
STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF THE RELEVANCE OF
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE NIGERIAN
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Babatunde Adeniyi ADEYEMI &
Omowumi Sola AGBOOLA
Institute of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper examined the stakeholders' perceived relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian educational system. It also highlighted areas of relevance as well as challenges facing multicultural educational system in Nigeria. It further examined how multicultural education can be promoted in Nigerian educational system and finally examined if there was a significant difference in the stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian educational system. These were with a view to promoting multiculturalism in the Nigeria educational system. The study employed survey research design. The population consisted of teachers, parents and ministry of education officials of secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised 300 teachers, 300 parents and 90 ministry of education officials selected through systematic random sampling techniques from three states selected from Southwestern Nigeria through simple random sampling technique. An instrument was developed and validated for the collection of the data. Four research questions and one hypothesis were asked and tested. Data were analysed using simple

percentages, Relative Significance Index (RSI) and one-way ANOVA. The results revealed, among others, that there was no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian educational system. ($F= 2.688;p> 0.05$). The study recommended, among others, that its teaching should incorporate ideas and facts that will promote mutual respect irrespective of diverse groups.

Introduction

Education is a global term which involves the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge. It is an act of reasoning and providing information for the preparation of self or others. It can also be defined as a wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after been exposed to a particular subject matter. It is also a process of facilitating learning, knowledge, skills, values, belief and habit of a group of people which are transferred to other people through various teaching methods or training or research.

Education plays vital roles in the development of every nation. It is the bedrock of societal development; hence every society strives to invest huge resources in education, in order to enhance socio-political, economic and technological advancement that will put it on a pedestal to compete favourably in the global arena (Ajayi 2011). The quality of education of a country is crucial to its development as it forms the basis for human capital development and facilitates socio-economic empowerment of the citizenry. According to section 1(5) of the 2004 Nigerian National Policy on Education which states that Nigeria's philosophy of education must be based on (i) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen (ii) the full integration of the individual into the community and (iii) the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens. For the above philosophy to be in harmony with the Nigeria's national goals, education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (NPE,2004). This is based on the importance

of education to any nation with particular reference to Nigeria as a country that is made up of several cultural groups.

Nigeria is a complex society whose history could be traced to prehistoric settlers living in the area as far back as 11,000 BC. Nigeria's official name is Federal Republic of Nigeria. It has its capital at Abuja. It is regarded as the Africa's most populous nation. It is located in western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon. Its geographical coordinate is 10,000 N, 800 E. and its area total is 910,770 sq km, and area water covered 13,000 sq km. Its climate condition varies equatorial in the South, tropical in the centre, and arid in the North. It is referred to as the giant of Africa. It is a country endowed with natural resources, such as Petroleum, Columbite, Tin, Iron Ore, Limestone, Lead, zinc and Natural Gas. The three main official languages are Yoruba, Ibo, and Hausa. The three main religions practised are indigenous belief, Christianity and Islam. It is composed of 36 states. It operates the presidential system of government with three distinct but complementary arms namely the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary, with each acting as a check and balance to the another.

Nigeria is, therefore, a multi-ethnic society consisting of about 300 ethnic groups. In Nigeria, the various ethnic groups had resulted to threat to national unity as centrifugal tensions, resource control and self-determination, ethnicity based identity politics and religious cleavages have enveloped national consciousness. It is clear that the outcome of integration policies and programmes in Nigeria have fallen far below expectations, as primordial ethnic loyalties are still deep seated. Ethnic particularism is seen as the major cause of this failure (Naanen, 1995). According to Ajibade (2014), various efforts have been put in place in Nigeria since its independence in 1960 such as NYSC scheme, establishment of unity schools, the federal character principle and states' creations are examples of state policies intended to achieve integration (Alapiki 2015). Emphasizing the importance of ethnicity, with a sense of belonging, brings variety and richness to a society by incorporating their own ideas and ways of life.

As Nigeria becomes more pluralistic, education that is multicultural/intercultural becomes a necessity. It should be central

in basic education. Such education should integrate global and multicultural perspectives in the curricula of early childhood, elementary, secondary and elementary learning experience. Grant (1978), who advocated for education that is multicultural, believes that "When education supports cultural diversity and individualized and personalized differences, it is not limited or restricted; it pervades the total curriculum and the total environment (Vold, 1973).

Integration of multicultural and global perspective in the curricula will provide every student an opportunity to succeed and to have a sense of belonging and empowerment. It will help the learner to develop an accurate knowledge of, and pride in, his/her own racial, ethnic and cultural heritage, as well as accentuate knowledge and perspective of others. It will lay a foundation for a more holistic education, and equip the students with adequate knowledge, values and skills to cope with the complexities of our global society.

Meaning of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education connotes different meanings to different people. According to Banks & Banks (2002), multicultural education is a necessary ingredient of quality education. In actual practice, educators, most often, perceive it either as an addendum prompted by some crisis or as a luxury. Multicultural education has not yet become a central part of the curriculum regularly offered to all students; instead, educators have relegated it primarily to Social Studies, language arts, and the fine arts and have generally targeted instruction for students of different colours.

Gay (2007) defined multicultural education as an integral improvement on the academic success of students of colour and preparing all youths for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society. Students need to understand how multicultural issues shape the social, political, economic, and cultural fabric of the United States as well as how such issues fundamentally influence their personal lives.

Henshaw & Smith (1991) saw multicultural Education curriculum as the study of ethnic groups as well as other sub-groups, such as religious, sex and gender, elderly, gay and lesbian, as well as

“exception” groups, i.e., the gifted, the talented and the handicapped. Traditional stereotypes that have grown up in the society around each of these groups are studied for awareness and possible solutions. According to them, multicultural education will help students to develop peaceful ways to solving differences and disputes and of coexisting harmoniously. It is also assumed that the discipline will enable students to acquire intercultural communicational skills. Banks (1997) defined multicultural education as ongoing process that requires long term investments of time and efforts as well as carefully planned and maintained actions. According to him, multicultural education is continuous and deliberate. Effort must be ensured that adequate preparation for its attainment must be put into consideration. Bennett (1990) saw multicultural education as an approach to teaching and learning, based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism in its most comprehensive form. It is a commitment to achieving educational equality; developing curricula that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and appreciate practices. In another dimension, Baptiste (1999) defined multicultural education as institutionalizing the philosophy of cultural pluralism within the education system that emphasizes group respect, acceptance, understanding and moral commitment to social justice.

Steps to Multicultural Education

Irvine and Amento (2001) provided specific examples for incorporating multicultural education into planning Language Arts, Maths, Science, and Social Studies lessons for elementary and middle school students and connecting these lessons to general curriculum standards. One set of lesson demonstrates how to use Navajo rugs to explain the geometric concepts of perimeter and area and to teach student how to calculate the areas of squares, rectangles, triangles, and parallelograms. These suggestions indicate that teachers need to use systematic decision making approaches to accomplish multicultural curriculum integration. In practice, this means developing intentional and orderly processes for including multicultural content. The decision-making process might involve the following steps:

1. Creating learning goals and objectives that incorporate multicultural aspect, such as “Developing students’ ability to write persuasively about social justice concerns”.
2. Using a frequency matrix to ensure that the teacher includes a wide variety of ethnic groups in a wide variety of ways in curriculum materials and instructional activities.
3. Introducing different ethnic groups and their contributions on a rotating basis
4. Inculcating several examples from different ethnic experiences to explain subject matter concepts, facts, and skills.
5. Showing how multicultural content, goals, and activities intersect with subject-specific curricular standards.

Purpose of the Study:

The main purposes of the study are to:

- I. examine the stakeholders’ perceived relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian education system.
- II. investigate the areas of relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian education system.
- III. examine the challenges that may be facing multicultural education in Nigeria education system
- IV. investigate how multicultural education can be promoted in Nigerian education system.
- V. examine the difference in the perception of stakeholders on the relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian education system.

Research Questions

1. What are the stakeholders’ perceived relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian education system?
2. What are the areas of relevance of multicultural educational education in Nigerian education system?
3. What are the challenges facing multicultural education in Nigeria educational system?

4. How can multicultural education be promoted in the Nigerian education system?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigeria educational system.

Method

This study employed a survey research design. The population consisted of teachers, parents and ministry of education officials from secondary schools in Southwestern, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting three states, comprising Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states out of the six states that made up Southwestern Nigeria. Systematic random sampling technique was employed in selecting 300 teachers, 300 parents and 90 ministry of education officials from three selected states in Southwestern Nigeria. An instrument titled 'Stakeholders' Perception of Relevance of Multicultural Education in Nigerian Educational System' (SPRMENES) was developed by the investigators. It made of up of six sections. Section A was on bio data of the respondents, section B consisted of 14 items of stakeholders' perceived relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian educational system. Section C consisted of four major areas of relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian education system. Section D consisted of 13 items on challenges facing multicultural education in Nigerian education system. Section E consisted of nine items that focused on ways to promote multicultural education in Nigerian educational system. While section F made up of 14 items on stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian educational system. The instrument was validated before being used and the reliability yielded 0.84 using cronbach alpha. Four research questions were raised and answered and one hypothesis was generated and tested. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, simple percentages, RSI and one-way ANOVA statistical analysis.

Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the stakeholders' perceived relevance of multicultural education in Nigerian educational system?

Table 1: Stakeholders Perceived Relevance of Multicultural Education in Nigerian Educational System

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4	4#### 4### 4### 4# 4 4#	4	4	4	4	94	0	94	4	0.1
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Table 1 shows the stakeholders' perceived relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian education system. From the result in the above table, it can be seen that the stakeholders considered "Increasing awareness of global issues" and "Developing respect and appreciation for culturally different people" as the foremost relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian education system with Relative Significance Index of 0.86 each; next is strengthening intercultural awareness with RSI value of 0.85; closely following is developing cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among students with RSI value of 0.83 while

Table 3 shows the challenges facing multicultural education in Nigeria educational system from stakeholder's perspectives. It can be observed that politics in education took the foremost position among other challenges with Relative Significance Index (RSI) value of 0.89. In other words the stakeholders ranked politics in education as the first challenge facing multicultural education in Nigeria educational system. Similarly, lack of adequate fund; and inadequacy in the curriculum content, each took the second rank with RSI value of 0.88 while cultural influence was considered as the fourth challenge facing multicultural education in Nigeria educational system with RSI value of 0.86. Also, lack of adequate personnel and poor assessment techniques both occupied fifth position among other challenges with RSI value of 0.83 while inadequate infrastructure was ranked seventh with RSI value of 0.82. Parental influence, as well as poor method of teaching, is ranked eighth with RSI value of 0.80. In like manner, increasing encroachments on academic freedom; and societal attitude towards change both were ranked tenth with RSI value of 0.77. While uncondusive learning environment received rank twelve with RSI value of 0.75, teacher's disposition received the least rank among other challenges with RSI Value of 0.73.

Research Question 4: How can multicultural education be promoted in Nigerian educational system?

Table 4: Ways to Promote Multicultural Education in Nigerian Educational System

S/N	5	S5		5		5		S5		S5
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3	333 333 333 33 3 33 333 333	3	3	3	33	13	3	13	3	5
3	333 333 333 333 333 333	3	3	3	33	3	3	3	3	5
3	333 33 3333 3 333 333 33	3	3	3	33	3	3	3	3	5
3	333 33 3333 333 3 3 3 3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
3	333 333 333 33333 33 3	3	3	3	3	13	3	3	3	5

7	<p>66</p> <p>6 6</p> <p>66</p> <p>66</p> <p>6</p>	6	6	6	6	6	0.85
6	<p>6</p> <p>66</p> <p>66</p> <p>66</p> <p>6</p> <p>66</p> <p>66</p>	6	6	6	6	6	0.83
6	<p>66</p> <p>6 6</p> <p>66</p> <p>66</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p> <p>66</p> <p>666</p> <p>666</p> <p>6 66</p> <p>666</p> <p>6</p>	6	6	6	6	6	0.85

Table 4 shows ways through which multicultural education can be promoted in the Nigerian educational system. Most of the stakeholders were of the opinion that multicultural education can be promoted in the Nigerian educational system when school policies and procedures foster positive multicultural interactions and understandings among students, teachers and the support staff. As can be observed, this opinion had the highest rating reflected in RSI value of 0.87. Other means through which multicultural education can be promoted in the Nigerian educational system, of the same importance include 'ethnic and cultural diversity should permeate the total school environment', 'the multicultural curriculum should develop in students the skills necessary for effective interpersonal, interethnic and intercultural group interactions', 'interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches should be used in designing and implementing the multicultural curriculum'; and 'the multicultural

curriculum should use comparative approaches in the study of ethnic and cultural groups'. All with the same RSI value of 0.85 and occupied second in ranking.

Next in ranking is that 'the schools should have systematic, comprehensive mandatory and continuing staff development programmes', and 'the multicultural curriculum should provide students with continuous opportunities to develop a better sense of self' with RSI value of 0.84. The least, among other means or ways through which multicultural education can be promoted in Nigerian educational system, is that 'the schools should provide opportunities for students to participate in the aesthetic experiences of various ethnic and cultural groups' with the least RSI value of 0.83.

Hypothesis: there is no significant difference in the stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigeria educational system.

In order to test this hypothesis, scores of stakeholders (teachers, parents, and officials of the Ministry of Education) on perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigeria educational system were subjected to One-way Analysis of Variance. The result is presented in Table 5

Table 5: One-way analysis of variance test of significant difference in stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in Nigeria educational system.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between	0	0	0	0	0
Within	0	0	0		
Total	0	0			

Table 5 shows a one-way ANOVA analysis between groups analysis of variance conducted to explore the difference in stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian educational system. It can be observed that there was a statistically non-significant difference in stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education in the Nigeria educational system as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2,688) = .920, p = .436$). This result concludes that there is a Nigerian educational system. In other words, there is no statistical evidence that suggests that teachers, parents and officials of the Ministry of Education shared different opinions about the relevance of multicultural education in Nigeria education system.

Discussion of Results

The results showed that "increasing awareness of global issues" and "developing respect and appreciation for culturally different people" were of foremost relevance multicultural education system, with RSI value of 0.86 each. The results corresponded with Odhe & Babatunde's (1994) view, that sense of identity will metamorphose to national unity, as it is a means of bringing about relationship devoid of appeal to a specific ethnic attachment.

The results also showed "knowledge construction process" and "equity pedagogy" as having the highest average of RSI value of 0.87, in each of the four major areas of relevance of multicultural education in the Nigerian educational system. This tallied with the view of Banks (2004) who said that integrating multicultural content into the curriculum would give different ideas from that of mainstream literature. Also, Banks and Banks (1995) were also of the opinion that equity pedagogy will help students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to function effectively within and outside immediate environment.

The results further indicated that 'politics in education took' the foremost position among other challenges facing multicultural education in Nigerian Education system with RSI value of 0.89. This result was in support of Vavrus (2010) who identified some

ideological assumptions that resisted multicultural education of which politics could not be exonerated.

In addition, most of the stakeholders were of the opinion that multicultural education can be promoted in the Nigerian education system when school policies and procedures fostered positive multicultural interactions and understandings among students, teachers and ministry of education officials with RSI value of 0.87. This corresponded with curriculum guidelines of multicultural education, as stipulated by the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS 1992).

Finally, the results showed that there was no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of relevance of multicultural education to the Nigerian educational system. This finding was in consonance with previous findings by Chia-Yulia (1990), Angley and Lowery (1991), Banks (1993), Nekhwesha (1999), Brock- Utne (2001) and Faibo & De Baessa, (2006) whose various stakeholders indicated evidence, that multicultural education in the mainstream curriculum had positive effects on the student.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that education is a vital tool in the development process of any nation, and therefore emphasis is expected to be placed on the priority accorded to its quality improvement and curriculum reform from time to time. Integration of multicultural education in the curriculum of the educational system will provide every student an opportunity to succeed and to feel a sense of belonging and empowerment. It is equally believed that the notion for multiculturalism is the need to understand one another in the world, and Nigeria in particular, where natural and artificial barriers will no longer count as hindrance to world social, scientific, technological, economic and political progress.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that the teaching of multicultural education should incorporate ideas and facts that will promote mutual respect, irrespective of diverse groups. Also, citizens must respect and value diversity. In addition, multicultural education must

engage in a critical examination of power and structural inequalities and explore conflicts between and within groups. Also, multicultural education should be taught as a unified discipline at all levels of education.

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