

# Counselling for Sustainable Peace in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Dr. Stella Ngozi Nduka-Ozo

Department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, PMB 053, Abakaliki, Nigeria

## Abstract

This study reviewed the nature of peace in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria using Ebonyi State University as a case study. The purpose of the study was to review the various factors responsible for lack of peace. The sample was drawn from the three hundred level students of the Faculty of Education. Thirty students were selected from each of the seven departments making a total of 210 students – 105 males and 105 females. A researcher made instrument named factors responsible for lack of peace in Tertiary Institutions (FRLPTI) was used as the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established for internal consistency using the Pearson Product Moment which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.78 after a test-retest carried out on some selected students from the Federal University students in the state. The results of the study were presented in 5 tables based on the four research questions and hypothesis formulated while the data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test for the hypothesis. Findings included that feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources and others contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The recommendations include that peace studies which are interdisciplinary approach to questions of war and peace should be introduced in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and that counselling efforts should be intensified by having many Counsellors who should be able to meet the needs of the students instead of having only one counsellor serving more than 1,000 students.

## INTRODUCTION

The National Policy (2004) referred to tertiary education in Nigeria as education given after secondary school in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics; the objectives of which include: contributing to national development through high level, relevant manpower training, developing and inculcating proper values for survival of individual and society, developing the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment, acquiring both physical and intellectual skills that will enable members of the society, promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service, forging and cementing national unity and promoting national and internal understanding and integration.

The above objectives are lofty goals that any society could wish for itself, provided that the citizens of that society are focused, committed disciplined and live in peace with one another. Peace could be seen as state of freedom from war, tranquility, mental calmness, harmony or law and order. It is lamentable, however that many Nigerians do not live in peace and this has also gone into the school system. Aning (2011) observed that in 1996 alone 14 of the 53 countries of Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than half of all war-related deaths worldwide and resulting in more than 8 million refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IPDs). In Nigeria many wars have been fought and various forms of conflict are encountered every year. In the tertiary institutions the case is not different, many acts of indiscipline are exhibited and perpetrated by both students and teachers which constitute a breach of peace.

Indiscipline in schools has been conceptualized by Peretomode (2004) as all forms of mis-behaviour within school system which could be collective mis-behaviour or individual behaviour. Indiscipline negates and works against constituted authority in such a way that established rules and regulations, norms and laid down procedures are not adhered to by the un-disciplined individuals. Elom (2005) asserted that indiscipline in the tertiary institutions manifest in the form of cheating at examinations, falsifying of results, awarding of fake results and certificates, cultism, truancy and violence. Acts of indiscipline which are observed among the students in the tertiary institutions as listed by Nwite (2010) include: absenteeism from lectures, noise making in lecture rooms, cultism, sorting for high grades and sexual harassment Aja-Okorie (2010) corroborated the lists above in her statement that

The picture of most of our higher institutions continue to present dilapidated infrastructure, industrial actions, students rioting and violence, cultism, armed robbery, prostitution, students' demonstration and incessant closure of schools. All these interferences have adverse effect on students' academic achievement. (p. 322).

One of the objectives of entrepreneurship skill acquisition at this level is to equip students with analytical skills in problem solving, negotiations, conflict resolution, marketing, leadership, interpersonal relations and

financial management. The above objective underscores the fact that peace is needed in the Tertiary Institutions, and the lack of peace amounts to conflict.

Conflict has been defined by Ezegebe (1997) as mutual hostility in inter-human relationships. Okoro (1998) identified intra-personal conflict – where an individual has two competing desires which he is unable to resolve, and inter-personal conflict – where two or more individuals or group of people are incompatible. He further observed that conflict is an obstacle in achieving desired goals, and if unresolved degenerate to enmity, clashes and wars.

Conflict resolution as explained by Alu (2002) entails the use of various methods like dialogue, arbitration, third party and sanction to bring about peace among organizations and between individuals. In sanction various bodies are made to impose sanctions on the conflicting parties unlike dialogue where the people in conflict are brought together to expose them to the issues at stake with a view to helping them to have clearer understanding of the issues. Again in arbitration an arbitrator is invited to settle the conflict by appealing to the conscience of those concerned, this is similar to the third party where the conflicting groups are invited by a third party who urges them to open up and speak out their grievances.

Problems like communal clashes, land disputes, inter-tribal wars, religious wars and political clashes have bedeviled the Nigerian nation for a long time. Resolution of these issues needs proper approach in conflict resolution which in turn has counselling implication for effective management. The Counsellor could mediate in dialogue, as an arbitrator or as the needed third party in conflict resolutions. Mallum (1990) defined counselling as an interpersonal relationship, usually between two individuals, a Counsellor and a Client, in which the principal objectives are the development of the client, the improvement of his welfare and the amelioration of his problems.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Conflict in the tertiary institutions has often been interpreted as a reflection of the degree of moral decadence in the greater Nigerian society and the youth dissatisfaction over the state of things in the country. The out of school youth show this anger in form of crises, like the Niger Delta youth. If the tertiary level of education which is supposed to contribute to national development, develop and inculcate proper values, develop the intellectual capacity of individuals, promote and encourage scholarship, forge and cement national unity and promote national and internal understanding and integration also degenerates to the level of mediocrity perverse value and conflict, then there is little hope for the nation.

### **PURPOSE**

Specifically the study reviewed the various factor responsible for lack of peace as:

1. Feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources
2. Sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation
3. Seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property
4. Acting out their feelings in order to be heard.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
2. Is sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation a contributing factor to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
3. Is seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property a contributing factor to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
4. Does acting out their feelings in order to be heard contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

### **HYPOTHESIS**

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the factors responsible for lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria due to gender.

### **METHODS**

The case study was carried out in Ebonyi State University, Faculty of Education, but employed the descriptive survey design to elicit information from the respondents, which is appropriate when a relatively large number of people are involved.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The population consisted of all the 2800 students of Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki,

while the sample was drawn by simple random sampling from the three hundred level students. Thirty students were selected from each of the seven departments making a total of 210 students

### INSTRUMENT

A researcher made instrument named factor responsible for lack of peace in tertiary institutions (FRLPTI) was used as the instrument for data collection. It is a four – point modified likert scale with four clusters (A - D) and 20 items. The instrument was subjected to content, construct and face validation by experts in the field. The reliability of the instrument was established for internal consistency using the Crombach Alpha which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.78 after a test-retest carried out on some selected students from the Federal University in the state. The supervisor related factor variable was controlled by the pre-survey briefing for three research assistants that helped the researcher.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were presented in Tables 1-4 based on the four research questions formulated.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

Does the feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean rating of the extent to which feeling of being left our in the distribution of national resources contribute to lace of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Items	Various ways of being left our	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	Not considering the opinion of student's parents in policies	3.76	1.04
2	Students not considered in decision taking in the Tertiary Institutions	3.62	1.22
3	Denial of basic amenities in their hostels where they exist	3.67	0.34
4	Denial of comfortable classrooms	3.46	0.34
5	Denial of good libraries and internet facilities	3.37	0.44
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.88</b>

Result of data analysis presented on table 1 shows that feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. A grand mean of 3.58 which is above 2.5 decision rule and SD of 0.88 on a 5-point scale, shows that feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria to a great extent.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

Is sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation a contributing factor of lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Mean rating of the extent to which sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation contributes to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

Items	Sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	They are young and can still make it in life	3.43	1.32
2	Most of them are not yet married	3.54	1.23
3	Most of them do not have children to think about	3.52	0.43
4	Many do not have investments to bother them	3.54	0.24
5	Many are not afraid to die	2.82	0.31
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.01</b>

Table 2 results from the data analysis shows that the sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation contributes to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The rand mean of 3.37 is above 2.5 decision rule while the SD is 0.01 on a 5-point scale, which shows that to a large extent, sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation contributes to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

Is seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property a contributing factor to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Mean rating of the extent to which seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property is a contributing factor to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Items	Seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	There are many students who are thieves	1.96	1.44
2	Many students have enemies that they are looking for situations to get even with them	3.76	1.32
3	Some students join others in the community to loot	2.84	0.45
4	Some indigent and hungry students see opportunity for pillage of property	2.54	0.51
5	Some students believe that government property belong to everybody	3.83	0.53
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>2.99</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Again the result of data analysis presented on tale 3 shows that seeing crises situation as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property contributes to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The grand mean from the table is 2.99 and SD is 1.05. This grand mean is above the 2.5 decision rule showing that, seeing crisis situation as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria to some extent.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

Does acting out their feelings in order to be heard contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

**Table 4:** Mean rating of the extent to which acting out their feelings in order to heard contributes to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Items	Cases of acting out their feelings in order to be heard	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	Many students induce rioting in order to be heard	3.56	1.46
2	Many use demonstrations instead of using dialogue	3.62	1.32
3	Many join cult groups	3.21	0.83
4	Many decide to beat up their lecturers	2.54	0.61
5	Many of them rebel by boycotting lectures	3.24	0.57
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.46</b>	<b>0.65</b>

Finally, result from table 4 as analyzed shows that acting out their feelings in order to be heard contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. With a grand mean of 3.23 which is above the decision rule and SD of 0.91 on a 5-point scale. It can be concluded that to a large extent, acting out their feelings in order to be heard contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

#### HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the factors responsible for lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria due to gender.

**Table 5:** t-test statistic table showing factors responsible for lack of peace at the tertiary Institutions in Nigeria as seen by male and female students

Item	Variable	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	Alpha	t-critical	Decision
1	Male	1.668	0.603	1.58	0.05	1.96	Accept Ho
	Female	1.337	0.747				
2	Male	3.594	0.789	1.86	0.05	1.97	Accept Ho
	Female	3.523	0.621				
3	Male	2.488	0.569	1.23	0.05	1.94	Accept Ho
	Female	3.771	0.441				
4	Male	1.281	0.599	0.76	0.05	1.93	Accept Ho
	Female	1.221	0.358				
5	Male	2.788	0.788	0.93	0.05	1.96	Accept Ho
	Female	3.732	0.451				

The summary of data analysis for table 5 indicates that for individual items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 have their t-critical value greater than the t-calculated. Based on the decision rule the null hypothesis was accepted, hence it

was concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the factors responsible for lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria due to gender.

## FINDINGS

The findings of the study have shown that the feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources, sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation, seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property and acting out their feelings in order to heard all contribute to lack of peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Gender does not significantly affect the factors responsible for lack of peace as seen by the students. This finding agrees with Elom (2005) who asserted that indiscipline in the Tertiary Institutions manifest in the form of cheating at examinations, falsifying of results, awarding of fake results and certificates, cultism, truancy and violence by males and females students.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Peace studies which are interdisciplinary approach to questions of war and peace, openly promoting peace over war should be introduces in the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Peace studies teach that scholars can learn more about certain aspects of international relations. Such as diplomacy, by becoming involved in them.
2. Civic education which featured in educational curriculum in the past is now downplayed; this should help in promoting peace.
3. Moral education should help in molding the character of children so that the question of conflict is minimized.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Counselling efforts should be intensifies by having many counsellors who should be able to meet the needs of the students of having only one counsellor in a school to serve more than 5.000 students.
2. The youths should be allowed to air their views in national issues before policies that affect them are made.
3. Schools should be returned to the missions who combine both moral and academics in their training.

## CONCLUSION

Mallum's (1990) definition of counselling as an interpersonal relationship, usually between two individuals, a counsellor and a client, in which the principal objectives are the development of the client, the improvement of his welfare and the amelioration of his problems could help to bring about peace in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria if applied. The counsellor should be able to resolve the issues of having a feeling of being left out in the distribution of national resources, sense of having nothing to loose in a crises situation, seeing crises as an avenue for survival through looting and pillage of property and acting out their feelings in order to be heard, by giving alternative ways of asking for one's rights to enhance peace at the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

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