

Employing Dramatization to Re-Engineer Nigerian Students' Attitudes to Gender Equity in Educational and Employment Opportunities: A Model in Peace Education

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Abstract

The study used filmed drama in teaching with the aim of fostering gender equity in education and employment opportunity among youths. To achieve this aim, a quasi-experimental design was employed using a sample of 400 students which was randomly drawn from the population of 4900 students in three south-south states in Nigeria. The questionnaire on attitude to gender equity on educational and employment opportunities were pre-tested on the subjects after whom they were exposed to the filmed drama on peace education then the post-test. Dependent t-test analysis, descriptive statistics and focus group discussion were used. The post-test attitude towards gender equity in educational and employment opportunities was significantly higher than the pre-test attitude, indicating a significant improvement in their attitude after exposure to peace education via the filmed drama. It was therefore concluded that filmed drama was an effective peace education instrument for improving attitude to gender equity in educational and employment opportunities among youths. Filmed drama and related techniques were recommended for use in peace education programmes.

Keywords: Employing Dramatization, Nigerian Students,' Attitudes, Gender Equity, Educational and Employment Opportunities, Peace Education.

Introduction

In Nigeria like in many parts of the world, being born a female is synonymous with a life of discrimination, inequity and missed opportunities. Girls face peace daunting challenges that require great resources and attentions because through peace education girls could be liberated. Gender training initiatives such as the discrimination against women have added essential perspective to peace education activities.

Global underdevelopment and injustice remains the central problem to building a more peaceful world through education. Burns and Aspeslagh (1996), Hicks (1998), and Selby (2000) emphasized the inclusion of human rights abuses, cultural conflicts, environmental destruction and inner-peace in peace education and the deliverance of peace education to the youth in a conducive environment for better result.

According to Savmel salomon (2005), Salomon and Nevo (2002), Peace education aims at helping students acquire skills for non-violent conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of the values of peace. It aims at preventing violence in advance; that is, educating individuals and a society for peaceful co-existence, non-violence tolerance, equality, respect for differences and social justice. Peace education is most effective when the skills of peace and conflict resolution are actively learned and are moldeled in the school environment in which children are taught (Baldo & Furniss, 1998). Dramatization, which is employed as a teaching method to modify attitudes in this study, is a very potent way to trigger learning among children. It is national to them and appeals to their emotions and is capable of modifying their attitudes.

The objective of peace education involves improvement of the school environment as a microcosm of the more peaceful and just society. Stephen and Cookies (1984) opined that equality, values and rights are the centre of a successfully functioning society and that educational system thinks of educating a complete person, which includes the complete social, emotional and moral development of an individual, and the development of positive self-concept and positive self-esteem.

The negative feelings that one is being discriminated against just for belonging to a particular group leads to a deep sense of injustice and discrimination. The discrimination and injustice do not stop with the individual but it is passed on from generation to generation. It is believed that it is peace education in the educational system that can eradicate this. Peace education advocates for gender equity and teaches the youth how to enjoy their own rights without endangering the right of others and how to advocate for the rights of others. This is the function of shared responsibility for the process of building peace (Stephen & Cookies, 1984).

In Nigeria, the implementation of the principles of peace education into institutionalized educational system is a better approach because this may significantly contribute to intellectual closeness and understanding. Staub (1999) emphasized that for change to happen and spread, there is need for a minimum map of people to show and share attitudes, a culture in which they can express those attitudes, and a society that accepts the attitudes.

According to Johnson (1981), active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in assuming learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potentials, for this is the priority in promoting equality in basic education. It improves understanding of complex concepts. Also cooperatively structural small group work can build group cohesion and reduce biases between group members who differ in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Extrapolating these principles to the educational system of the South-South Zone, the relationship between the groups in conflict can be changed. Therefore, the problem of this study was to investigate whether Nigerian South-South youths' attitude could be changed towards gender equity through peace education. The problem was investigated using two hypotheses to guide the study.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in youth's attitude towards gender equity in educational opportunity, before and after their introduction to peace education programme.
2. There is no significant difference in youth's attitude towards gender equity in employment opportunity, before and after their introduction to peace education programme.

Research Method

Quasi-experimental design was used for this study. This design involves the administration of a pretest (O_1) to a sampled group. Afterwards, the group was exposed to a treatment (x), and post-test (O_2). The population for this study comprised all the 5,900 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in the South zone of Nigeria. A sample of 400 SS2 students was used in the study. The multistage sampling technique was employed. It is a sampling procedure in which sampling moves from the more inclusive stage to the less inclusive sampling units until the final population elements that constitute the desired sample is arrived at. In the first stage, a sample of 3 states (50%) was randomly selected from the 6 states that make up the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. They are Bayelsa, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom. Then within each of the states, 2 schools were selected by purposive sampling giving a total of 6 schools. The sample was limited to 2 schools in each State since the study was quasi-experimental, involving a treatment (filmed drama). This ensured effective pretest, treatment and posttest. The third stage involved selecting 30% of the senior secondary 2 students from each of the schools selected. This selection was randomly done whereby each student in that class had equal chance of being picked for the study. Through these stages, the desired sample of 400 students was arrived at. An instrument titled "Peace Education and Gender Equity Questionnaire (PEGEQ)" was employed for data collection. The PEGEQ was made up of two main sections, A and B. Section A was constructed to gather demographic information such as sex, age, class and name of school. Section B contained 40 items measuring the key variables being: education (10 items), employment (10 items), respectively. Also used the focus group discussion. This was organized using 7 students from each of the selected schools under study.

Staff members and students of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, were employed to stage a drama on the key variables of the study. The drama was stage, filmed and edited by experts in that field. The filmed drama constituted the treatment to which students were exposed in the study, and was accompanied by discussions.

The three research associates and other two research experts ascertained the face and content validity of the instrument. The instrument, PEGEQ, was administered to 20 subjects who did not participate in the main study. The data obtained were analysed using Cronbach's formular 21. The reliability index of 0.71 was obtained, which showed high internal consistency of the instrument. The research associates and 12 research assistants were involved in the data collection. The questionnaire was first administered to the students. Then the treatment package was introduced which was subsequently followed by the administration of the same questionnaire items.

The responses to the instrument were placed on a four-point scale of Strongly agree (4 points), Agree (2 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly disagree (1point) for positively worded items and vice versa for all negative worded items. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the Research Questions, while student t-test was used to determine the difference between pretest and posttest; and to determine whether treatment (x) was effective on the respondents or not.

Results

Table 1: Attitude of Youth toward Gender Equity in Education and Employment Before and After Exposure to Peace Education

Sub-variable	Before Exposure			After Exposure			Remark
	Means score	Mid-point score	Deviation from mid-point	Mean score	Mid-point score	Deviation from mid-point	
Attitude to gender equity in education	30.055	25	+5.055 (20.22%)	31.9275	25	+6.93 (27.7%)	Fair Improvement
Attitude to gender equity in employment	29.3125	25	+4.312 (17.25%)	31.1675	25	+6.1675 (24.67%)	Fair improvement

Table 2: Results of Dependent t-Test Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Attitudes to Gender Equity in Employment.

Properties	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean (x)	29.312	31.167
Variance	30.626	25.397
N	400	400
df		399
t -stat.		-7.1416
P (T<=t) two tail		4.3991E – 12
T critical two tail		1.9659

In Table 2, the calculated t-value (-71416) is higher than the critical t-value for two-tailed test (1.9659), therefore there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test attitude to gender equity in employment. The post-test mean attitude is, therefore, significantly higher than the pre-test mean attitude.

Table 3: Results of Dependent t-Test Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Attitude to Gender Equity in Education

Properties	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean (x)	30.055	31.9275
Variance	30.508	30.378
N	400	400
Df		399
t- stat.		-7.194
P (T<=t) two tail		3.12113E – 12
T critical two tail		1.9659

Result in Table 3 shows that the calculated t-test value (-7.194) is higher than the critical t-value (1.9659), meaning that there is a significant difference between the mean attitude to gender equity in educational opportunities between pre-test and posttest attitudes, with the post-test attitude being higher.

Discussion

The study found that there were significant improvements in attitudes to gender equity after the respondents were exposed to the filmed drama. The role of education in changing behaviour cannot be over-emphasized; particularly when the interest of the learners is captured by the kind of education they are exposed to. Peace is an issue that touches the lives of people on a daily basis, involving resolving conflicts, clarifying values and understanding diversity (Duffy, 2009).

On provision of educational opportunities, the females in the groups observed that female children provide greater care to their aging parents than the male children, hence the need for them to be well educated. Some males however were of the opinion that given a choice to be made between the male and female child in educational pursuits in the face of financial constrains, they may opt for the male child. However, after further discussion, all group members agreed that other criteria such as the child's academic performance and age should be considered, not gender. Group members also observed that gender discrimination against the females had cultural antecedence and that it was fading away with increased civilization. They even noted that it appeared there are more females than males in most of our secondary schools.

The study also showed that females were more disposed to gender equity than males before exposure to peace education. Even during the focus group discussions, this picture was portrayed by the discussants. Males tended to defend their gender roles and rights, as females did. But with more information and explanations the gap narrowed towards the end of the discussion. This finding further alludes to the importance of education in minimizing or even eradicating gender discriminations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Ministries of Education and their relevant parastatals should develop peace education curriculum and integrate same into the Nigerian school curriculum right from the primary school level. The integration need not take the fashion of introducing a separate subject but integrating the concepts into the relevant subjects such as Social Studies and the newly introduced Values Education.
2. The didactic methods of teaching the social sciences including teaching the newly introduced peace and conflict studies in tertiary institutions should be complemented with more student-oriented methods such as role play, drama, and the like to ensure relevant attitudinal change. These participatory and interest-stimulating methods should be employed as all levels of educations, starting from the nursery/primary level. It is note-worthy that attitudes may not readily change by just talking to people (or learners) but by the experiences they acquire through creating such learning situations in which the learner can confront value judgments and examine his own attitudes.

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