

# Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creativity of Secondary School Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State-Nigeria

Maurice Emeka Aniako\* Peter Terfa Ortese Happiness Ihuoma Igbo

Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University Makurdi, Km 1, Gboko Road, PMB 102119, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

\* E-mail of the corresponding author: [hapigbo@yahoo.com](mailto:hapigbo@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

This study was designed to examine the influence of ethno-religious crisis on creativity of secondary school students in Jos-North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State-Nigeria. The variables of interest of the study examined were creative expression and creative thinking of senior secondary school students. Two research questions guided the study while two hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The research design employed in the study was descriptive survey design. A total of 370 respondents were sampled from a population of 10,134 Senior Secondary School students. A self developed instrument: "Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creativity Inventory (IERCCI)" was used to elicit information from the respondents. Result of the study revealed that ethno-religious crisis has significant influence on students' creative expression and creative thinking. It was recommended that school guidance counsellors should engage the students in brainstorming sessions so that multiple ideas on how best to resolve the crisis will be realized for use.

**Keywords:** Influence, Ethno-religious, crisis, Creativity,

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria in recent years has been engulfed in all sorts of crisis ranging from religious, tribal and inter ethnic crisis. This situation is posing a lot of concern not just to the government agencies but to the entire populace. Crisis is any situation which the participants of a social system recognize as posing a threat to the status quo, wellbeing, or survival of the system or any of its parts whose ordinary coping mechanisms and resources are stressed or inadequate for meeting the threat. According to Hornby (2000), it is a time of great difficulty or danger, or when an important decision must be made in an illness, somebody's life, war, history, among others. Crisis situations as seen in Nigeria today seem to be mostly ethno religious in nature. The nation is being threatened by some religious fundamentalists for example "Boko Haram" sect who have claimed responsibilities for several suicide bombings within the country. The nation has also witnessed several ethnic crises especially in the northern parts of the country. In fact Nigeria today is facing a lot of security challenges due to this ethno religious crisis. Ethno religious crisis therefore connotes situations of heightened disagreement, intolerance and claim of superiority between two groups of people from different races and religions that leads to destruction of lives and properties, and creates social unrest.

The emergence of such crisis situations in any nation calls for creativity skills that will yield solutions. Creativity is the ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or devise, or a new artistic object or form. It describes a way of using the mind to produce novelty and new designs to produce new realities (Kazdin, 2000). In other words creativity involves the production of new concepts and restructuring of new concepts from the old.

Creativity may be made manifest either in expression or in thoughts hence the concepts of creative expressions and creative thinking. Akinboye (2003) and Ortese (2009) noted that creative expression involves the kind of creativity depicted in art work, dance, poetry, drawing, literally works, music, aesthetic arts, among others where the individual reveals his/her mind and imaginative power in order to make fun or offer therapy to readers or audience. On the other hand, Ortese (2009) asserted that creative thinking refers to series or streams of mental activities that improve the creative ability of individual, exploring and combining ideas, generating possibilities, looking differently at situation with positive approach and making divergent considerations.

Several studies have revealed that most of the recent behavior problems and ethno religious crisis ravaging Nigeria is perpetrated by her adolescents and youths (Igbo, Egbe-Okpenge & Awopetu, 2012). The secondary students are predominantly adolescents. The adolescence stage is characterized by vibrant energy and known to be adventurous. At this stage of life, there energy could be channeled positively or negatively if not guided properly. The incessant manufacturing of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings in and around study areas by adolescents and youths seems to be major concern for the citizenry. One begins to wonder whether these adolescents and youths could channel these destructive creative expressions and thoughts in some

positive tendencies hence the study sought to determine the influence of ethno religious crisis on creativity of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State-Nigeria.

### *1.1. Statement of Problem*

It is no gainsaying that secondary school students are the country's next and expected labour force. The country therefore ought to invest its time, finance and appropriate resources for the full grasp of their potentials and creative ability in order to ensure a brighter future. Until the students' study and social environment is welcoming the chances of harvesting their creativity may be low or absent. At the moment, due to the ongoing ethno religious crisis in Plateau State that resulted in the death of some students, their parents/guardians, the destruction of their business places which is the source of their school fees, the surviving secondary school students of Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas might be in panic and emotionally unstable for studies. This may also run down their creative potentials. With this, the researcher also foresees that so long as the crisis persists, the students are likely to graduate without acquiring creative abilities required to take up white collar jobs in the various private and public companies in Jos North, and in effecting new farming methods needed in Bokkos Local Government Areas where farming activities is their dominant occupation. This will mean future wide spread of half-baked labour force in the study areas and the nation at large. The economic, personal and national implication of this ethno-religious crisis has therefore remained a cause of concern.

The geography of Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas which are characterized with mountains, waterfalls and several tourist locations were exploited as venues and inspirations for creative expressions like drawings, music and dances. Secondary school students of both Local Government Areas were also involved in these activities either through invitations by a sponsor or during school excursions. These therefore afford them the opportunity to express creativity. But with the present condition in Plateau State, the researcher wonders if the students still consider these places in term of creativity and not potential hideouts for harmful religious fanatics. Landau (1982) noted that creativity is fragile, and in the best of circumstances requires tender-loving-care from society. It is against this background that the researchers delved into investigation on the impact of ethno religious crisis on creativity of secondary schools students with the view of suggesting possible ways of ameliorating the situation to meet individual and national creative aspirations and challenges.

### *1.1.1 Purpose of the Study*

The study generally aims at determining the impact of ethno-religious crisis on creativity of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State. Specific objective include to:

1. Determine if there exists any influence of ethno-religious crisis on creative expression of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas.
2. Determine if there exists any influence of ethno-religious crisis on creative thinking of Secondary Schools Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas.

### *1.4 Research Questions*

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of ethno-religious crisis on creative expression of Secondary School Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas?
2. What is the influence of ethno-religious crisis on creative thinking of Secondary School Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas?

### *1.5 Research Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. Ethno-religious crisis has no significant influence on creative expression of Secondary School Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas.
2. Ethno-religious crisis has no significant influence on creative thinking of Secondary School Students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas.

### *1.1.2. Methodology*

The design of this study was descriptive survey. The population comprised of 10,134 secondary school students of Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State. 370 of the students served as the respondents, out of which 81 males and 74 females are from Jos North while 111 males and 104 females are from Bokkos Local Government Areas. A researcher designed instrument 'Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creativity Inventory (IERCCI)' was used. The instrument consisted of 30 items. Respondents were asked to tick (✓) "Yes" or "No" as applicable to them. IERCCI was pilot tested on 42 respondents and the result yielded Cronbach Alpha of .71, which is considered adequate for social science researches. The bio-data and research questions were analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages while the

hypotheses were analyzed with chi-square statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

### 1.1.3 Results

*Research Question 1:* What is the influence of ethno-religious crisis on creative expression of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas?

**Table 1: Percentage Scores of Impact of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creative Expression of Senior Secondary School Students**

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Remark	
		N	F	%	F		%
1.	Senior secondary school student(s) compose poem(s) about the ethnoreligious crisis.	369	200	54	169	46	<b>Has Influence</b>
2.	Senior secondary school student(s) form song(s) that relates to the ethnoreligious crisis	366	207	57	159	43	√
3.	Senior secondary school student(s) develop imaginary stories on account of the ethnoreligious crisis	368	215	58	153	42	√
4.	The crisis has influenced senior secondary student(s) to make drawings that represent a bomb blasted market.	363	173	48	190	52	<b>No Influence</b>
5.	Senior secondary school student(s) are involve in drama acting to imitate the crisis.	365	197	54	168	46	<b>Has Influence</b>
6.	The crisis influenced senior secondary school student(s) to draw weapon(s) like gun, long knife, bow, arrow, among others.	369	186	50.41	183	49.59	√
7.	The crisis influenced senior secondary school student(s) to draw cartoons about the crisis	366	182	49.73	184	50.27	<b>No Influence</b>
8.	The ethnoreligious crisis has made senior secondary student(s) create weapon(s) to protect themself/themselves.	367	194	52.86	173	47.14	<b>Has Influence</b>
9.	Senior secondary school student(s) made painting that show(s) damaged places during the crisis (like damaged market, shops, houses, among others)	370	186	50.27	184	49.73	√
10.	Senior secondary school student(s) made a sculpture to show crying people (or a person) who fall victim of the crisis.	368	197	53.53	171	46.47	√
11.	Senior secondary school student(s) made music that has/have the content of the ethno religious crisis	369	202	54.74	167	45.26	√
12.	Senior secondary school student(s) wrote article(s) to discourage the ethnoreligious crisis for publication in newspaper(s).	369	192	52.03	177	47.97	√
13.	Senior secondary school student(s) developed novel(s) that centers on the ethnoreligious crisis	359	183	50.98	176	49.02	√
14.	Senior secondary school student(s) formulated jokes to make people laugh out their fears during the crisis	348	191	54.89	157	45.11	√
15.	Senior secondary school student(s) made mock-news presentations about the crisis.	354	186	52.54	168	47.46	√
<b>Total</b>		<b>5470</b>	<b>2899</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2571</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>Has Influence</b>

It is evident from the analysis in Table 1 that ethno-religious crisis has influence on creative expression of Senior Secondary School students. The Table shows an average percentage of 53, which is above the acceptable percentage level of 50. This implies that ethno-religious crisis has influence on creative expression of students in the areas of study.

*Research Question 2:* What influence has ethno-religious crisis on creative thinking of Senior Secondary School Students Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas?

**Table 2: Percentage Scores of Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creative Thinking of Senior Secondary Schools Students**

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Remark	
		N	F	%	F		%
1.	I have had a brainstorming exercise on how best to resolve the crisis.	364	212	58.24	152	41.76	<b>Has Influence</b>
2.	I had imagined the possibility of crisis free environment.	366	202	55.19	164	44.81	√
3.	I think there is no only one way solution to the Ethno-religious crisis.	361	199	55.13	162	44.87	√
4.	I think that a combination of various ameliorating ideas will fetch a better helpful one to resolving the crisis	363	228	62.81	135	37.19	√
5.	I think that school debate is a useful way to gain helpful ideas to resolve the crisis.	363	217	59.78	145	40.22	√
6.	I think the ethno-religious groups need only to modify intolerance of others to tolerance in order to effect a peaceful co-existence.	363	220	59.78	148	40.22	√
7.	I thought of several ways of survival in this moment of crisis.	364	210	57.69	154	42.31	√
8.	I look at the crisis as another opportunity to confirm that the human person is also a violent person.	366	206	56.28	160	43.72	√
9.	I don't just discuss but offers solution for the crisis with my friend.	365	217	59.45	148	40.55	√
10.	I think of a new way of resolving the crisis rather than the old way idea of doing away with "non-indigenous people"	369	203	55.01	166	44.99	√
11.	I think it's not best to follow a general view that violence is a good way of returning to peace.	363	197	54.27	166	45.73	√
12.	I understand that our school conference for peace keeping is relevant to keeping peace around me.	363	226	61.25	137	38.75	√
13.	I think of many ways school knowledge can be useful to maintaining peace in the State.	364	213	58.52	133	41.48	√
14.	I think curfew is not the only way to keep the crisis in check.	365	208	56.99	157	43.01	√
15.	I told my colleague that running away from Plateau state is not a better idea.	368	224	60.87	144	39.13	√
<b>Total</b>		<b>5472</b>	<b>3210</b>	<b>58.66</b>	<b>2262</b>	<b>41.34</b>	√

Table 2 reveals that ethno-religious crisis has positive impact on creative thinking of Senior Secondary School Students in the areas of study. There is an average percentage of 58.66 which is above the acceptable percentage level of 50; and this reveals that ethno-religious crisis has positive influence on creative thinking of Secondary School Students in the study areas.

**Hypothesis 1:** Ethno-religious crisis has no significant influence on creative expression of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokokos Local Government Areas.

**Table 3: Chi-square Statistics on Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creative Expression of Senior Secondary School Students**

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	$\chi^2$	Asymp. Sig.	Sig. level	Remarks
Yes	3201	2735.0	1	158.80	.0001	0.05	Sig.
No	2269	2735.0					
<b>Total</b>	<b>5470</b>	<b>5470</b>					

**df = 1, P = 0.001 < 0.05,  $\chi^2 = 158.80$**

Result in Table 3 indicates chi-square value of 158.80, which is significant at P = .0001. Since P.0001 < 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that ethno-religious crisis has significant influence on creative expression of students.

**Hypothesis 2:** Ethno-religious crisis has no significant impact on creative thinking of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Statistics on Influence of Ethno-religious Crisis on Creativity Thinking of Secondary School Students**

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	$\chi^2$	Asymp. Sig.	Sig. level	Remarks
Yes	4132	2736.0	1	1424.60	.0001	0.05	Sig.
No	1340	2736.0					
<b>Total</b>	<b>5472</b>	<b>5472</b>					

**df = 1, P = 0.001 < 0.05,  $\chi^2 = 1424.60$**

Result in Table 4 indicates chi-square value of 1424.60, which is significant at P = .0001. Since P .0001 < 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that ethno-religious crisis has significant influence on creative expression of students.

#### 1.1.4 Discussion of Findings

Research question one and hypothesis one reveal that ethno-religious crisis has significant influence on students' creative expression. This was seen in expression of several songs, poems, and music they composed about the ethno-religious crisis. Their expression also turned negative such that they not only drew deadly weapons like guns and arrows but created the weapons and manufactured some Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) that are being used by the religious fanatics to attack other individuals. This finding agrees with Czikkentmihaliyi (1996) who holds that no one, even the most abstract mind is immune of the impression that impinges on the senses from outside. This finding implies that the crisis was stressful and requires to be ameliorated for students to express beneficial creativity for national development. On the contrary, Zenasni, Besancon and Lubart (2008) in their study found that ambiguous situations or crisis, can cause feelings of anxiety, confusion and psychological discomfort in some individuals such that it affect their ability to express creativity in terms of storytelling.

Research question two and hypothesis two show that there exists significant influence of the ethno-religious crisis on students' creative thinking as they were brainstorming and proffering various solutions, among other creative thinking items, for the amelioration of the crisis. This finding agrees with that of Janssen (2000) who holds that challenges such as role conflict, higher levels of job demands and internal and external crisis trigger innovative responses by forcing individuals to become receptive to different viewpoints, be more flexible, and expand their source of information, which is creative thinking. This means that the ethno-religious crisis, which may limit students' movement by imposition of curfew by the government and non supply of study materials, can be avenue for them to think creatively and learn to improvise to meet their pressing academic demands and solve some social problems.

However, Greenberg (2004) affirmed that crisis have negative influence on creativity. He maintained that extreme stressor, as observed in ethno-religious crisis, affect the cognitive ability and cause nerve cell damage and post-traumatic stress hence reduces creative thinking. This difference may be explained with the fact that individuals are different in the way they react to crisis situations in respect of creativity expressions and thinking and that ethno-religious crisis can have both positive and negative influence on the young minds of secondary school students. This fact is opined by Igbo, Aniako and Ndam (2010) who observed that crisis, whether internal



like tension or external like ethno-religious crisis, can have either positive or negative impact on people's expressive creativity.

#### 1.1.5 Conclusion

Every individual is born creative. Life challenges however have the capacity of inhibiting this potential. Care therefore is required in handling all individuals, especially students, who face all forms of crisis in order to help them attain self actualization for the good of the nation at large. School guidance counselors should take up their responsibilities of ensuring that their students actualize their maximum potentials as it relates to creative expressions and thinking.

#### 1.1.6 Counselling Implications

This study has some implications to guidance counselors and counseling practice in general.

- i. Counsellors should emancipate traumatized students from the shackles of crisis and redirect their thought towards positive expressions through cognitive restructuring. The counsellors' should assist the students realize the fact that the way they think about the crisis may constitute more problem than the crisis itself and so they need to think more positively.
- ii. Counsellors should also create peaceful, favourable and enabling environment for students to express positive creativity that will benefit the nation. This might be achieved through public enlightenment campaigns that will cause opposing ethno-religious groups to have mental shift, from sectional interest and religious superiority to tolerance national unity.
- iii. Counsellors should engage the students in brainstorming sessions so that multiple ideas on how best to resolve the crisis will be realized for use. The brainstorming exercise may take three steps:
  - a. Problem definition: This involves knowing the nature of ethno-religious crisis and its effects on students' creativity. A better understanding of its causes and holistic look at it is also required,
  - b. Incubation period: Here the counsellor engages the students to reflect on the possible solutions to the crisis and how they will sustain positive creativity even if the crisis continues.
  - c. Treatment level: At this stage, the counsellor and the student selects best options from the numerous ideas acquired in order to apply them to the problem on ground. This exercise, apart from sorting immediate solution go a long way into developing creative thinking ability in the students; which they may apply in future problems resulting from dynamic nature of the society.

#### References

- Akinboye, O.J. (2003). *Creativity innovation and success*. Ibadan: Stirling-Holden Publishers Nigeria Limited.
- Aniako, M.E. (2011). Impact of ethno-religious crisis on creativity of secondary school students in Jos North and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State. Unpublished Master of Education Dissertation, Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Csikzentmalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity; flow and psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Greenberg, M. T. (2004). *How stress affects creativity*. [Online] Available <https://notes.utk.edu/Bio/greenberg.nsf/0/7a033128f68632C985256b4a0053b0a6?Opendocument> (December 9, 2010)
- Hornby, A.S. (2000). *Oxford Advanced learners Dictionary of current English*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Igbo, H. I, Aniako, M.E. & Ndam, T. (2010). Impact of family violence on the education of the child. *Sustainable Human Development Review: An International Multidisciplinary Academic Research Journal*. 2, (3&4), 35-44
- Igbo, H. I.; Egbe-Okpenge, E. G. & Awopetu, R. G. (2012). Influence of information and communication technology on behavior problems of Nigerian youths. Paper presented at 3<sup>rd</sup> world conference on psychology, counseling and guidance at Izmir-Ephesus, Turkey, May 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> 2012. (In Print).
- Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perception of effort reward fairness and innovative work behaviour. *J. Occup.organ. psychol.* 73:287-302.
- Kazdin, A.E. (2000). *Encyclopedia of Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. (2).
- Landau, R. (1982). *The innovative milieu*. In S.B. Lundstedt and E.W. Colglazier (Eds.). *Managing Innovation*. New York: Pergamum Press, 53-92.
- Ortese, P.T. (2009). *Psychology of creativity*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers (Chapter 3).
- Zenasni, F., Besancon, & Lubart, T. (2008). Creativity and tolerance of ambiguity: An Empirical study. [Online] Available [http://www.psych.univ-paris5.fr/img/pdf/creativity\\_and\\_Tolerance\\_of\\_Ambiguity.pdf](http://www.psych.univ-paris5.fr/img/pdf/creativity_and_Tolerance_of_Ambiguity.pdf) (July 28, 2010)

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/>

The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

### IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

