# THE NEED FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The study investigated the need for multicultural education in the teacher education programme as perceived by Federal College of Education students Osiele, Abeokuta. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The sample consisted of two hundred colleges of education students selected, using stratified random sampling technique. One research question and three null hypotheses guided this study. A twenty item questionnaire was used for data collection. Its validity and reliability were established using cronbach alpha. The value got was 0.81. Its reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.85. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, mean and t-test statistical tools. The results indicated that College of Education students perceived multicultural education as very important to their programme of study, because it affords students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with diverse racial, cultural, ethnic and language groups to experience academic success. A major recommendation therefore

is that, multicultural education curriculum should be introduced into teacher education programme to enable student develop cultural consciousness that include an awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices found in human societies around the world and some recognition of how one's own thought and behaviors might be perceived by members of the differing nations and groups.

Introduction

In virtually every educational setting, one is likely to find students from a variety of racial composition and this variety is increasing everyday (Valdez, 1999). Therefore, teachers in contemporary classroom must re-examine their curricula and instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students. For example, Shade, Kelly and Oberg (1997); Ladson and Billings (1990) and many other scholars have called upon education to create "culturally responsive" classroom that can help students understand and negotiate difference across culture. Teachers in culturally responsive classroom emphasize that students must learn to become pluralistic in thought, behaviour and affect. Teachers must ask questions that promote higher level of thinking about multicultural topics, concepts, issues and groups. Hence learning experiences that promote cultural empathy are encouraged.

Similarly, by focusing on multicultural contents and issues, minority students are opportuned to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. A multicultural approach also gives other students ongoing opportunities to see culturally diverse students reflected in the curriculum (Davidman & Davidman 1997). Consequently, multicultural education should help the students develop their decision making abilities, promotes values, attitudes and behaviors that supports ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity (Witty and Mesaric 2002). The principle and tenets of multicultural education make it possible to promote excellence in performance of all students (Sleeter & Grant 1999). The fundamental principles of the global perspectives of multicultural education make it possible to increase academic excellence among diverse groups of students on many campuses in the nation (Green 1989, Gollnick & Chinn 2002).

Multicultural education maintains that all students should have equal opportunities to learn regardless of racial, ethnic, social class or gender group to which they belong (Banks 2008). It is therefore very certain that multicultural education advocates the belief that students and their life histories and experiences should be placed at the centre of the teaching and learning process. Drew (2009) emphasizes that, teaching with multicultural strategies promote the child's sense of uniqueness of his own culture as a positive characteristic and enables the child to accept the uniqueness of other people's culture.

Trotman (2002) argues that multicultural education is valuable because it "uses several disciplines to highlight neglected aspects of social history, particularly the histories of women and minorities and promoters respect for the dignity of the live and voices of the forgotten. By closing gaps by raising consciousness about the past, multiculturalism tries to restore a sense of wholeness in a post modern that fragments human life and thought. Modood (2007) says that multicultural education is most timely and necessary for students from diverse culture, because it is a form of integration" that best fits the ideal of egalitarianism, has the best chance of succeeding" in the world.

Parekh (2002) is of opinion that multicultural education allows individual to develop respect and appreciation for all existing cultural groups and gives room for promoting value as well as promoting of equity among all cultural  group in society. There is need now to include the global perspective in which cultural pluralism is recognized as an ideal and health state in any productive society. The scope of multicultural education needs to be broadened to include democratic values, cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies, national and global interdependence (Bennett, 2003). Therefore, a multicultural perspective geared towards social participation and political efficacy is vital for socially democratic nation like Nigeria.

Objective of the Study
The specific objectives of the study are to find out
- the perception of N.C.E students on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.
- the perception of male and female students of N.C.E. on the need

of multicultural education.
- the perception of science based and non science based students of NCE students on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.
- the perception of NCE students in penultimate year (200L) and those in final year (300L) on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.

Research Question
What is the perception of Federal College of Education student on the need of multicultural education curriculum in teacher education programme?

Hypotheses
Ho1:  There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students of F.C.E on the need of multicultural education curriculum in teacher education programme.

Ho2:  There is no significant difference between the perception of science based and non science based students of F.C.E on the need of multicultural education curriculum in teacher education programme.

Ho3:  There is no significant different between the perception of student of F.C.E in penultimate year (200L) and those in final year (300L) on the need of multicultural education curriculum in teacher education programme.

Methodology
This study employed the descriptive research design. The sample consists of two hundred students, out of which one hundred were male and other hundred were female. Also one hundred were in their penultimate year (200L) while the other one hundred were in first year (100L). The sampling procedure employed stratified sampling method which involve the students being selected from each of the four academic departments in the school of Arts and Social Sciences and school of Sciences viz: Department of Social Studies, Theatre Arts, Chemistry and Physics. Fifty students from each department were

randomly selected.

The instrument for the data collection in this study was a questionnaire developed by the authors. The questionnaire has two sections. Section A consists of respondents personal data while section B consist of twenty items that sought information on the perceived need of the multicultural education programme in teacher education. Internal consistency and validity of the questionnaire were established using Cronbach alpha and value got was 0.81. The instrument was revalidated by the researchers and its reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.85. Data analysis involved the use of frequency, percentage and t-test statistics.

Result

Research Question: What is the perception of Federal College of Education students on the need of multicultural education in teacher training programme?

Table 1: Perception of Federal College of Education students on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme

N= 200, percentages are in bracket

| S/N | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Multicultural Education is a Program For a country like Nigeria. | 162 (81) | 38 (19) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| 2 | Multicultural Education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values. | 151 (15.5) | 37 (18.5) | 10 (5.0) | 02 (5.0) |
| 3 | Multicultural Education is ideal and healthy discipline that can promotes equity and respect among the existing cultural groups. | 131 (65.5) | 53 (15.5) | 06 (25.5) | 10 (64) |
| 4 | Incorporating Multicultural education in Social Studies programme will enhance academy excellence in pluralistic and democratic societies. | 15 (7.5) | 21 (0.5) | 30 (18) | 238 (64) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Multicultural Education promotes cognitive and moral growth among all people. | 123 (61.51) | 40 (20) | 19 (9.5) | 18 (9) |
| 6 | Multicultural Education increases creative problem-solving skills through the different perspectives applied to same problems to reach solutions. | 136 (56) | 59 (29.5) | 05 (2.5) | 0 (0) |
| 7 | Multicultural Education increase positive relationship through achievement of common goals, | 139 (69.5) | 46 (23) | 13 (6.5) | 02 (01) |
| 8 | Multicultural Education create a platform for respect, appreciation and commitment to equity among diverse culture. | 131 (65.5) | 55 (27.5) | 12 (6.0) | 02 (1.0) |
| 9 | Multicultural education decreases stereotype and prejudice through direct contact and interaction among diverse individual. | 59 (29.5) | 55 (27.5) | 12 (41) | 02 (2) |
| 10 | Multicultural education renew vitality of society through the richness of the different culture its member. | 42 (21.5) | 58 (28.5) | 58 (49) | 02 (1.0) |
| 11 | Multicultural education brings about equity pedagogy as a means of correcting the inequalities among people in society. | 43 (21.5) | 57 (28.5) | 98 (49) | 02 (1.0) |
| 12 | Multicultural Education is a worthwhile programme. | 55 (27.5) | 114 (57) | 31 (15.5) | 0 (0) |
| 13 | Through the teaching and learning of multicultural education the interaction between different groups will be made possible. | 108 (54) | 83 (51.5) | 7 (3.5) | 0 (1.0) |

| 14 | Multicultural education strengthens intercultural competence. | 90 (45) | 106 (53) | 4 (02) | 0 (0) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Through multicultural education programme, racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and distribution will be combated. | 135 (68) | 35 (18) | 20 (10) | 8 (4) |
| 16 | Multicultural Education gives respect for human dignity and universal human right. | 17 (8.5) | 37 (18.5) | 128 (63) | 20 (10) |
| 17 | Multicultural education gives way for acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity. | 22 (11) | 136 (68) | 30 (15) | 12 (0.6) |
| 18 | Multicultural education focuses on the characteristics of children racial attitude and on strategy that can be used to help student develop more product racial and ethnic attitude. | 112 (56) | 76 (38) | 8 (4) | 4 (2) |
| 19 | Multicultural education creates a safe, accepting and successful learning environment for all. | 5 (25) | 50 (25) | 114 (57) | 37 (15.5) |
| 20 | Creating the ability to work and live with a multicultural perspective. | 108 (54) | 80 (40) | 8 (40) | 4 (2.0) |

Hypothesis One
There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students of F.C.E on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.
Table 2: Sex difference in student's perception on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme

| SEX | N | MEAN | SD | t-calculated | t-critical | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 100 | 62.290 | 5.153 | | | |
| Male | 100 | 63.467 | 3.647 | 10.617 | 1.645 | Sig. |
| Significant at p< 0.05 | | | | | | |

Table 2 shows that there is significant difference (t-cal. = 10.617, p t-critical at < 0.05 = 1.645) between the perception of female students (52.390, SD = 5.153) and male students > = (63.467, SD = 3.647) on their perception of the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference between the perception of science based and non-science based students on the need of multicultural students on the need of multicultural education in teacher training programme.

Table 3: Comparison of science and non-science based students on their perception on the need of multicultural education in the teacher training programme.

| Group | N | MEAN | SD | tcal | TCRIT | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Science | 35 | 63.419 | 4.997 | 3.277 | 1.645 | Sig. |
| Non-Science | 165 | 62.074 | 4.061 | | | |
| Significant at P<0.05 | | | | | | |

Table 3 shows that documents that there exist a significant difference (t-cal. = 3.227, t – critical P < 0.05 = 1.645) between the perception of science students (63.415, SD = 4.997) and male students > = (62.074, SD = 4.061) on their perception of the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.
Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the perception of student in penultimate year (200L) and those in final year (300L) on

the need of multicultural education.

Table 4: Comparison of 200l and 100L students' perception of the need of multicultural education in the teacher education programme.

| Group | N | MEAN | SD | TCAL | TCRIT | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200L | 100 | 62.698 | 4.66 | 0.360 | 1.646 | Sig. |
| 300L | 100 | 62.856 | 4.5 | | | |
| P<0.05, NS = Not Significant | | | | | | |

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference (tc = 0.360, P< 0.05) between the perception of 200level students (62.698, SD = 4.66) and 300level student (62.856 >, SD = 4.59) on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the students of Federal College of Education had a positive perception of the need and importance of multicultural education in teacher education programme. Table 1 shows that all the respondents (100%) perceived multicultural education as an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values that can promotes equity and respect among the existing cultural groups. In the same vain, 92% of the respondents were of the opinion that multicultural education will enhance academic excellence in pluralistic and democratic societies. Also 92% of the respondents perceived multicultural education as a worth while programme while 95.3% saw it as an opportunity to create a platform for respect, appreciate and commitment to equity among diverse cultures. In conformity with theirs, they disagreed (72% of the respondents) that a diverse people worldwide are mostly engaged in hating each other, that is, when they are not killing each other. A diverse, peaceful, or stable society is against most historical precedent. 72.5% of the respondents also disagreed with the concept that even the relationship between ethnic, religious and social communities in some Western states is surrounded by a sense of crisis. This was was buttress Okin (1999) who said that, the effect of diversity is worse than

had been imagined.

The perception of Gollnick & Chinn (2002) are of opinion according to their findings that multicultural competence is the process in which a person develop competencies in multiple ways of perceiving, educating, believing, and solving problem. The purpose is to be focused on understanding and learning to negotiate cultural diversity among nations as well as within nation by becoming aware of one's perspectives as well as becoming conscious of other cultural perspectives as a foundation of informal cross-cultural interaction (Pang 2001).

Another finding in this study is that there is a significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the need of multicultural education in teacher education programme. This was buttress with the finding of Nieto (1996) who emphasized the clearing up of myths and stereotypes associated with gender, age and the various races and ethnic groups by stressing basic human similarities. In addition, teaching toward social justice promotes developing an awareness of the historical root and an understanding of the evidence of individual and institutional prejudice and discriminations such as cultural racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination (Quiseberry, McIntyre & Duthon 2002). However, the point here is that the male mean (63.467) is higher than that of the female (62.290). It seems from the results that, male have a better perception when it come to the issues pertaining to cultural differences that also deal with inequality between genders in the society. This was also supported by Cushner, McClelland and Stafford (2000).

Another major finding of this study is that there is significant difference between the perception of science-based and non science based students on the need of multicultural education in the teacher education programme. The result lends credence to that of Queensberry, McIntyre & Duhon (2002) who find that students in different discipline differ in their attitude to, and perception of issues like interculturalism, ethnicity and interdisciplinary. The result of the study could be explained to consider the fact that science-based and non-science based students could possess distinct characteristic peculiar to their thinking ability, style, opinion and disposition to

concepts, events and educational discourse like this nature.

In addition, this study documents that there is no significant difference in the perception of students in their penultimate year (200 levels) and those in their final year (300 levels) on the importance and need of multicultural education in teacher education programme. May be, this result was because those in their final year might be well grounded in some similar courses like 'cultural identity', 'Nigeria as a nation-state', 'social change in Nigeria', to mention but few; which would have adequately informed them of the importance of multicultural education in the multilingual country like Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has come up with findings that college of education students see multicultural education as a way for acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity which focuses on the characteristics of children's racial attitudes and on strategies that can be used to help students develop more positive racial and ethnic attitudes. Multicultural education is part of a greater plan to support togetherness through education, urging people of different origins and different blood to acknowledge cultural identity as a means to transform society. Therefore, education is the foundation on which future generation will help guide society into another age of enlightenment (Wiedeman, 2002). The paper recommends that an empowering school culture and social structure will require the restructured of the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience educational equality and a sense of empowerment. Government should organise conferences, seminars and workshop to enlighten teachers, parents, and school heads of the importance of multicultural education. Curriculum planners should implement multicultural education into the teacher education programme as a general course for all students.

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