

PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL STUDIES ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG FARMERS AND HERDERS IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

BY

Joy Habiba Ofuokwu: Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria-Nigeria

I.D. Abubakar: Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria-Nigeria

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H.I Bayero: Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria-Nigeria
Correspondence E-mail: joyerimal3@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the Perception of Undergraduate Students on the Impact of Social Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution among Farmers and Herders in North-West, Nigeria. The design of the study was descriptive survey research method. The population of this study consisted of all the undergraduate Social Studies students of 400 Levels in degree awarding institutions of the region under study which offer Social Studies Education at the B. Ed Level numbering 873. The sample size used for the study was 267. The sampling techniques adopted for this study were purposive sampling proportionate sampling. Structured questionnaire entitled "Undergraduates Perception on Impact of Social Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution among Farmers and Herders Questionnaire (UPISSOPCRAFH-Q)" was used for collecting data. The content and construct validity were ascertained by relevant experts. The reliability coefficient index stood at 0.86 determined using Cronbach Alpha method. The study used mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while independent samples t-test statistic was used to test the research hypothesis at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. It was found that there is no significant difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that in order to avert the recurring herders-farmers conflict in North West zone, 'dialogue and conflict resolution' approaches at community levels.

Keywords: Perception, Undergraduates, Social Studies Conflict Resolution, Farmer-Herders

Introduction

Conflict have been part of human nature as long as human being exist, interact with one another, and engage in diverse economic, social, cultural, and political activities based on the exploitation, utilization and management of human and material resources. It is further exacerbated by differences in interest and competition over the securing and utilization of the scarce space for grazing and farming activities. It is undisputable fact, that resource ownership and utilization have determined the nature and dimensions of most conflict involving man. The incessant conflict witnessed in the tropics has resulted in loss of lives, properties and environment degradation as also witnessed in some developed countries. The production potential of grassland and livestock in the arid and semi-arid region is constrained by low and variable rainfall (Ker, 2007). Therefore, there is a need for grazing movements to access pasture resources across regions in order to ensure food security for herds. In North-west agriculture and pastoralist have coexisted side by side for centuries. Overtime many herding and farming communities in the same area have developed interdependent relationships through reciprocity,

other exchange, and support. At the same time, conflicts between herders and farmers have arisen for centuries. Recently, a small number of these disputes have escalated into widespread violence and displacement of people. In some cases, a herder- farmer conflict there is an ongoing grassroots war in Northern states of Nigeria between herdsmen and farming communities. It is an old age problem, but it has escalated in the last decade and has assumed a very deadly dimension. Social Studies is a natural development from man's interaction and exploration of the environment in which he lives. It concerns the concrete experiences man encounters as he relates to the various aspects of his environment.

Social Studies Education is a discipline which promotes awareness, consciousness and participation of students through its curricular and co-curricular activities with the aim of creating effective and practical culture. This will reduce the multitude of negative factors that have hitherto characterized the Nigerian society today thereby giving a negative meaning to the society. Social Studies is a discipline that make us want to search, examine and observe issues that effects our everyday lives. Irikana and Ibeh (2014) are of the view that it could be summed up that Social Studies is a field of study that deals with the integration of knowledge, experience and effective use of resources for the purpose of citizenship education. Social Studies Education equips man with useful knowledge, practical skills, positive values and attitudes to be sufficiently informed to be sufficiently informed to tackle societal problems and issues Social Studies man objectives or purpose is to help the individual develop the ability to adapt and contribute to the ever- changing environment (Ololobou, 2010). Social Studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such discipline as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography history, law, philosophy, political science psychology, religion and sociology as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. According to Bayero and Lawal (2014) Social Studies is the sum of leaning derived from the various aspects of human thoughts and experiences for the purpose of solving man's interminable problems. The objectives and curricula for social studies basically aim at moulding individuals to become responsible citizens. A responsible citizen is defined by the possession of or the desire to acquire basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable him/her to function and participate effectively in the social, political and economic system. While it is agreed that the process of moulding a responsible citizen is complex and requires the cooperation of many institutions and agents of political socialization, there is an assumption that if the different institutions and agencies are somehow coordinated and share common values and framework, the impact of the efforts will be greater. Jallow (2009) opine that citizens need to acquire knowledge about themselves and about others and the relationships among them (interdependence).

The experience of many countries of the world where Social Studies was introduced showed that such countries were motivated to do so by the felt need to get rid of certain social problems in their countries and which they believed Social Studies will contribute in eliminating them. Social Studies Education is those common learning of man's interaction with his social and physical environment. It is not only a study but a way of life of how man influences and is influenced by his physical, political, economic, psychological and cultural environment. Social Studies Education is therefore the learning about people how and where they live, how they form structure and society, how they govern themselves and provide for their external and sociological need why they love and hate each other and how they use and misuse the resources on the planet. Social Studies objectives in Nigeria have been tailored to meet the needs of the Nigerian society.

Foremost among these problems are those of dishonesty, greed, selfishness and covetousness. There are other problems like land for farming, human population, animal population, poverty, climate change, land seizer etc. Social Studies can be a very useful remedy for correcting several ills of the Nigerian society that is why Social Studies is concerned with human relationship and societal development (Okam, 1998). There is a worrisome trend because both have co-existed interdependently for countries sharing the same fields for farming and grazing with a manageable level of tolerance and accommodation. Social Studies Education has significant impact on the issue of farmers-herdsmen crisis. Social Studies Education is concerned with human relationship and societal development. This study is timely due to the growing rate of clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. In every society world over, it is the obligation of the government to citizens to guarantee their survival and protection in the overall uplifting of the society. Social Studies Education can be used to address the issue with farmers and herdsmen. It is on this note that this study examined the Perception of Undergraduate Students on the Impact of Social Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution among Farmers and Herders in North-West, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

- i. Determine the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria;

Research Question

- i. What is the difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

- i. There is no significant difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria;

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research method. Olayiwola (2010) describes descriptive survey design as a method that describes a given state of affairs at a particular time. Additionally, Koul (2011) the purpose of descriptive survey research is to find out or study a group of people or items by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Nwana (2008) states that the design is relevant because it enables the researcher to describe an event, situation or phenomenon, as it is, at the time of the study. The population of this study consisted of all the undergraduate Social Studies students of 400 Levels in degree awarding institutions of the region under study which offer Social Studies Education at the B. Ed Level. The total population of 400 Level students in the above institution stood at 873. The sample size used for the study was 267. The choice of the sample size was based on Research Advisors' (2006) table for sample selection. The table provides the minimum expected return instruments at 95% confidence level, 50% level of variability and ± 5 margin of error. The sampling techniques adopted for this study were purposive sampling proportionate sampling. Structured questionnaire entitled "Undergraduates Perception on Impact of Social Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution among Farmers and Herders Questionnaire

(UPISSOPCRAFH-Q)” was used for collecting data. The questionnaire was constructed using four-point modified Liker Scale: Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with scores of 4-1 respectively. The content and construct validity were ascertained by relevant experts. The reliability coefficient index stood at 0.86 determined using Cronbach Alpha method. This agrees with the view of Lawal (2014) that a reliable test will have a high reliability coefficient close to positive one (1). The study used mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while independent samples t-test statistic was used to test the research hypothesis at 0.05 Alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria?

Table 1: descriptive statistic on difference in the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social Studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in North-West, Nigeria

Social Studies	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Social Studies Objectives	141	94.0061	8.47701	.65993	2.22035	-1.33751	5.77820
Social Studies Content areas	126	91.7857	10.69911	2.02194			
Total	267						

Table 1 presents the lecturers’ the mean scores of differences between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social Studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in North-West, Nigeria. The mean score for Social Studies objectives was (M=94.0061, SD=8.47701) which was higher than that of Social Studies content areas (M=91.7857, SD=10.69911). The mean difference was 2.22035 in favour of Social Studies objectives. The 95% confidence interval of the difference was from -1.33751 to 5.77820. Therefore, there was difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social Studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in North-West, Nigeria.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in north-west, Nigeria;

Table 2: Summary of independent samples t-test on perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social Studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in North-West, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	p
Social Studies objectives	141	94.0061	8.47701	1.231	265	.220
Social Studies content areas	126	91.7857	10.69911			
Total	267					

Table 2 presents the students' perception of Social Studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution among farmers and herders in North-West, Nigeria. This was because the mean score for Social Studies objectives was (M=94.0061, SD=8.47701) which was higher than that of Social Studies content areas (M=91.7857, SD=10.69911). The mean difference was 2.22035 in favour of Social Studies objectives. The 95% confidence interval of the difference was from -1.33751 to 5.77820. The analysis provides that $t(265) = 1.231$, $p = 0.220$; the null hypothesis was retained.

Discussion

It was found that there is no significant difference between the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of Social studies objectives and content areas on peace and conflict resolution. Okonkwo (2004) who stated that social studies education exposes learners to the problems in the society and equip them with necessary skills needed for their survival. In a related development, Aibangbe (2004) asserts that social studies education raises a generation of individuals, who can think critically for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate all those values specified under the nation's broad national objectives. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) identified; reflective thinking goal development of critical thinking, enlightened patriotism, which directly supports the aforesaid. This idea is further buttressed by Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) who opined that effective learning of social studies focus on learning the virtues of co-operation, perseverance or endurance, self-control or self-discipline, truthfulness, loyalty, patience, obedience, courage, bravery, kindness, dedication to duty, hard-work or diligence, tolerance, love for others mutual harmony and co-existence, and the recognition and pursuance of ones rights. In a related development, Oloolobou (2010) stressed that the primary purpose of social studies education is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally interdependent world.

Conclusion

Based on the outcome, the following it is concluded that Social studies education objectives and content areas impacted positively on Peace and Conflict Resolution among Farmers and Herders in North-West, Nigeria;

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that in order to avert the recurring herders-farmers conflict in North West zone, 'dialogue and conflict resolution' approaches at community levels. Indeed, conflict is totally unavoidable in every human setting, however, its early detection and proper management could forestall conflict escalation from individual to group levels, and from group to communal levels, and beyond as witnessed in the case of herder-farmer clashes in Nigeria.

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