Teachers’ Perception on the Use of Recreational Activities for Peace Building and Peace Culture in Bayelsa State Secondary School

Dr. Nanighe Baldwin Major, Dr. Patience Alazi Epelle
Department of Education Foundations, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study examined the perception of teachers in the use of recreational activities for peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools. The descriptive research design was adopted in the study. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. The 2,982 teachers in the 154 senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State constituted the population of the study. The sample of the study consisted 317 teachers drawn through the simple random sampling technique. A researchers’ developed “Teachers’ Perception of Recreational Activities for Peace Building/Culture Questionnaire (TPRAPBCQ)”, formatted on four point Likert type scale was the instrument used for data collection. It was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation; with a reliability coefficient of 0.69 established using the Crombach Alpha technique. Data was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to accept or reject responses. The results showed that recreational activities could be used for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State as responses exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50. It was therefore recommended that an enabling framework for the use of recreational activities for peace building and peace culture be put in place for secondary schools. More so, high level collaboration should be encouraged between Government agencies, multinational corporations, the organized private sector, public spirited individuals and schools in the provision of appropriate recreational activities with the aim of peace building and enhanced peace culture among the youth.

Keywords: Bayelsa State; Crombach Alpha technique; youth
1. INTRODUCTION

The world we live in is presently characterized by various acts of violence, manifested in terrorism, wars, gun battles, kidnappings, cultism, corruption, deceit, hatred, disrespect for law and order and other social vices. Several consequences including the loss of lives, property and psycho-emotional traumas have been suffered worldwide. Economically, billions of dollars are constantly lost worldwide to these acts of violence. The safety of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed by national government under these circumstances. This worrisome trend has caused national governments, regional bodies and world organizations such as the African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU) and the United Nations, (UN) among others to consciously evolve strategies in addressing such acts. These acts of violence have also crept into the school system and the secondary schools are no exceptions.

Among others, one of such strategies in addressing such acts could probably be the use of recreational activities in peace building to ensure a culture of peace in secondary schools and society (United Nations 2003 and World Health Organization 2008). Recreational activities could likely be part of the strategies to employ as panacea for peace building in ensuring a culture of peace to aid harmonious coexistence among peoples.

According to the United Nations (2003), and Donnelly (2011), the advanced economies of the world such as the United States of America (USA), Germany, and Canada and so on, have successfully repositioned recreational activities for peace building in their educational institutions including secondary schools. Today, many nations have adopted this strategy and recreational activities are increasingly becoming a major focus and part of the toolkit for peace building and attaining peace culture around the world. Effective frameworks need to be articulated and developed for secondary schools in the use of recreational activities for peace building and ensure a peace culture.

These concerted efforts by governments were propelled by the UN General Assembly (1999) proclamations of year 2000 as the “international year for the culture of peace” (A/RES/52/15); and the decade 2001-2010 as the “international decade for a culture of peace and Non-Violence for the children of the world” (A/RES/53/25). According to the UN declaration and programme of action for a culture of peace (A/RES/53/243), the culture of peace in practice could mean actions:

- To foster a culture of peace through education.
- To promote sustainable economic and social development.
- To promote respect for all human rights.
- To ensure equality between women and men to foster democratic participation.
- To advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity.
- To support participatory communication and free flow of information and knowledge to promote international peace and security.

Based on the above, De Rivera (2004) articulated and organized the UN conceptualizations of peace culture into a model reflecting a peace culture of some socio-political theory. The three phases of the theory are interrelated and involve changing societal norms, transforming socio-political structures and promoting governmental policies that help establish an environment that nourishes a culture of peace.
A culture of peace according to the UN General Assembly (1999) is “values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interactions and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by taking their root causes, to solve problems through dialogue and negotiations and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society (UN/RES/52/13).

De Rivera (2004) therefore articulated a template of three indices to assess the extent to which a society is achieving a culture of peace to include:

1. Societal norms promoting a civil society
2. State structures to achieve political stability
3. Governmental market policies that promote a just environment

Effective frameworks and platforms for peace education, targeted at minimizing conflicts and the development of a peace culture are generally lacking in Africa (Foltz 1991; Stodman 1991; Yakubu 2000). Therefore, based on the above indices in measuring the extent to which a society is achieving a culture of peace, African government including Nigeria especially, Bayelsa State could be judged to be slow. The rise in youth militancy, gun violence, cultism, kidnappings and armed conflicts in the State points to the fact that the general citizenry live in anxiety and fear. Under such conditions no meaningful development can take place. There is therefore the urgent need to find workable solutions to this culture of violence. One of such ways could be the repositioning of recreational activities for the purpose of building peace and ensuring a culture of peace across all the secondary schools in the state.

Recreational activities could be regarded as games, sports, adventures and amusement endeavours people undertake in, using their free time. These could be categorized into indoor and outdoor recreational activities. Such activities grant enjoyment and also provide relaxation of the body and mind, creating opportunities for social interactions that have socially redeeming values.

The activity performed is less important than the reason for performing the activity, its outcome. According to Corbin, Lindsey & Welk (2000) and De Rivera (2004), recreation has a connotation of being morally acceptable, not only to the person performing such an activity but to the society if it is properly channeled. As a result, recreational activities when properly articulated and implemented could serve as a socio-educational instrument that could be used in the production of socially desirable outcomes. They could meet a variety of physical, psychological and social needs, unifying people and creating a sense of well-being and social development.

The benefits of using recreational activities as an instrument for peace building and a peace culture are indeed much. The UN (2003), World Health Organisation (2008) and Corbin, Lindsey & Welk (2000), noted that involvement and participation in sports is a fundamental human right, essential to healthy development of children and have capacity for a wide audience, accommodating diverse nationalities and cultures. They offer children opportunities to learn the skills of discipline, confidence, leadership, tolerance, cooperation and respect for others as interactions go on. More so, in addition to peace building, involvement in sports could have positive health implications.
Such activities help in the reduction and prevention among youths, non-communicable diseases (cardio-vascular diseases, cancer and diabetes) as a result of lack of adequate physical activity and unhealthy nutritional habits. Sports activities always lead to increases in human and economic development, healthier and more active citizens with higher life expectancy.

According to Yakubu (2000), United Nations (2003), Odunaiya, Ayedele & Oguntibeju (2010) and Donnelly (2011), sports in education can lead to better attendance, achievement and making youths more knowledgeable about body and disease. Economic development is enhanced by the manufacturing of sporting goods and sporting events, a more productive workforce due to health benefits of sports, and a heightened capacity of the workforce through the teaching of skills such as tolerance, teamwork, peaceful coexistence and leadership.

On the other hand, United Nations (2003) and Donnelly (2011), highlighted the negative aspects that could arise in the use of sports as an agency or instrument for peace building. Sports could have the potential of breaking down bonds rather than build them. It could also be capable of breeding violence, discrimination, hooliganism, excessive nationalism, cheating and drag abuse.

The use of such recreational activities in peace building need to be tactical and strategic, with the needed capabilities in repositioning it as an agency for peace building with well thought out and articulated programmes with set goals in mind. Odunaiya et al (2010), lamented the decreasing levels of physical and sporting activities among young people around the world and noted that it could be difficult to attain effective psychomotor development advocated in the National Policy on Education (2004). The state of recreational infrastructure in Bayelsa state secondary schools seem to be very poor. Although psychomotor development is cardinal in the aims and objectives of education as contained in the National policy on education (2004), the enabling framework is yet to be adequately developed.

The study of Odunaiya (2010), on physical activity levels of senior secondary school students concluded that adolescents are not involved in adequate physical activities that could lead to effective development of the psychomotor domain and improve teamwork among students. The study showed a decline in the level of physical activity among young people. The consequences could be monumental as young people were found not to be sufficiently active in order to safe guard their present and future health and well-being. The infrastructure for effective recreational activities to promote peace building and a peace culture in our secondary schools seems to be overtly lacking. Action need to be taken urgently in line with the UN respective resolutions concerning the eradication and prevention of violence and conflicts, ensuring that the world becomes a better and peaceful place for livelihood.

Since recreational activities bring together people of diverse backgrounds working to achieve common goals, promotes respect and community with others, encourage trust, teamwork, facilitates good communication skills capable of reducing tensions and preventing conflicts and disagreements that could lead to violence and the like; it is the researchers belief that their introduction into the secondary school programmes could cause the needed peace building and a culture of peace where students and society would live in harmonious relationships.

It is against this background that this study was carried out to assess the perception of secondary school teachers in the use of recreation activities in peace building and enhancing a peace culture in secondary schools.
Purpose of study

Generally, the study was carried out to ascertain the extent to which recreational activities could be used in peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools. But specifically, the study was carried out to:

i. To find out the extent to which games (sports) could be used in peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools.

ii. To discover the extent to which social activities could be used in peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools.

iii. To investigate the extent to which inter school competitions could be used in peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools.

Statement of the problem

The secondary school educational system in Bayelsa State seems to be beclouded with so many vices which aid the perpetuation of a culture of violence within and outside the school. The increasing rate of violence in secondary schools manifested in cult activities and students general disregard for school rules and regulations need urgent attention. So many strategies could be employed in peace building to ensure a peace culture in secondary schools. In line with the United Nations General Assembly (1999) declaration of years 2001-2010 as “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non Violence for the Children of the World”; recreational activities such as games, sports, social activities and inter school competitions could be part of the toolkit for peace building to ensure a peace culture in secondary schools.

It could likely be that some of the things that occupy reasonably students’ time in learning societal values such as recreational activities may no longer be adequate hence their involvement in anti social behaviours. Several studies including those of Corbin et-al (2000), United Nations (2003), and the World Health Organisation (2008), have confirmed the decline of youth involvement in physical activities. Preliminary observations revealed that most of the things that create avenues for social interactions such as games, sports, social activities and inter school competitions are on the decline. The consequences could be that students may no longer learn values such as tolerance, respect, leadership, team play, good communication skills, good neighbourliness, friendship, trust and peaceful coexistence using recreational activities as springboard. Recreational activities are capable of values that bound students together in social relationships in secondary school. The legitimate demand on the educational system to produce socially desirable outcomes such as good neighbourliness capable of generating peaceful living within the school and at home has become an imperative. The problem of this study put in a question is to what extent could recreational activities be used in peace building to ensure a peace culture in Bayelsa State secondary schools? This study therefore investigated the extent to which recreational activities could be used in peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Research questions

The study was guided by three research questions:

1. To what extent could games be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa state secondary school?
2. To what extent could social activities be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa state secondary?
3. To what extent could inter school competition be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa state secondary schools?

2. METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in the study was the descriptive survey. The population of the study was made up of the 2,982 teachers in the 154 senior secondary schools in Bayesla State. Three research questions were posed for the study. 317 teachers made up the sample of the study selected through the simple random sampling technique. A researchers’ developed “Teachers’ Perception of Recreational Activities for Peace Building/Culture Questionnaire (TPRAPBCQ)” formatted in four point Likert scale. Exports in tests and measurement validated the instrument. Reliability coefficient of 0.69 of the instrument was established using the CronbachAlph method. Data collected were analyzed using mean ratings and standard deviation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used as basis for rejecting or accepting response on the extent to which recreational activities could be used in peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

3. RESULTS

Research question 1

To what extent could games be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 1. Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) on games as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Handball</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Basket ball</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monopoly</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 presents the mean scores of all the items on games as a tool for peace building and peace culture in Bayelsa State. The mean scores of all the items were above the criterion mean of 2.50. This could be as a result of a high degree of the spirit of sportsmanship exhibited among participants in these games. This further indicates that whenever participants in any type of games exhibit the spirit of sportsmanship, such a game could be devoid of frackers and would be taken over by peace. For peace culture to be part and parcel of members of any given game, there is the need for adequate provision of materials for games and sports such as a football field, volley ball net, table tennis balls, well marked out tracks for athletics, hockey sticks, chess, monopoly etc.

**Research question 2**

To what extent could social activities be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools Bayelsa State?

*Table 2.* Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) on social activities as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Essay writing</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 2 revealed that the mean scores of all the items are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This could possibly be the result of tolerance exhibited by members involved in social activities. This leads to the imbibing of social values which result to peaceful co-existence among students.

**Research question 3**

To what extent could inter school competition be used as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
Table 3. Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) on inter school competition as a tool for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Volley ball</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Essay writing</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in table 3 indicate that all the mean scores were above the agreed criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that all the items in table 3 are capable of building peace and peace culture in secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The result could possibly be that students exhibited the skills of discipline, confidence, co-operation, respect for one another, leadership skills etc. which are virtues of peace and harmony in any inter schools competition.

4. DISCUSSION

The results on games as a tool for peace building and peace culture revealed that with adequate provision of games and sporting facilities, the virtues of peace could be developed. These findings are in line with that of (Odunaiya et al, 2010) who maintained that the spirit of sportsmanship are easier achieve when games are actively engaged by participants. This finding agrees with the views of United Nations (2003), that sports could be repositioned as tool for social integration which is capable of peace building and ensure peace culture in secondary schools.

The results on social activities as a tool for peace building and peace culture revealed that peace building and peace culture could be achieved through active participation in such social activities as debates, drama, singing, dancing, essay writing etc. The result revealed that participation and membership of any social activity with adequate motivation and
guidance could result in the acquisition of virtue of peace culture. These results are in line with the views of Krafchek (2012), who revealed that in tolerating the excesses of one another results in peaceful co-existence among participants.

The results on interschool competition revealed that when schools engage in competitions, the virtues of peace are build continuously. Participant, are more conscious of the acquisition of the skills of leadership, co-operation, discipline etc. This could are more exposed the consequences of anti-peace vices such as bullying, fighting, gangsterism etc. Healthy inter school competitions results in peaceful co-existence and tolerance among students of different backgrounds.

5. CONCLUSION

Peace building and peace culture in secondary schools is a conscious effort that strengthens and rebuilds post primary institution in the state to avoid them being a state of constant conflict and violence. Hence recreational activities become a way out for youths to engage their time and energies that would have otherwise been used in anti social vices hence promoting a culture of peace. The active participation of secondary school students in such recreational activities such as football, volley ball, basket ball, hockey, handball volley ball, basketball, drama, excursive, essay writing debate, table tennis, singing, dancing, etc remain a veritable tool for peace building and peace culture in this era where a culture of violence has become the other of the day. These activities have capacity of bringing students from various backgrounds together to achieve common goals thereby promoting tolerance, teamwork, good communication skill and peaceful coexistence which are all ingredients for peace building and peace culture in secondary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. An enabling framework for team sports should be established for all secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
2. Government, secondary schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public spirited individuals and multinational cooperations should collaborate and ensure that recreational activities are provided and maintained across all secondary schools in Bayelsa State. This could curb youth restiveness.
3. Inter house and interschool games competitions for all secondary schools should be instituted, encouraged and made mandatory.

References


( Received 08 October 2015; accepted 26 October 2015 )