level (VHL) (4points) High Level (HL) (3points), Low Level (LL) (2points) and Very Low Level (VLL) (1point). Both scales contain sixteen items each.

The instruments were validated by two experts in religions and two experts in educational measurement and evaluation. Cronbach alpha statistics was used to establish the reliability coefficient of internal consistency for the RCTRPARS and LRCTDRTAPRS as 0.86 and 0.082 respectively while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula for two of them as 0.80 and 0.83 respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant levels.

The criterion mean of 2.5 was used to determine the accepted roles of religious and cultural teachers in achieving peace. Both items and respondents' responses were used as units of analysis. Item means were used to determine the level for each item while the respondents' mean (observed mean) shows the level to which religious and cultural teachers carryout their perceived roles towards peace achievement and sustenance. The expected average level is the product of the number of items and the average of the four point scale (2.5) (i.e., $16 \times 2.5 = 40$). The observed of the mean on the extent to which religious and cultural teachers carryout their perceived roles in achieving peace is then compared with the expected average level.

4. Results

Table 2. Perceived Religious and Cultural Teachers Roles Towards Achievement of Peace in Imo State

S/N	Items: Religious and Cultural Teachers should help students to:	\bar{X}	S	Decision
1	Have respect and value for human life	3.80	0.40	Accepted
2	Cherish hospitability	3.73	0.44	Accepted
3	Have respect for elders and those in authority	3.89	0.31	Accepted
4	Be kind and friendly to others	3.87	0.34	Accepted
5	Be obedient to state laws, community norms and traditions	4.00	0.00	Accepted
6	Have respect for other peoples' right and religion	4.00	0.00	Accepted
7	Be honest always and in all things	4.00	0.00	Accepted
8	Learn to love others	4.00	0.00	Accepted
9	Cherish justice notwithstanding who is involved	3.90	0.30	Accepted
10	Be decent in their talking and dressing	3.89	0.31	Accepted
11	Have self-control	4.00	0.00	Accepted
12	Learn to persevere in difficult situations	3.90	0.30	Accepted
13	Have respect for private/public properties	4.00	0.00	Accepted
14	Keep promises and agreements	4.00	0.00	Accepted
15	Be hardworking	3.89	0.31	Accepted
16	Learn to strive to have positive relationship with others	4.00	0.00	Accepted

Table 2 showed the mean and standard deviation and the decision taken on the perceived religious and cultural teachers' roles towards achievement of peace in Imo State. The table showed that each of the items obtained mean value that is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and hence all are accepted as the roles of religious and cultural teachers toward attainment and sustenance of peace in Imo State.

Table 3. Level Religious and Cultural Teachers Carryout their Role in Achieving Peace in Imo State

S/N	Items: Religious and Cultural Teachers should help their students to:	\bar{X}	S	Decision
1	Have respect and value for human life	2.11	0.74	Low Level
2	Cherish hospitability	1.87	0.75	Low Level
3	Have respect for elders and those in authority	2.09	0.75	Low Level
4	Be kind and friendly to others	1.79	0.72	Low Level
5	Be obedient to state laws, community norms and traditions	2.57	0.89	High Level
6	Have respect for other peoples right and religion	2.23	1.09	Low Level

7	Be honest always and in all things	2.23	1.09	Low Level
8	Learn to love others	1.87	0.75	Low Level
9	Cherish justice notwithstanding who is involved	2.09	0.75	Low Level
10	Be decent in their talking and dressing	2.57	0.89	High Level
11	Have self-control	1.87	0.75	Low Level
12	Learn to persevere in difficult situations	1.71	0.69	Low Level
13	Have respect for private/public properties	1.87	0.75	Low Level
14	Keep promises and agreements	1.00	0.00	Very High Level
15	Be hardworking	2.88	1.11	High Level
16	Learn to strive to have positive relationship with others	2.41	0.98	Low Level
	Cluster/observed mean and standard deviation	33.16	1.96	BEAL

BEAL = Below Expected Average Level

Table 3 showed the mean standard deviations and the decision taken on the level to which religious and cultural teachers carryout their roles toward achieving peace in the state. The table showed that three items with serial number 05, 10 and 15 obtain mean value of appropriately 3 (i.e., to the nearest whole number) which indicated high level, item number 14 obtained mean value of 1 which indicated very low level while the rest of the items obtained mean value of approximately 2 which indicate low level to which religious and cultural teachers discharge their roles towards achievement of peace in the state. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 33.16 and 1.96 respectively.

Table 4. Summary Result of z-test of Hypothesis One

Category of mean	X	S	z-cal	SL	z-tab	Dec.
Observed	33.16	1.96	50.70	0.05	1.96	Ho1 is rejected
Expected	40.00					

Table 4 showed the z-calculated value of 50.70 and z-tabulated value of 1.96 at 0.05 significant levels. Since the z-calculated value is greater than the z-tabulated value the hypothesis one is rejected and the alternative accepted.

5. Discussion of Results

Results of the study revealed that religious and cultural teachers have a lot of roles to play in order to achieve and maintain peace in the society. The results showed that the respondents accepted all the 16 specific roles of the religious and cultural teachers must effectively discharge if peace is to be achieved and sustained. Some of them include: respect and value for human life, respect for elders and those in authorities, being kind and friendly to others, obeying laws, customs and traditions, self-control, being

honest always and in all things, respect for other peoples' right just to mention but a few. There is no doubt that if students could be assisted through effective teaching, to learn how to live by all these values, it will go a long way to usher in peace which seems to have eluded the present society in Nigeria. Ogomaka (2006) reported that students can be led through words, examples and some real reinforcement reward system to acquire new or improved affective responses which include all the mentioned virtues that could help to achieve peace in the society.

The result also showed that religious and cultural teachers have performed below the expected average level in discharging the identified specific roles that will bring peace among our youths and the society in general. This is in tandem with the findings of some researchers who found that both parents and teachers perform below the expected average in the motivation of their students to excel in the areas of affective domain (Ipem, Eguzo, & Alaribe, 2019). The present finding is very instructive to all and sundry because every responsible individual needs a peaceful society. The present finding is highly contributory to the high level of moral decadency and violence in our society. A situation where students don't understand these virtues, internalize and live by them, it means that peace will continue to elude the society. To avoid this, religious and cultural teachers should be more proactive in ensuring that students understand these virtues not only to the extent of passing them in examination but also to live by them.

6. Conclusion

The study has identified the sixteen specific roles the religious and cultural teachers could play to achieve and sustain peace in the society while the level to which the present religious and cultural teachers carryout these roles is significantly below the expected average level which is not good for the realization and sustenance of peace in the society.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications of the study the following recommendations were made:

- i. Religious and cultural teachers should ensure that they are very effective in teaching the students the sixteen identified roles so that the students can learn to live by them.
- ii. Curriculum experts should ensure that the identified sixteen roles of religious and cultural teachers that can lead to peace are well infused into the curriculum at the primary and secondary educational level.
- iii. The Secondary Education Management Board should organize seminars and workshops for religious and cultural teachers so as to boost their effectiveness in the discharge of their duties especially in this area.

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