

Effective Teaching of Multicultural Education Concepts in Social Studies

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural Education concepts are themes which promote national unity using education as a tool. With over 400 ethnic groups distributed among Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion, ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have resulted in loss of several lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages. These situations could improve with the effective teaching of multicultural concepts through Cooperative learning strategy which is effective at enhancing students' knowledge of multiculturalism and national unity from Social Studies perspective. This work, therefore, determined the effective teaching of multicultural concepts in Social Studies. It further determined the moderating effects of ethnic origin and religion. The pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design was adopted. Participants were three hundred and fifty-two junior secondary III students purposively selected from six secondary schools in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Two null hypotheses were tested at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, analysis of covariance and Scheffé post hoc test. Treatment had significant main effect on students' posttest knowledge scores in multicultural concepts ($F_{(2,340)} = 5.84$; $\eta^2 = .25$) and attitude to multicultural concepts ($F_{(2,340)} = 34.06$; $\eta^2 = 0.40$). Students in the cooperative learning group had higher mean knowledge score ($\bar{x} = 10.14$) than those in the field trip ($\bar{x} = 7.95$) and the control group ($\bar{x} = 10.09$). Cooperative learning strategy was most effective at enhancing students' knowledge of multicultural concepts in Social Studies. Teachers should adopt the strategy to complement the conventional method for effective teaching of multicultural concepts in Social Studies.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Social Studies, Multicultural concepts, National unity.

INTRODUCTION

The growing spate of ethno-religious crisis and insurgency calls for sober reflection and concern about the unity and peaceful co-existence of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. This situation experienced in Nigerian polity could be traced partially to inadequate knowledge of Multicultural education. Therefore, as a matter of need, an appropriate education of citizens could contribute to national development by equipping them with adequate knowledge of how to work and live together harmoniously in any society (Ghosh, 2004). Such an appropriate education is Multicultural studies. Multicultural education encompasses theories and practices that strive to promote equitable access and rigorous academic achievement for students from all diverse groups, so that they can work toward social change and peaceful co-existence. Multicultural

education challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice (Banks, 2004).

Many curriculum guides and standards for Social Studies instruction call for more emphasis on multicultural concepts because the nature of Social Studies classroom is about a mixture of students from diverse cultural background (Salako, 2010). Social Studies is primarily concerned with the study of people, their activities and relationships as they interact with the physical and cultural environment. Numerous scholars in the field define Social Studies as a discipline through which human beings learn about the problems of survival (Adler and Sim, 2008; Mhlauli, 2010; Ross, 2006). If Social Studies is taught from a multicultural perspective, the subject is capable of producing well informed citizens who would utilise Social Studies knowledge in meaningful contribution to national development in Nigeria and the world in general. Since its emergence as a curricula area, Social Studies has expanded rapidly to become a core subject offered in Nigerian schools (NPE, 2004). The subject has assumed an increasingly important role particularly in the first nine years of the country's education system (Adeyemi, 2005).

Consequently, more emphasis is placed on the effective teaching of its methodology which lays emphasis on finding out, understanding and coping with various problems confronting human beings in the course of survival in a multicultural environment like Nigeria. The search for effective instructional strategies in multicultural studies is the prime mover of this study. Hence, cooperative learning strategy is adopted as an effective multicultural strategy. The teaching and learning of multicultural concepts through cooperative learning strategy could discourage discrimination and promote mutual respect for other cultures. Education is the only tool that can be used to affect the much desired national development (Andrew, 2002; NPE, 2004). Education, therefore, remains the core of national stability in a world where people continually encounter problems such as racism, sexism, prejudice and discrimination in the society.

THE ORIGIN OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

James Banks has been researching and advocating Multicultural education for many years resulting in research-based principles for creating multicultural schools and learning environments. In the early years of 21st century, large-scale human migration is a global phenomenon. This massive relocation of cultural groups is both optional (e.g. people seeking economic advantage) or forced (e.g. as a result of conflict or environment degradation). Many of these migrating populations seek to develop a new life in these new environments. As a result of these migrations, contemporary societies are becoming more diverse and multi-ethnic in nature, especially in the urban environments of large cities. These changing demographics are especially apparent at the school level and are having a major impact on the work of educators, particularly those in formal leadership positions within the school (Billot, Goddard and Cranston, 2007). The development and consequent need for a Multicultural educational approach is the direct result of the multicultural and pluralistic nature of the modern, global and internationalised society.

The historical roots of Multicultural education lie in the civil rights movements of various historically oppressed groups (Banks, 2004; Grant, 2005). Many trace the history of Multicultural education back to the social action of African Americans and other people of colour who challenged discriminatory practices in public institutions during the civil rights

struggles of the 1960s (Brown and Kysilka, 2002; Gay, 2001). Among those institutions specifically targeted were educational institutions, which were among the most oppressive and hostile to the ideals of racial equality. In the publication *Diversity within unity*, Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley, Irvine, Nieto, Schofield and Stephan (2001) note that between 1991 and 1998, 7.6 million immigrants entered the United States. The United States census estimated that more than one million immigrants would enter the United States each year for the foreseeable future (Banks et al, 2001).

Therefore, it has become necessary to address the global problem of cultural diversity through effective use of appropriate instructional strategies for teaching in Social Studies classrooms which contain students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. School curriculum must directly address issues of the informal social interactions because other ethnic groups of students prefer to study together in small groups (Bennet, 2003). One of such policies is probably the use of the school as a tool to promote national unity. . Therefore, the role of education in national integration cannot be overemphasized. This is because in any democratic society, education remains the core of national stability, security and an instrument for political, economic growth and development (Abdullahi, 2007).

COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Co-operative learning is a successful teaching and learning strategy in which small teams (each with students of different levels of ability) use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. It is used as pedagogical approach in conjunction with the conventional teaching method. According to Johnson, Johnson and Helobec (1991), cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students could work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Kagan (2001) states that the main purpose of cooperative learning is to actively involve students in the learning process and improve inter-personal relationships among them. This would result into transformation in the society. The co-operative learning strategy is an effective teaching strategy which is aimed at accommodating learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (Salako, Eze and Adu, 2012). Therefore, it has become necessary to address the global problem of cultural diversity through effective use of appropriate instructional strategy for teaching in Social Studies.

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) define cooperative learning as the instructional use of small groups so that students could work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Based on their research, they have proposed five essential pillars that are necessary to construct effective cooperative learning experiences.

Johnson, Johnson and Smith's five Pillars of Cooperative Learning is presented in Fig.1.1 below:



Fig. 1.1: Johnson, Johnson and Smith's five Pillars of Cooperative Learning
Source: Foundation Coalition, 2008

The pillars are positive interdependence, promotive face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing. As shown in the above graphic, this five pillar model provides the foundation for building successful cooperative learning in any multicultural classroom. A state of positive interdependence among learners may serve as the catalyst for the establishment of healthy, caring and committed scholastic and social relationships across the cultural spectrum (Francis, 2013; Keramati, 2010). Finally, the interdependence, interconnections and interrelationships in all aspects of education for all learners is vital for peaceful co-existence. In the same vein, Moronkola (2012) states that education is regarded as a tool that can accommodate the ethnic, cultural and religious diversities of a country and enhance societal development and transformation. Therefore, education remains the core of national stability.

Consequently, the use of cooperative learning strategy has the potentials of helping to foster cooperation, mutual trust, and understanding which could amount to sharing of other peoples' world views and improved knowledge of students in multicultural concepts. Also, in employing the strategy, students' knowledge of multicultural education is enhanced. Equally, the field trip strategy and conventional teaching method were both used in this study but they proved ineffective. The cooperative learning strategy proved the most effective and consistent among the three strategies examined in this study. Hence, the call for its use in our schools for positive learning outcome.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;

HO1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' knowledge of Multicultural education concepts.

HO2: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' attitude to Multicultural education concepts.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, means, percentages and standard deviation. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistics was used to test the

hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Also, the Scheffe Post hoc test was used to determine the source of significant main effect where observed.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design was adopted. Participants were three hundred and fifty-two junior secondary III students purposively selected from six secondary schools in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Participants were randomly assigned to cooperative learning strategy, field trip strategy and control groups; while treatment lasted ten weeks. Five instruments used were: Multicultural Concepts Knowledge Test ($r=0.82$), Multicultural Concept Attitude Scale ($r= 0.86$); Teachers' Instructional Guide for Cooperative Learning Strategy, Teachers' Instructional Guide for Field Trip Strategy and Teachers Instructional Guide for the conventional method. Two null hypotheses were tested at $p<0.05$ level of significance. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, analysis of covariance and Scheffé post hoc test.

RESULTS

Table 1.1: ANCOVA Summary of Posttest Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts by Treatment, Ethnicity and Religion

Source of Variance		Hierarchical method				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Covariates	SCORES	1307.933	1	1307.933	112.318	.000
Main Effects	Combined	1613.222	4	403.306	34.634	.000
	Treatment	135.892	2	67.946	5.835	.003*
	Ethnic Grp	1477.297	1	1477.297	126.862	.000*
	Religion	3.255E-02	1	3.255E-02	.003	.958

* Significant at $p<.05$

From the table, there is significant effect of treatment on students' posttest knowledge scores in multicultural concepts ($F_{(2,340)} = 5.835$; $p<.05$). This means that there is significant difference in the adjusted posttest scores of students exposed to the cooperative learning, field trips and conventional instructional strategies. Hence, hypothesis 1a is rejected.

Table 1.2: Scheffe Posthoc Tests of Knowledge by Treatment

Treatment	N	\bar{X}	Treatment		
			(1) Coop	(2) Field Trip	(3) control
1. Coop	101	10.14		*	*
2. Field Trips	126	7.95	*		*
3. Control	125	10.09		*	

*Pairs of groups significantly different at $p<.05$

Table 1.2 shows that the cooperative instructional group ($\bar{x} = 10.44$) differs significantly from the field trip group ($x = 7.95$). The control group ($x = 10.09$) also differs significantly from the field trip group. Hence, it is the field trip instructional group's difference from each of the cooperative and control groups that was responsible for the observed significant main effect of treatment on knowledge of multicultural concepts.

Table 1.3: ANCOVA Summary of Posttest Attitude Scores by Treatment, Ethnicity and Religion

Source of Variance		Hierarchical method				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Covariates	PREATTD	61.435	1	61.435	.194	.660
Main Effects	Combined	21824.697	4	5456.174	17.200	.000
	Treatment	21605.475	2	10802.738	34.055	.000*
	Ethnic Grp	21.652	1	21.652	.068	.794
	Religion	197.569	1	197.569	.623	.431

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 1.3 shows that there is significant effect of treatment on students' attitude to multicultural concepts ($F_{(2,340)} = 34.055$; $P < .05$). Hence, hypothesis 1b is rejected.

Table 1.4: Scheffe Posthoc Tests of Attitude Scores by Treatment

Treatment	N	\bar{X}	Treatment		
			(1) Coop	(2) Field Trip	(3) Control
1. Coop	101	79.05		*	
2. Field Trips	126	64.71	*		*
3. Control	125	82.26		*	

* Pairs of groups significantly different at $p < .05$

Table 1.4 shows that the field trip instructional group ($\bar{x} = 79.05$) significantly differs from the cooperative learning group ($\bar{x} = 64.71$). The group is also different significantly from the control group ($\bar{x} = 82.26$). This implies that the difference between the field trip instructional group and the other two groups were responsible for the observed significant effect of treatment on students' attitude to multicultural concepts.

DISCUSSION

Effect of treatment on Knowledge of and Attitude to Multicultural Concepts

It was found in this study that the effect of treatment on students' knowledge of multicultural concepts is significant. This is to the effect that the cooperative learning strategy was more effective than the conventional teaching method and the field trip strategy. The superiority of the cooperative learning mode of instruction over the two other strategies is founded upon the nature of interaction among the students in the learning situation. For instance, students worked together in small heterogeneous groups, sharing ideas, experiences and were more or less in charge of the activities as teachers only acted as facilitators. Within each group, students from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds were provided equal opportunities and interacted to achieve common goals. Also, students of different levels of abilities used the variety of learning activities provided to improve on their understanding of the multicultural concepts within inter group and intra group setting. Indeed, the cooperative learning instruction fostered greater student attention and stimulated interest through the exploration of the different cultures presented to them.

Another possible reason for the effectiveness of cooperative learning is that students' various interests, needs and challenges were accommodated and taken care of through multicultural concepts presented to the cultural heterogeneous group. They are also encouraged to make critical decisions concerning themselves, as well as concerning others in the group. Cooperative

learning is indeed experiential in the context and helped to reinforce students' learning while experiencing realistic situations, applying practical knowledge and connecting with the community. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students could work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Therefore, co-operative learning is an effective teaching strategy which is aimed at accommodating learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. This finding is in agreement with those of Slavin (2001), Williams (2007), Fink (2004) and Lie (2008) that cooperative learning is not only viable in classrooms but the strategy helps students to become effective leaders, communicators and listeners.

Further, the findings showed that on attitude to multicultural concepts, students in the control group had higher attitude mean score compared with the two experimental groups. This could be due to the age-long tradition of the deployment of the conventional teaching method by teachers of Social Studies. In addition, students had come to develop positive interest and attitude towards the strategy since that is the strategy they had always known and were always taught with (Chang, 2000; Strom and Strom, 2003). It is important to recognize that interpersonal behaviours will change over time. However, authors agreed that the conventional teaching method is not the best (DuBrin, 2004; Lai, 2002) because it ignores experiential form of learning and relies mostly on intellectual development. Therefore, conventional teaching method could be complemented using other strategies for effective teaching and learning. In a similar perspective, Adekunle (2008) is of the opinion that there are many teaching methods and techniques associated with the integrated Social Studies, there is no single mode of teaching which fits all the learning situations. Hence, conventional teaching method should not be out rightly condemned.

Students in the field trip group consistently lagged behind in knowledge of and attitude to multicultural concepts in Social Studies. First, planning and execution of field trips are difficult for some teachers to do and they therefore would rather not employ it for normal classroom teaching strategy. This agrees with the position of Ajitoni and Salako (2013) that field trip strategy has not been effectively utilised in the teaching and learning process in secondary schools in recent times. Similarly, Noel (2007) and Heuvel (2008) argue that because field trip is an away from classroom strategy, teachers find it difficult to take trip risks, sharpen their skills and choose the right sites and plan the trip before-hand. These could have limited the dispositions of the teachers and subsequently students' reception of the strategy as another effective strategy for school work. Hence, students' knowledge acquired as well as their attitude remained at the base in this study

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the use of cooperative learning instructional strategy has the potentials of helping to foster cooperation, mutual trust, understanding, more effective communication sharing of other peoples' world views and ultimately lead to improved knowledge of students in multicultural concepts. Also, in employing the strategy in the Social Studies classroom, students' religious and ethnic origins are relevant. Hence, the future of the Nigerian state will become surer and among the citizens, peaceful co-existence will tend to hold sway in different parts of the country if multicultural education is given a pride of place through the cooperative learning strategy in Nigerian Secondary Schools. Less emphasis should be placed on conventional method of teaching because it focuses mostly on intellectual development and ignores experiential learning. It teaches students how to succeed on standardized tests and relies mostly on the use of the intellect. Instructors also tend to have a greater control over what is being taught in the classroom because they are partially the sole

source of information. Obviously, this teaching method has partially failed to bring about the desired outcome of interactive learning. Therefore, there is the need for teachers to use other teaching strategies such as cooperative learning to complement the conventional teaching method.

Cooperative learning offers an opportunity for students to get exposed to people, events and the opportunity to make connections with others. There is need to create an environment where all races and cultures of the world would learn to respect their differences. An overall goal of Social Studies is to create a place where all students can live as responsible citizens in a pluralistic society. In realising this view, if the cooperative learning strategy is implemented effectively and vigorously, it may indeed contribute to the enhancement of peaceful co- existence between learners in multicultural schools and the society at large.

RECOMMENDATION

It is hereby recommended that:

1. Teachers should adopt the cooperative learning strategy in the teaching of multicultural concepts in Social Studies and indeed across other subject areas in order to better prepare the students for future communal living, understanding of other peoples' culture and development of abilities to live peacefully with others especially outside of their own culture or ethnic origins.
2. Students should be assisted to appreciate the need for national unity, peace, love and harmony and the need to contribute to its entrenchment in the society. This could be achieved through the inclusion of more group work activities in classroom teaching. Through group work activities, students could be more sociable and tolerant of others' ways of life.
3. Curriculum developers in Social Studies should incorporate more multicultural concepts into the Social Studies curriculum. Also, they should popularize cooperative learning by recommending its use to teachers in the curriculum.
4. Curriculum developers in Social Studies should also incorporate field trip into Social Studies curriculum and should popularize field trip by recommending its use to teacher in the curriculum.
5. Teachers' Associations such as Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) should organize seminars and workshop for teachers in order to make them familiar and interested in the use of the cooperative learning strategy in the teaching of Social Studies generally and multicultural concepts specifically.
6. Researchers should venture into more research works in the area of cooperative learning in Ogun State and Nigeria in particular where there is an urgent need to reduce the spate of ethno-religious insurgencies and promote peaceful co-existence.
7. Conventional teaching method could be complemented with other teaching strategies for effective teaching and learning.

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