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CONTENTS

- 82. Threat of Perceived Stereotype on Behaviour Related to Choice of and Practices in Teaching as a Career among Teacher Trainees**
Nenty, J. H.
- 94. Prudential Approach to Resource Management in Nigerian Education: A Theoretical Perspective**
Agabi, C. O.
- 107. Transfigurations of Nigerian Federalism**
Eresia-Eke, A. & Eberiyé, S. S.
- 113. Democratizing Education for the Enhancement of Education for Sustainable Development: A Challenge in Botswana**
Jotia, A. L.
- 121. Secret Cults at Niger Delta University**
Epkenyong, S. N.



Threat of Perceived Stereotype on Behaviour Related to Choice of and Practices in Teaching as a Career among Teacher Trainees

Johnson H. Nenty

Department of Educational Foundations, University of Botswana

E-mail: hjnenty@yahoo.com

Abstract

The extent to which teachers perceive the existence of pressure emanating from negative stereotype of teaching as a career by the society tends to reduce the amount of affective and cognitive investments on teaching and learning by teachers and teacher trainees. Given this problem, the purpose of this study was to determine the level to which stereotype threat as perceived by University of Botswana (UB) teacher trainees influences their learning- and teaching-related behaviour. To test the nine research hypotheses posited to guide the study, data for the inferential survey study was collected using a validated 48-item questionnaire from a sample of 452 UB teacher trainees. Data analyses were done using t-test of single mean, chi-square (χ^2) test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings showed that the level to which UB teacher trainees perceived teaching as a stereotyped career significantly influences the amount of affective investment they are making on their training programme and hope to make on their teaching. These findings were discussed and recommendations that emanated from findings were made.

Keywords: Teaching; Stereotype Threat; Teacher Training; Dissatisfaction; Motivation; Attitude; Willingness.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Over recent years, the professional status and motivation of teachers have been declining worldwide while the expectations of parents, employers and others towards teachers are steadily on the increase. In both developed and developing countries, teachers suffer from a decline of their professional image (IIEP, 2001). There abound in the society several stereotyped views of teaching as a profession. For example, according to the Department of Education, Science and Training [DEST] (2003, p.3) "students who were not considering teaching as a career said that they saw teaching as a low status job, negatively perceived in the community, and 'semi-professional'". Parents in Australia also complained that 'low university entrance requirements have lowered the status of teaching and resulted in a lower quality teaching workforce'. To them teaching is low-paid, low status work, and there is a negative publicity about the teaching profession and teachers.

Career stereotyping occurs when one applies negative attributes, views, opinions or roles towards a career or a profession. Some stereotypes are so powerful that members of the stereotyped groups tend to believe them (Stevens, et al., n.d.). Gardner in Jones (2002) stated that over the last decade:

the voice of the teaching profession at the end of 1996 is cynical, pessimistic and profoundly weary ... A deep sense of impotence...declining professional status...and what they perceive as constant 'teacher-bashing' by the Government, the Opposition and the press has destroyed confidence...Passion has been replaced by a sort of *fin de siecle* fatalism

Stereotype threat refers to “the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype” or “the discomfort targets feel when they are at risk of fulfilling a negative stereotype about their group” (Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998, p. 85). Such threat operates subtly to influence a lot of what we do and how we perform task related to the stereotype. A lot of what is done under the spell of a stereotype threat is done to confirm the expectations of the stereotype. It is so powerful that members of the stereotyped group, encapsulated within the influence of the stereotype, tend consciously or unconsciously to accept or believe them. And this has a great influence on their performance. According to Stevens et al. (n.d.),

often the derision someone suffers who attempts to break out of the stereotype is so severe that s/he retreats and therefore the stereotype is perpetuated. Because of this, sometimes, members of the stereotype category fail to try different behaviors because of a fear of failure. They are unsure, because they have bought into the stereotype themselves that they are able to succeed. (p.3)

Teaching and Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat affects members of any group about whom there exists some negative stereotype especially if a situation makes them believe that they will be viewed in light of the negative stereotype even if they believe in the threat or not (Steele, 1997). Such stereotype must be relevant to one's self and one must care about the behaviour or practice that the stereotype describes. Different groups experience different degree of threat depending on the content or intensity of the stereotype and the situation. Within the context in which teachers are bombarded with several negative stereotypes from different groups in the society they are bound to be prone to stereotype threat. In the context of the teaching profession, this is more so provoked when they are especially wary of situations in which their behaviour can confirm the negative reputation that their profession lacks a valued social, economic or especially professional qualities. The extra pressure caused by the fear of reinforcing the negative interferes with their ability to perform, resulting in low performance.

Underlying the stereotype threat among teachers is the fact that many dissatisfying conditions under which the teachers work impact on their professional and personal lives. They are alienated from and ill-understood by the society, they are frustrated by their low status within the community and whereas their role has intensified and the expectations placed on them by the community in relation to this role fulfillment have become even greater, their profession is looked down upon as if it is not providing any significant service to the society (Jones, 2002). African teachers suffer from 'implicit occupational stereotype' (Bennell, 2003) and because of the stereotyping of their profession, there is alienation from the community and a feelings of frustration and powerlessness in relation to role fulfillment; desperation from the unsuccessful desire to involve parents and the community in the school environment, the lack of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards; all these impact on their professional and personal satisfaction, and embolden the effects of the threat from the stereotype.

Steele in Bergeron, Block and Echtenkamp (2006) presented three conditions for the phenomenon of stereotype threat to take place. The society must be aware of the negative stereotype against a group. In the case here, the society is the one stereotyping teaching as a profession and all are very conscious of it. Secondly, there must be individuals who identify themselves with the profession as a part of their life and they stake their self-image on the profession. Here teachers are domain-identified as a profession. The last of the conditions to be satisfied for the existence of stereotype threat is 'the relevance of the negative stereotype to the individual during a domain performance situation' (p.137). This is a situation in which the teachers are at risk of confirming the negative stereotype of teaching as a profession. A teacher devalued in a domain that is important to the maintenance of his/her self-regard experiences a very threatening condition (Bergeron, Block & Echtenkamp, 2006). They see themselves as performing under a name 'profession,' a name that is shared with other groups that are highly regarded by the society as being true to type, truly professionals.

The Research Problem and Purpose of the Study

According to DeRouin, Fritzsche and Salas (2003, p. 1), 'because stereotype threat increases the cognitive burden placed upon victims, it has the power to reduce test scores. In addition, stereotype threat may impact training outcomes

as well'. Stereotyping a profession tends to undermine both the cognitive and affective dispositions of members of that profession in carrying out what is required of them in the professions. It is an 'important variable that can impact training effectiveness and that has not been addressed in the training literature'. Just as stereotype threat increases the cognitive burden placed upon its victims (Aronson, Quinn & Spencer, 1998), it does also place a huge affective burden on them and such burdens tend to reduce the cognitive and affective prowess of teachers. Hence it impacts on the training and performance effectiveness of professionals and these have not been addressed in the training literature.

To Stevens (n.d.), 'most stereotypes are not based on personal experience, but are the result of hearsay or images concocted by the mass media or are generated within our own heads as ways of justifying our own prejudices and cruelty.' Stereotypes are so powerful that members of the stereotyped groups tend to believe them. If we believe that teachers are socially low-class people, then when we meet a teacher in any occasion we tend to treat them as low-class persons hence robbing them of their right to be treated as an individual. 'We consciously set up social conditions in such a way that our suspicions about a group are met and instead of being open minded, we gather confirmatory evidence for our stereotype'. Considering the identified problem this study aimed at determining the extent to which, in the perception of UB education students, Botswana society stereotypes teaching as a career and how this influences teacher trainees' perception of and behavior in the career.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Given the purpose of the study as indicated, the under listed research questions and hypotheses served as guide to the achievement of the aim of the study:

1. To what extent does the society stereotype teaching as a career?
2. To what extent does being trained into a stereotyped career influence one's perception of and behaviour in the career?

To answer these research questions, the following null hypotheses were tested:

1. Botswana society does not significantly stereotype teaching as a career.
2. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their ranking of teaching as a career.
3. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their perceived effectiveness of the training programme.
4. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their achievement motivation.
5. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their attitude towards teaching.
6. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their attitude towards their training programme.
7. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their willingness to teach.
8. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence the amount of effort they put into the programme.
9. The level to which teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their perceived usefulness of the programme.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Results of several studies tend to agree that exposing a group of people to negative stereotypes about the group increases anxiety and stress and thus reduce performance on a task related to that stereotype (Dobbs, 2007). For example, to determine the influence of stereotype threat, Aronson, Quinn and Spencer (1998) told a sample of White males that the aim of their study was to examine why Asian students tend to perform better than Caucasian students on tests of mathematical ability. They gave them articles describing the White-Asian mathematics performance gap. After this they gave the subjects a mathematics test. As a result of the stereotype threat, White males in the threat

condition performed significantly poorer on the mathematics test than White males in the control condition. In addition, stereotype threat may impact training outcomes as well.

After several years of studying situations such as choking under pressure or succumbing to "stereotype threat" scientists are learning how emotion combines in the brain with memory, attention and other cognitive skills to affect performance (Vajda, 2007). To him, 'getting in touch with our emotions and learning to express them effectively has the potential not only to make us feel better, but also to help us perform better' (p.2). In the final analysis, stereotype threat can produce several additional consequences beyond short-term underperformance. Situations that produce consistent exposure to stereotype threat as with teachers can reduce the degree that they value the domain in question (Aronson, et al. 2002; Osborne, 1995; Steele, 1997). It can also lead students to choose not to pursue teaching as a profession or be serious at it. This limits the range of professions that are open to them, thus contributing to educational and social inequality (Good et al., n.d.; Schmader, Johns & Barquissau, 2004).

Studies from Human Performance Lab., University of Chicago [HPLUC] (n.d.) show that introducing a negative stereotype about a social group in a particular domain can reduce the quality of task performance exhibited by group members. For instance, when negative group stereotypes are activated in performance situations, African-Americans perform more poorly on cognitive tasks reputed to assess intelligence, women perform more poorly on math problems for which they have been told gender differences exist, and Whites perform more poorly on athletic tasks that purportedly are diagnostic of athletic ability rather than athletic intelligence. Hence professions can experience underperformance under the influence of stereotype threat (Good, Aronson, & Harder, in press).

From studies by Heafford and Jennison (1998) as well as Sinclair (1990) it is concluded that '... diminished status of teachers were crucial factors that generate dissatisfaction, low commitment, low moral, and greatly detract from the enjoyment of teaching' (AARE, n.d., p.9). Teachers feel somewhat alienated from the society; they are confused, frustrated and powerless by their perceived low status within the society (Australian Association for Research in Education, [AARE] n.d.). They are compelled to justify or defend their profession, or at worst to even feel ashamed of their profession (Australian Senate Employment, Education and Training Reference Committee [ASEETRC], 1998). According to these studies, 'the compulsion to justify or defend one's profession, or at worst, to even feel ashamed of their profession, is often felt by teachers' (ASEETRC, 1998, p.1; Dinham & Scott, 1998, p.1; Scott, Cox & Dinham, 1999, p.297). Heafford and Jennison (1998) as well as Sinclair (1990) found out that '... diminished status of teachers were crucial factors that generate dissatisfaction, low commitment, low moral, and greatly detract from the enjoyment of teaching' (AARE], n.d., p.9).

METHODOLOGY

This study is survey inferential in design as it surveyed and analysed the views and perceptions of a representative sample of all education students in University of Botswana (UB) and based on the results inferred the general views of perceptions of UB education students. It is assumed that such views and perceptions would not be drastically different from those of students in similar institutions in Africa. Out of 742 students in the first semester of 2007/2008, a sample of 500 was randomly drawn for the study. A total of 452 of those sampled actually took part in the study because some refused to take part and some of them submitted questionnaire that were not completely and correctly filled. Out of 150 envisaged, 129 Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) students took part, while out of 350 envisaged, 318 were Bachelor of Education students took part five students did not indicate in which programme they were registered. These 318 students were drawn from each of the eight departments in the Faculty of Education in close proportion to their population. There were 261 female and 182 male students while nine students failed to indicate their gender.

An instrument consisting of two sections was developed for the study. The first section – Section I with five items demanded for demographic information and students' ranking of teaching as a career. Section II with 44-item Likert-type items with six options – from 'very strongly agree' through 'very strongly disagree' – was developed, face-validated by three colleagues in the area of assessment and used for the study. After validation, a pilot study of the instrument was carried out on a sample 39 randomly selected students from the population of the study. Negatively worded items were scored in the reverse direction. A Cronbach alpha analysis of the reliability of the measurement of the variables involved in the study showed that for achievement motivation with 16 items, alpha was .945; for attitude towards programme with 10 items, alpha was .904; attitude towards teaching with 3 items, alpha was .759; willingness to teach with 6 items, alpha was .827; usefulness of programme with 3 items, alpha was .744; programme effectiveness 2 items alpha was .658. These were deemed as good measures for each of the variables (see Appendix I - during administration the items were all mixed up and randomly ordered).

Data were collected through the help of five graduate teaching assistants and mainly during the dying minutes of classes where the selected students were enrolled. Permission to collect such data was secured from the different lecturers and each student had an option not to participate in the study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

Data analysis was performed per hypothesis using the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) version 17. In the null form, the first one which has it that in the perception of UB teacher trainees, Botswana society does not significantly stereotype teaching as a career was tested using one-sample t-test. This was done to compare a single mean of the sample with the population mean. This analysis ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.60$, $n = 411$) resulted in a t-value of $t(410) = 8.31$, $p < .001$, hence the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that Botswana society significantly stereotype teaching as a career as an inferior profession.

The null form of the second hypothesis has it that the level to which UB teacher trainees perceive teaching as a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their ranking of teaching as a career. Given that the data here were the number of cases (frequencies) in each ranking category for each perceived level of stereotype, grouped into three categories (low, average, high) based on its mean and standard deviation, a chi-square (χ^2) statistical analysis was employed (See Table 1) to test this hypothesis. This gave a chi-square value of 11.41 .

Table 1: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis of Dependence of Ranking of Teaching as a Career on Perceived Level of Stereotype of Teaching as a Career by UB Education Students.

Perceived Level of Stereotype View of Teaching by the Society	Rank of Teaching as a Career				Total
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	
Low	29 (27.8) ^a	14 (13.8)	12 (12.8)	13 (13.6)	68
Average	84 (77.8)	45 (38.4)	34 (35.8)	27 (38.0)	190
High	61 (68.4)	27 (33.8)	34 (31.4)	45 (33.4)	167
Total	174	86	80	85	425

^aExpected frequencies are in parentheses

$\chi^2(6, N = 425) = 11.41, p > .05$.

which was found to be less than the critical value of 12.59 at .05 alpha level. ($\chi^2(6, N = 425) = 11.41, p > .05$). Hence the null hypothesis was retained, meaning that the level to which teaching is perceived as being a stereotyped career by the UB teacher trainees does not significantly determine their ranking of teaching as a career.

The other seven hypotheses taken together in the null form posited that the level to which UB teacher trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career does not significantly influence their: (1) perception of the effectiveness of their training programme; (2) achievement motivation; (3) attitude towards teaching; (4) attitude towards their training programme; (5) willingness to teach; (6) effort they put into the programme, and (7) their perceived usefulness of the programme. The significance of the influence of the level to which UB teacher trainees perceive teaching as a stereotype career on each of these dependent variables was tested by performing a one way analysis of the variability (ANOVA) of each of them (See Table 2). A one-way ANOVA was deemed suitable here because the nine dependent variables were measured at the interval level while the independent variable, level to which UB teacher trainees perceived teaching as being stereotyped, was categorical with three levels.

For the first dependent variable on the list, perceived level of programme effectiveness, the ANOVA showed a significant influence, $F = 5.84$, $p < .003$, of the level to which UB teacher trainees perceived teaching as being a stereotyped career on the perceived level of programme effectiveness. The significant F-value demanded a post hoc analysis and using the least significant difference (LSD) method, it was found that students with perception of a high level of stereotype of teaching differed significantly ($p < .01$) from those who perceive average and low level of stereotype of teaching in their perception of programme effectiveness.

Generally, the result of the analyses showed that the higher the level of perception of teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower their perceived level of programme effectiveness. For achievement motivation, the analysis showed a significant influence, $F = 6.75, p < .01$, of the level to which teaching is perceived as being stereotyped on the achievement motivation of teacher trainees in UB. The significant F-value called for a post hoc analysis and using the least significant difference (LSD) method, it was found that students with a high level of perception of teaching as stereotyped career differed significantly ($p < .01$) with those who perceive average and low level of stereotype of teaching. Generally, the analyses showed that the higher the level of perception of teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower the achievement motivation of teacher trainees.

For attitude towards their programme the analysis resulted in a significant F-value [$F(2, 317) = 7.25, p < .01$], which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. In other words, the level to which teacher trainees perceived teaching as being a stereotyped career has a significant influence on their attitude towards their programme. The significant F-value prompted a post hoc analysis using the LSD method. This analysis showed that teacher trainees with high perceived level to which teaching is stereotyped differed significantly ($p < .05$) from those with low and average levels of perceptions in their attitude towards their programme. The higher the level to which they perceived teaching as being stereotyped, the less favourable their attitude towards their programme. In the case of attitude towards teaching, the analysis resulted in a significant $F = 5.46, p < .01$, which again led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. In other words, the level to which teacher trainees perceived teaching as being stereotyped has a significant influence on their attitude towards teaching. Given the significant F-value a post hoc analysis using the LSD method was done. This analysis showed that teacher trainees with high perceived level to which teaching is stereotyped differed significantly ($p < .01$) from those with low and average levels of perceptions in their attitude towards teaching. For teacher trainees' perceived economic status of teachers, the ANOVA resulted in a non-significant $F = 1.73, p > .05$, influence of the level to which teaching is perceived as being stereotyped on the perceived economic status of teachers. Considering their perceived social status of teachers, the analysis showed a significant influence, $F = 17.37, p < .01$, of the level to which teaching is perceived as being stereotyped on teacher trainees' perception of the social status of the teacher. The significant F-value called for a post hoc analysis and using the least significant difference (LSD) method it was found that students with a perception of a high level of stereotyping teaching differ significantly ($p < .01$) with those who perceive average and low levels of stereotyping teaching in their perception of social status of teachers. The analyses showed that generally, the higher the level to which a teacher trainee perceives teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower his/her perceived social status of teachers.

Table 2: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Influence of Perceived Level of Stereotype of Teaching as a Career on Teachers Behaviour by UB Education Students.

Variable	Perceived Level to Which Teaching is Stereotyped	n	Mean	Std. Dev0	Std. Error	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Programme Effectiveness	Low	62	9.82	2.34	.297	Between Groups	68.69	2	34.34	5.84	.003
	Average	188	9.58	2.03	.148	Within Groups	2406.66	409	5.88		
	High	162	8.82	2.84	.223	Total	2475.35	411			
	Total	412	9.32	2.45	.121						
Achievement Motivation	Low	42	75.55	11.14	1.72	Between Groups	2029.87	2	1014.94	6.75	.001
	Average	125	72.18	11.54	1.03	Within Groups	42731.04	284	150.46		
	High	120	68.13	13.33	1.22	Total	44760.91	286			
	Total	287	70.98	12.51	0.74						

Attitude Towards Programme	Low	47	52.28	13.10	1.91	Between Groups	2342.84	2	1171.42	7.25	.001
	Average	143	48.24	10.69	0.89	Within Groups	51249.54	317	161.67		
	High	130	44.45	14.50	1.27						
	Total	320	47.29	12.96	0.72	Total	53592.39	319			
Attitude Towards Teaching	Low	61	12.67	3.81	.488	Between Groups	156.38	2	78.19	5.46	.005
	Average	180	12.35	3.34	0.25	Within Groups	5804.26	405	14.33		
	High	167	11.19	4.20	0.33						
	Total	408	11.92	3.83	0.19	Total	5960.65	407			
Economic Status of Teachers	Low	66	3.21	1.52	0.19	Between Groups	7.11	2	3.56	1.73	.179
	Average	192	3.47	1.23	0.09	Within Groups	879.31	427	2.06		
	High	172	3.21	1.60	0.12						
	Total	430	3.36	1.44	0.07	Total	886.42	429			
Social Status of Teachers	Low	60	4.58	1.46	0.19	Between Groups	70.08	2	35.04	17.37	.000
	Average	184	4.31	1.12	0.08	Within Groups	823.14	408	2.02		
	High	167	3.56	1.67	0.13						
	Total	411	4.04	1.48	0.07	Total	893.212	410			
Willingness to Teach	Low	56	26.23	7.50	1.00	Between Groups	679.28	2	339.64	7.61	.001
	Average	175	25.49	5.84	0.44	Within Groups	17060.71	382	44.67		
	High	154	23.01	7.24	0.58						
	Total	385	24.61	6.80	0.35	Total	17739.99	384			
Amount of Effort Put into Programme	Low	69	4.49	1.42	0.17	Between Groups	33.35	2	16.67	7.73	.001
	Average	194	4.16	1.36	0.10	Within Groups	933.74	433	2.26		
	High	173	3.73	1.60	0.12						
	Total					Total					

Usefulness of Programme	Total	436	4.05	1.49	0.07	Total	967.08	435			
	Low	58	13.86	2.81	0.37	Between Groups	79.64	2	39.82	4.62	.010
	Average	175	12.82	2.60	0.20	Within Groups	3396.05	394	8.62		
	High	164	12.50	3.29	0.26						
	Total	397	12.84	2.96	0.15	Total	3475.68	396			

In the case of their willingness to teach, the result of the analysis showed a significant influence, $F = 7.61$, $p < .01$, of the level to which teaching is perceived as being stereotyped on teacher trainees level of willingness to teach. Following the significant F-value a post hoc analysis was done using the least significant difference (LSD) method. It was found that teacher trainees with a perception of a high level of stereotyping teaching differ significantly ($p < .01$) in their willingness to teach from those who perceived average and low levels of stereotyping teaching. The analyses generally showed that the higher the level to which a teacher trainee perceives teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower his/her willingness to teach.

When it came to the amount of effort they put into the programme, the result of the analysis showed a significant influence, $F = 7.73$, $p < .01$, of the level to which teaching is perceived as being a stereotyped career on the amount of effort teacher trainees put into the programme. Given the significant overall F-value, a post hoc analysis using the least significant difference (LSD) method was done. This again showed that teacher trainees with a perception of a high level of stereotyping teaching differ significantly ($p < .01$) in the amount of effort they put into the programme from those who perceived average and low levels of stereotyping teaching. The analyses showed that generally the higher the level to which a teacher trainee perceives teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower the amount of effort he/she puts into the teacher training programme.

For perception of the usefulness of the programme, the result of the ANOVA showed a significant influence, $F = 4.62$, $p < .01$, of the level to which teaching is perceived as being stereotyped on teacher trainees perception of the usefulness of the programme. The significant F-value called for a post hoc analysis and using the least significant difference (LSD) method it was found that teacher trainees with a perception of a high level of stereotyping teaching differ significantly ($p < .01$) in their perception of the usefulness of their teacher training programme from those who perceived average and low levels of stereotyping teaching. Generally, the analyses showed that the higher the level to which a teacher trainee perceives teaching as a stereotyped career, the lower his/her perception of the usefulness of their teacher training programme.

In summary, UB teacher trainees have confirmed that teaching is a highly stereotyped career in Botswana and this perception has been seen to have insignificant influence on their ranking of teaching as a career and their perception of the economic status of the teacher, but to have significant influence on their perception of the effectiveness of their training programme; on their motivation to achieve in teaching; on attitude towards the programme; on attitude towards teaching; on the perception of social status of teachers; on their willingness to teach; on the amount of effort they put into the programme; as well as on their perceived usefulness of the programme. Generally, the higher the level to which UB teacher trainees perceived teaching as being stereotyped, the less they are affectively disposed toward and are willing to invest both cognitively and affectively in the training programme as well as in their teaching.

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Being trained into a stereotyped career has been shown to influence one's perception of and behavior in the career. There are levels to which UB teachers trainees perceive teaching as being a stereotyped career and though these levels relate insignificantly to their ranking of teaching as a career, they have significant influence on: the effort they put into the programme, their attitude towards the training programme, the level to which they perceived their programme to be useful, their achievement motivation, attitudes towards teaching and willingness to teach.

The stereotype view of teaching as a career by Botswana society creates a psychologically hostile working environment within which teachers operate. This reduces teachers' cognitive and affective investment on teaching and

learning by the teacher and the teacher trainees. It builds a load of high psychological pressure on the teachers' head and some tend to 'choke' under such pressure. Their work suffers as such pressure tends to 'compromise performance' (Dobbs, 2007). Some boggle under such psychological pressure and quit the profession while some stay back miserable and under-productive. Consciously and unconsciously, teachers get choked under the societal expectation and hence pressure-induced performance decrement results. Hence, Botswana society is contributing to the poor and deteriorating performance by our children in school by disabling our teachers by negatively stereotyping teaching as a profession.

To the question of whether negative stereotype of the teaching profession affects the performance of teachers during training and at work, this study gives an emphatic "yes" answer. It significantly affects the main human resources in the educational process. This leads to a significant reduction in professional prowess of teachers because their sense of professional self is not sustained by the evaluation of the society. Stereotype belittles teachers as it deprives them of the means of sustaining the sense of self. But come to think of it, are teachers professionally inferior? How can inferior professionals produce members of 'superior' callings? (Steven et al., n.d.).

The findings of this study confirm DeRouin, Fritzsche and Salas' (2003) view that 'stereotype threat may interrupt learning during training and, as a result, reduce training effectiveness' (p.1). Teachers feel somewhat alienated from the society; they are confused, frustrated and rendered powerless by their perceived low status within the society. The society's negative stereotypic view of teaching activates negative feeling in performance situations and hence teachers experience underperformance under the influence of stereotype threat (Good, Aronson, & Harder, in press). Sinclair (1990), as well as Heafford and Jennison (1998) see the stereotyping of teaching, diminished status, expanded teaching load, declining provision of resources and working conditions, as crucial factors that generate dissatisfaction, low commitment, low morale among teachers and these greatly distracts them from the enjoyment of teaching.

The society, which is the ultimate stakeholder in education, has contributed in no small measure to the alienation of the people at the very hub of the education process – the teachers. The quality of education in any system cannot be higher than the cognitive and affective dispositions of the teachers in that system. Findings of several studies have shown that learners' performance depends significantly on these qualities. The level to which the teaching profession has been stereotyped by the society itself erodes these qualities. 'As the society makes her bed, so shall she lie.' It is the society that provides for her education system and if that society turns around to deprive its teachers of the psychological foundation for the attainment of success by looking down on them then she deserves the consequences. Teachers are the very people that matter most in the operation of such educational system.

According to AARE (n.d.), the primary motivation for teachers to remain in the profession is the satisfaction and enjoyment they derive from working with the students. One teacher or the other contributed in one way or the other to the success of every successful member of the society. Teachers should look at such colleagues as role models which symbolize success for teachers. Encouraging teachers to think of themselves in ways that reduce the salience of a threatening identity can attenuate stereotype effects. Another way the effect of stereotype threat could be reduced for teachers is to modify task descriptions so that 'such stereotypes are not invoked or are disarmed' (Stereotype threat, n.d.). Teachers should be encouraged to think about their characteristics, skills, values, or roles that they value or view as important (Schimmel, Arndt, Banko & Cook, 2004). If the chief operators of an educational system are inferior then the quality of education in the system must be inferior. Again, the question is: 'how can inferior professionals produce members of "superior" callings?' Teachers should be made aware that like any other professionals they are performing a unique and vital function in the society and they can and do meet highly valued standards. Such feedback increase motivation and preserves domain identification (Cohen, Steele & Ross, 1999). They should view actions and views that pose stereotypic threat to their profession as distractions that have nothing to do with, and hence should not diminish their affective and cognitive investment in teaching. The findings of this study concur with DeRouin, Fritzsche and Salas' (2003) contention that potentially important variable that can impact training effectiveness and that has not been addressed in the training literature is stereotype threat. It is evident that the dissatisfaction that is permeating the lived realities of teachers indicates the existence of a serious problem that clearly warrants further research (AARE, n.d.).

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire on Attitude toward Teaching, and Achievement Motivation Among Students in UB BEd & PGDE Programmes.

Your participation in this study is solicited for the interest the study has on contributing a solution to the damaging consequences of stereotyping teaching as a profession by the society; and will be useful only to the extent to which you give honest reaction to every item of this questionnaire

Section I

1. Gender: F ___ M _____
2. Programme: PGDE ___ BEd _____
3. What is your area of concentration/teaching subject? _____
4. Number of years you have taught before _____ Years
5. Teaching is your First ___; Second ___; Third ___; Fourth ___; Fifth ___ Career choice (Tick one only) Other (indicate) _____

Section II

Please react honestly to each of the following statements by ticking under one of the following options:

#	Statement	Very Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
	<i>[Motivation to achieve in the programme; $\alpha = .945$]</i>						
1.	I am putting a lot of effort in this programme						
2.	I would feel ashamed if I do not do well in this programme						
3.	I would hate to get someone to do all my assignments for me						
4.	I am determined to do well in this programme						
5.	I will be very proud if I do well in this programme						
6.	I will make do with any grade in this programme (-ve)						
7.	I am very excited about this programme						
8.	I feel this programme is good for me						
9.	I am putting in all I have to do well in this programme						
10.	This programme is a big waste of my time (-ve)						
11.	Academically, I am highly motivated in this programme.						
13.	I do not feel like attending classes in this programme (-ve)						
14.	I have to get very good grades in this programme						
15.	I wish I could get a job now and run out of here (-ve)						
16.	I lack the urge to do well in this programme (-ve)						
	<i>[Attitude towards the programme; $\alpha = .904$]</i>						
17.	I hate this programme (-ve)						
18.	This programme is not adding a lot to what I knew already						
19.	I am learning a lot of useful things through this programme						
20.	I am very interested in this programme						
21.	I have a good attitude towards this programme						
22.	I am happy I had the opportunity to register for this programme						
23.	I like this programme						
24.	This is a very nice programme for me						
25.	I refer this programme to others						
26.	My interest in this programme is very minimal (-ve)						
	<i>[Attitude towards teaching; $\alpha = .759$]</i>						
27.	Generally I hate teaching (-ve)						
28.	I have a good feeling toward teaching						
29.	Teaching is a very good profession						
	<i>[Willingness to teach; $\alpha = .827$]</i>						
30.	I never really wanted to be a teacher (-ve)						
31.	I see myself as a very effective teacher in the future						

32.	I like to be a teacher						
33.	Though I am undergoing this programme I would prefer not to teach						
34.	I cannot imagine myself as a teacher (-ve)						
35.	I cannot wait to get into my classroom and teach my pupils.						
	<i>[Usefulness of the programme; $\alpha = .744$]</i>						
36.	To me this is a very useless programme (-ve)						
37.	This programme meets my professional needs						
38.	This is a very useful programme to me.						
	<i>[Effectiveness of the programme; $\alpha = .658$]</i>						
39.	This programme has not achieved its objectives in many areas (-ve)						
40.	This programme is very effective in the achievement of its goals						
41.	Being a teacher tends to enhance one's economic status						
42.	Generally teachers are of low social standing (-ve)						
43.	I am putting in all I my effort to do well in this programme						
	<i>[Level to which teaching is stereotyped]</i>						
44.	To the society teaching is an inferior profession.						



Prudential Approach to Resource Management in Nigerian Education: A Theoretical Perspective

Chinyere O. Agabi

Department of Educational Management
University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

Resource scarcity is a problem experienced by virtually all human organizations. The Nigerian education sector has endured consistently declining levels of federal government funding over the last two decades. This comes in the face of ever increasing inflation rates and a growing demand for formal education. This untenable situation is compounded by the compulsory and free Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which expanded free education from six years of primary education to nine years of basic education. In addition to lengthening the programme's timeframe, its target population was expanded to include out-of-school youths and adults who, for one reason or the other, did not complete a regular formal education. Unfortunately, this zeal for providing education as a social service in Nigeria has not been matched with a zeal for funding it. The under-funding of Nigerian education has been made worse by recent global economic crises. This paper recommends the exploration of non-governmental sources of funding, and the application of prudent measures for managing existing educational resources.

Keywords: Resourcefulness; resources; prudence; education management; programme; objectives; social service; physical capital; human capital; procurement; distribution; utilization.

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INTRODUCTION

Resource scarcity is a central focus of economics. This is because resources (time, information, money, material and human capacity) are scarce in supply relative to the various uses to which they can be applied. Economics has therefore evolved to establish how to best apply limited resources to achieve the greatest advantage.

This formula applies to educational institutions as organizations. In 2006, Nigeria's population was 140 million with at least 45% of the total population under 15 years of age (Okojie 2008). World Bank country poverty assessments reveal that 88 million Nigerians are living below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day (World Bank, 2009). This, in turn, means that a significant percentage of Nigerians cannot invest in sending their children to school. Consequently, the opportunity to acquire an education for a large proportion of the school aged population depends on the provision of education as a social service. For the Nigerian state this means that there are many people to be educated and many educational programmes to be implemented. The resources needed to accomplish this feat are, to say the least, lacking.

A review of previous educational programmes in the country shows that resource inadequacy has long been a central factor in chronic education shortcomings (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1985; Aiyepoku, 1989). The state resources provided for the execution of education programmes are inadequate and irregular. This inadequacy is compounded by the meagre budgetary allocations for education in recent years, which have been steadily declining over the past two decades. While in 2007 the education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, this fell to 13% in 2008, 8% in

2009 and 6% in 2010. Both the global economic recession and a growing demand for education in all developing countries have compounded the already-compromised state of Nigerian education.

In 2009, there was a near collapse of the education sector in Nigeria as virtually all labour groups involved in education embarked on nation-wide industrial actions. Learners at all levels were forced to sit at home for several months and wait for the resolution of the dispute. The industrial actions were intended to achieve greater financial and material support for the school system in Nigeria (Ololube, 2006). The questions that emerged, however, included: should children sit at home because the school system is inadequate? Should education be abruptly terminated because schools are not properly equipped? Should the education sector be expunged from the sectors of organized human endeavour because the government is not providing adequate funds? Many suggestions have since been put forward by researchers and observers to ensure improved funding and more resources for the effective implementation of Nigerian education. This outpouring is, in part, a result of the expectation that the education sector will facilitate technological advancement and economic development in Nigeria, given adequate resources (Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2007).

Asuka and Paulley (2008), in their analysis of the funding of the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) in the Bayelsa State of Nigeria, note that the envisaged financial contributions from various sources, particularly local communities and individuals, as proposed by the federal government's implementation guidelines, have not had a visible impact on the success of the programme. They attribute this situation to poor public understanding and the inadequate mobilization of the public by the government. They attribute the low participation of children, especially female children, in the UBE programme, to the poor state of schools in the Bayelsa State which they, in turn, trace back to poor funding. They recommended the further exploration of non-governmental sources of funding and additional public enlightenment efforts on the part of the Bayelsa State government. They see this as the most viable means for achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015, as envisaged by the federal government.

Robert-Okah (2008) concurs with Asuka and Paulley and stresses that the participation of parents and the community will contribute significantly to the achievement of UBE programme objectives. In his treatise, Robert-Okah advises that parents should contribute as monitors, curriculum designers, para-professional aids and primary educators. For its part, the community should initiate and execute specific projects, and provide logistical support and an enabling environment that will ensure safety and the maintenance of infrastructure. He recommends the establishment of strong and viable Parents-Teachers' Associations (PTA) as a medium for getting parents to participate actively and meaningfully in the effective implementation of the UBE programme.

With reference to tertiary education in Nigeria, Okojie, (2008: 163) highlights the human and capacity development expectations of the federal government. In his words, "the academic community is being increasingly called upon to provide useful answers to the countless anxieties of our society, not the least of which is the anxiety over the true foundations of our national development which underlines President Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda." Specifically, the federal government expects universities to offer perspectives on development policies and strategies, the nature of investment resources, modalities for effective implementation of educational programmes, monitoring and evaluation indicators, impact assessments for identified programmes/projects, and the implementation and prioritization thereof over the next three to four years. Describing Nigeria as Africa's great hope transformed into Africa's great disappointment, with a real per capital income of about 250 dollars in 2008, Okojie contends that while Nigeria was once sub-Saharan Africa's most promising and oil rich country, over the last two decades its economy has floundered in the face of political instability and bad governance. It is therefore not surprising that the same government that places such enormous expectations on the academic community allocates a smaller percentage of each subsequent annual budget to education; this at a time when other countries are increasing their education spending.

The prospect of the education sector receiving adequate funding as a social service becomes less likely with each passing day. As such, the best alternative in the effective management of education is prudence in the use of those resources which are available. When a given level of resources is utilized efficiently, more services are provided and more goods produced. Such economy in the use of resources begins with the adequate exploration of all sources of relevant resources. This is the mark of efficiency in management. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the problem of resource inadequacy in the education sector in Nigeria and the importance of achieving managerial effectiveness through the use of prudential measures to facilitate the achievement of education objectives, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a combination of observation and document materials for facts gathering, which are valuable sources of data about educational research. In short, the type of observation used in this study did not imply a research strategy of immersion. However, some observations were made of the physical settings of institutions and the quality

of resource management. The central materials for this study were textbooks, articles and reports. The categories of documents used in the study include both primary and secondary sources. Documents provided me with good insight into what has been written concerning the topic under study. These theoretical sources were used extensively in the course of my analysis of this study. To be able to make full use of the document materials that I located and accessed, I needed to assess their validity and value. Scott's (1990, p. 6) four overlapping validity criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, served as a framework. In all, it must therefore be recognised that I were able to systematically select documents in a fashion, which looks like a randomized sampling procedure, which helped me put more ideas, color and rigor into this work. And my acceptance or otherwise of the retrieved information were dependent on my selection of information from the review and the interpretation put on it. It is hoped nonetheless that the representation pinched here is a relatively balanced and logically precise one. Though, no researcher is independent of his or her own normative evaluation of a research problem, as such, if any part of this analysis should bear the hallmark of the researcher stance, it should be overlooked and considered as part of the researcher own oversight (Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2007).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The resources provided by government for the execution of education projects in Nigeria are inadequate and irregular as highlighted by the frequency of industrial actions in the education sector. Moreover, due to the general level of poverty in the country, the contributions of communities and households to educational provision have been negligible. Consequently, the best alternative is prudence in the use of available resources. This is because when a given level of resources is efficiently utilized, more services are provided and more goods are produced than when inefficiency abounds. Prudence in the use of education resources begins with the identification and exploration of all sources of resources relevant to education. It also includes the careful harnessing, rational distribution, efficient utilization and adequate maintenance of the identified resources.

This framework of resource research and usage is established in the System Resource Model of organizational effectiveness put forward by Yuchtman and Seashore in Hoy and Miskel (1987). According to the model, effectiveness is "an organization's ability to secure an advantageous bargaining position in its environment and to capitalize on that position to acquire, judiciously distribute and monitor utilization of scarce and valued resources" (Hoy & Miskel 1987:322-323). In other words, an organization is resourceful when it is able to adequately acquire, rationally distribute, efficiently utilize and regularly maintain scarce resources in implementing its programmes. In turn, such an organization is likely to be effective in accomplishing its goals.

This is true of schools as educational organizations. Schools are not closed social systems and so depend on environmental support for their survival. Yet resource allocation to schools is vulnerable to both state and community politics because of the multiple social programmes competing for limited resources. In this context, it takes a resourceful manager to secure a good bargaining position and acquire more resources from the environment for his or her school. The rational distribution and utilization of acquired resources not only guarantees short term success but also helps to improve the manager's bargaining position for more resources (feedback effect). Thus, the resourcefulness and abilities of the manager can be a major determining factor in the success of an organization. The concern of this paper is to highlight the importance of achieving managerial effectiveness in education from the perspective of the System Resource Model. This conceptualization is schematically represented in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the school is a social system; it has continuous interaction with its environment through input, processes and output. One of the cardinal managerial tasks is to take advantage of the numerous opportunities available to secure the resources needed to execute educational programmes. The proper distribution, efficient utilization and adequate maintenance of these resources will determine the extent and quality of school goal achievement. The output of the school system generates feedback into its environment, which ultimately affects the manager's capacity to secure additional resources. Where output is considered inadequate to justify the initial input of critical resources, securing additional input to sustain the school's production and management process becomes difficult.

The basic processes or inputs required by the school to sustain itself within the system are the work process (teaching and learning), the management process, the evaluation process, and the internal feedback process (from the student). These processes must be properly handled to ensure that the school can be judged as resourceful. As shown in Figure 1, the Ministry of Education, school boards, households, the industrial and commercial sector, the school community through the PTA, as well as all donor agencies (local or international) are the elements of the environment from which critical input must be secured to sustain school management.

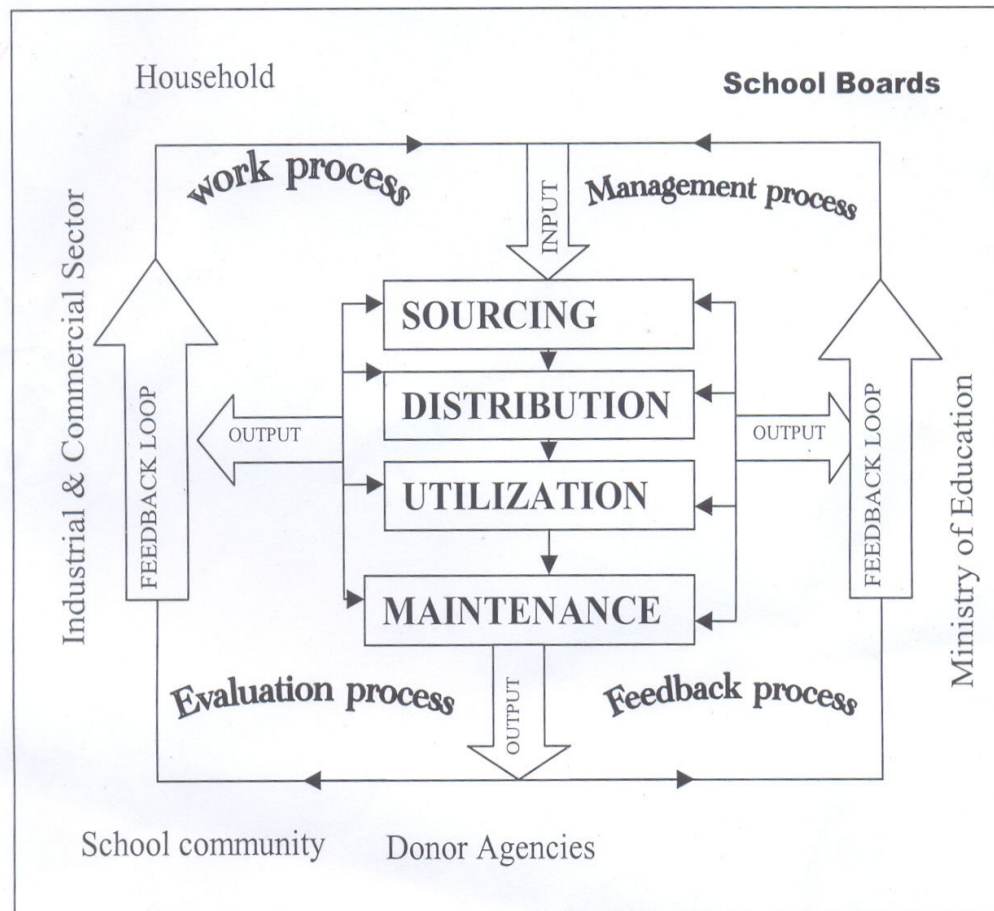


Figure 1: Resourcing Model of Sustainable School Management

The Concept of Resources

While resources have been defined in various ways to suit various purposes, almost all definitions accept that resources are necessary tools for the creation of wealth. According to Williams (1982:1107), the word, “resource” developed out of the Latin phrase “re surgere” literally interpreted as: again (re) to rise (surgere), or “to rise again.” “Re surgere” developed into the French word “resource” meaning “relief or recovery” which, in turn, developed into the English word, “resource” defined as something that can be turned to for support or help; an available supply that can be drawn upon when needed; and/or means that can be used to an advantage. Hornby (2000:999) defines resource as something that a country, an organization or an individual has and can use, especially to increase wealth; a thing that gives help, support or comfort when needed. Longman (2005) provides a more comprehensive and detailed approach to the word by defining it to include:

- (a) Useful land or minerals such as coal, or oil that exists in a country and can be used to increase its wealth;
- (b) All the money, property, skills, etc. that are available and can be used when needed;
- (c) Personal qualities such as courage and determination that are necessary in dealing with a difficult situation; and
- (d) Books, films, pictures, etc. used by teachers and students to provide information.

Resources are the basic tools necessary in the effective performance of tasks and for the growth and development of human organizations. The constitution of a resource is determined by the uses to which it can be put. Generally, a resource is identified by its ability to solve problems, and yield more wealth when applied to economic situations. Resources are classified as visible when they exist and can be quantified in the form of human beings, land, money, property, books, pictures, and so on. Resources are invisible when they exist in the form of skills and physical

dexterity and can only be measured in terms of productivity levels and quality of work. It is difficult to determine who has what skill and what level of physical dexterity if tasks are not assigned to human beings. The human beings who possess the skills and the physical dexterity constitute the class of resources known as human resources. The other types of visible resources that can be applied by human resources in the production process constitute material resources.

Black (2003:213) separates human capital from other human and physical resources, by describing it as:

The present discounted value of the additional productivity, over and above the product of unskilled labour, of people with skills and qualifications. Human capital may be acquired through explicit training or on-the-job experience. Like physical capital, it is liable to obsolescence through changes in technology or tastes. Unlike physical capital, it cannot be used as collateral for loans.

Human capital is therefore consciously created through education and training. While accepting the general economic definition of land as the factor of production supplied by nature, Begg *et al.* (1994) believe that the quality of land can be improved by the application of human expertise. Thus a farmer is able to produce better land by applying labour to extract weeds or fertilizer to improve soil balance. Similarly, in the field of education, professionals are required in the effective manipulation of educational resources to achieve the desired balance in the production of educated labour. According to Black (2003), the cost of creating human capital falls mostly on individuals or their families, philanthropic institutions or the state.

Financial capital is a significant resource often assumed to be a part of physical capital. It is actually the basis for the procurement, utilization and maintenance of all other types of resources. Without a strong financial base, it will be difficult to produce the right types of goods and services in desirable quantity and quality. Since the human economy is a monetary economy, the availability of funds in any organization or institution is vital to its productive process and the quality of its product and service. Defining finance as the science of controlling money, Ogbonna (2001) expands his approach by citing Pandit (1979) who saw finance as a body of facts, principles and theories dealing with the raising and using of funds by individuals, business firms, educational institutions and governments. Ogbonna (2001) rightly deduced from Pandit's definition that finance is the process of raising, allocating, controlling and prudently managing funds for the purpose of achieving institutional objectives.

The foregoing analysis clearly shows that resources are assets only to those who can identify them and effectively employ them for the purpose of achieving clearly defined objectives. This is because resources alone cannot yield additional wealth. They must be drawn upon and put to judicious use to enable them to increase wealth or productivity. Thus, the prudent management of education funds involves decisions on how to procure, expand, utilize and properly account for funds directed at the achievement of education objectives in general or institutional goals in particular.

Types of Educational Resources

That which constitutes a resource in education is determined by the level of education and the type of education to be provided. The standard resources for all education types and levels are prescribed by the federal government. These include professionally trained teachers and qualified teaching staff in all subject areas, government approved curriculum, teaching aids, school buildings and furniture and the right calibre of administrators to ensure effective school management. The resources necessary for the provision of primary and secondary education in Nigeria are prescribed by the national policy on education (FRN, 2004). At the tertiary level, the federal government works in collaboration with the Nigerian Universities Commission, the National Board for Technical Education and the National Commission for Colleges of Education in ensuring the provision and maintenance of standard recommended resources.

Educational resources have been classified into four groups and include (a) physical resources such as school plants, classrooms, offices, recreational facilities and the entire school ground; (b) material resources including instructional aids, stationeries, education plans, objectives and prescribed methodologies; (c) human resources (both teaching and non-teaching staff); and (d) financial resources made up of all monetary input into the education system directed towards the achievement of specified educational objectives.

Time is a resource that is highly limited in supply and critical to education, but often taken for granted by the providers of educational resources. Time is a vital complementary resource that is indispensable in the effective harnessing and utilization of the physical, material, financial and human resources in the school system. Ebong (1997:13) defines time as "the continuum in which events succeed one another from the past through the present, to the

future.” All school system activities are carried out within a time frame which may be limited to minutes, hours, days, months or even years. Time mismanagement constrains the effective achievement of the objective for which a particular educational resource is required. Effective resource management will be difficult to achieve in any school where time is disregarded.

Information, another vital resource that complements the use of other resources identified in this work, is critical in the effective management of any organization. Information is defined as “facts or details that tell you something about a situation, person or event” (Longman, 2005). Specifically, information is a service facility for applying facts or news, and law; it is a numerical measure of uncertainty of an experimental outcome (William 1982). Adequate information and its proper management are central to effective decision making (Opeke 1984). The relevance of information as an educational resource cannot be over-emphasized. It is believed that most educational management problems in Nigeria are traceable to inadequate information and a general lack of proper information management techniques (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008; Akinwumiju & Agabi, 2008).

In light of the above analysis, two classes of resources can be identified. The first consists of concrete resources that can be physically quantified and their effect on education achievement measured in terms of their quantity and quality. In this class of resources belong human resources, school plant facilities, funding (financial resources), and instructional materials. The second class of resources (of equal importance), which consists of abstract resources such as time and information, can only be measured in terms of their effect on job performance. Good knowledge and the appropriate utilization of these major classes of resources are vital in the achievement of effectiveness in resource management in the school system, especially in the present context of global economic crises and a consistent decrease in federal monetary allocation to education. The school manager must be well informed of the existence of education resources and know when to collect and use such resources. He/she should also be able to adopt a classificatory method that is suitable to the level of education at which he/she is operating.

The Role of Resources in Educational Management

The importance of resources in the management of education cannot be over emphasized. It is not possible to deliver effective education without some level of relevant resources. This has been highlighted by various education analysts and professionals. As observed by Nchor (1998), instructional resources provide a solid basis for conceptual thinking; increase the propensity of the brain to retain information; make learning more interesting; and take care of differences that may exist among learners. Finance, as a resource, plays a crucial role in the development of education (Kosemani, 1995: 8). This supports Fadipe’s (1990) opinion that proper funding and a good supply of qualified teachers can greatly improve the facility index of a school.

In addition to all these benefits, it is important to note that the quality and quantity of resources available to any education system provides a basis for the assessment of the managerial abilities of an education manager. This is because even the most resourceful manager requires a resource base upon which to exhibit resourcefulness. For instance, a school principal in a rural school with unfurnished classrooms, a large enrolment, poor supply of instructional materials and a grossly inadequate number of trained teachers cannot be said to have a good resource base. His counter part in a sub-urban area, who is managing a school with a similar teacher-pupil ratio, well furnished classrooms, and a regular and good supply of instructional materials, has a better resource base. Efforts at resourcefulness may yield better results for the latter because of an improved resource base.

Resource Wastage in the Nigerian Public School System

Various studies have established that even with shortages in the provision of educational resources, the education system in Nigeria records enormous resource wastage, especially in the areas of human resources and technical science education equipment. Most of these wastages occur as a result of over-utilization while others can be attributed to under-utilization.

Bassey & Nkwo (1998) examined the teaching of vocational, prevocational, introductory technology, science, and technical subjects in the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria’s Cross River State. Their study focused on the availability of workshop equipment and manpower. Fifty three teachers were randomly sampled as respondents to a twenty-item questionnaire. The results of their data analysis revealed a minimum teacher-pupil ratio of 1:262 and a maximum of 1:772 (in cases where every student in the school was offered science and technology subjects). The study also showed that in 33.3% of the cases, workshop equipment was either unavailable or grossly inadequate, while 2.56% had equipment that was not installed. The study identified the causes of these inadequacies as poor funding; manpower shortage and wastage from over-utilization; and facility wastage from over-utilization due to resource

inadequacies. They concluded that poor workshop equipment and the inadequacy of allied facilities constitute major constraints in the teaching of science and technology based-subjects in Nigerian schools.

Ebong & Agabi (1999), in a similar study, examined the level of wastage in manpower utilization in the Cross Rivers State. Fifty three schools were randomly sampled in two of three state education zones. The data analysis revealed a gross wastage of teachers through over-utilization due to an overall shortage of teachers in the school system. The nature of the wastage was attributed to work overload in the form excess teaching periods, high pupil-teacher ratios and the assignment of work not related to areas of professional training. Their results did not show significant differences between schools in rural and urban areas. The analysis of Ebong & Agabi's (1999) is supported by the work of Rugai & Agih (2008), which established that teachers' experience and qualifications had potent impacts on their job performance. They concluded that an experienced and widely trained teacher performs better than a less experienced teacher with a lower level of training.

Wastage of educational resources in Nigerian schools is further discussed by Akpotu (2008) from the perspective of classroom utilization. In a study of classrooms in Delta State secondary schools, Akpotu revealed that classrooms were considerably inadequate in both urban and rural areas and that there was an excess supply of teachers in the secondary school system. Akpotu's study revealed a teacher-student ratio of 18 for the state, 15 for urban areas, 24 for riverine areas and 28 for rural areas. It also showed an average of 4.3 teachers per class in urban areas, 1.2 in riverine areas, 2.7 in rural areas and 3.4 teachers per class in the state as a whole. The relatively normal classroom situation in the riverine areas was attributed to the community development efforts of multi-national oil prospecting companies that engage in constructing school facilities for host communities. Akpotu's study recommended that the practice of two schools (e.g., I and school II) operating on the same premises should be abolished, and that more schools should be constructed to accommodate the growing number of learners and to provide adequate work for the excess supply of teachers already in state employment.

The works reviewed in this paper show that the Nigerian government has yet to strike a balance in the distribution and utilization of educational resources, even in the face of rising inflation, and a general reduction in the level of statutory fiscal allocations to education by federal powers. The importance of prudence in the management of education cannot be over emphasized, especially given visible government indifference to the welfare of Nigeria's education sector.

Managerial Resourcefulness

The primary goal of management is to ensure that system goals are optimally achieved through the clear allocation of roles and resources, and through the monitoring of organizational tasks. The level of efficiency achieved in the performance of managerial tasks is highly dependent on the manager's resource management abilities.

Resourcefulness can generally be defined as the ability to act effectively in the achievement of goals that require the use of resources. In defining resourcefulness as the ability to find quick, clever and efficient ways of doing things, Hornby (2000:999), identifies a resourceful person as one who is "clever at finding ways of doing things." These definitions highlight that resourcefulness in management is a combination of effectiveness and efficiency in handling organizational matters. Effectiveness enables the manager to keep the organization's goals in constant view, while efficiency enables the manager to aim at prudence in the achievement of organizational goals. Akubue (1991:134) describes prudence as "the ability to plan, regulate, and calculate possible causes, effects and results as well as to cover loopholes for fraud, cheating and temptation." Here, prudence is a sensible and careful attitude that averts wastage in the use of resources. A resourceful education manager is therefore prudent in the application of scarce resources to the implementation of education policies and programmes.

Resourcefulness measured in terms of productivity can be defined as the ability to combine various factors of production to achieve a desired level of productivity. The education sector, as the sector charged with the production of highly valued human capital, cannot afford to be wasteful in the use of resources if it is to achieve its goal of producing relevant and educated manpower.

The achievement of economy in the use of educational resources includes good knowledge of educational resources and the ability to adequately explore the many sources of such resources. The education manager in this case is expected to have good knowledge of various sources of educational resources. However, knowledge of resource sources is inadequate without an accompanying knowledge of what constitutes relevant resources for the particular level and type of education being managed. The most common sources of education resources are the government, local communities, philanthropic organizations and international aid. Likewise, knowledge of educational resources and their various sources is not enough if such resources, harnessed by the school system, are not effectively manipulated to achieve educational objectives. Effective resource manipulation skills are also necessary in the

achievement of prudence in resource management. Resource manipulation in this case includes distributing resources into task areas, and ensuring that they are properly utilized in task performance.

The prerequisites for resourcefulness in educational management include:

- Professional training;
- Knowledge of relevant resources and their uses in education;
- Knowledge of the various sources and the ability to acquire them through regular exploration of the identified sources;
- Ability to effectively distribute vital resources to areas of educational need;
- Good understanding of the importance of time and accurate information in school management; and
- Ability to effectively apply time and information in managerial activities.
- Ability to maintain educational resources in good working condition through regular utilization, servicing and replacement as often as necessary.

Resource Management Tasks of Education Managers

From the structural perspective, management is the policy level at which major organizational decisions are taken, and at which policies and programmes of activity are defined and stated. Education policies and programmes define education resources. The manager's role thus includes the provision of appropriate guidance in resource acquisition and distribution in line with education policies and programmes for subordinate structural levels. Emetarom (1991:54) recommends that in the pursuance of the accomplishment of the goals of education, the school principal who plans the affairs of the school should be prudential by allocating available resources in such a way and by using such methods that will lead to the realization of much of the set objectives of the school in a concise time frame. The school head, whose primary responsibility is the provision of functional managerial services, is expected, in addition to planning the daily activities of the school, to allocate available education resources *vis-à-vis* education time. To this end, Akubue (1991:6) provides the following ten point guidelines for effective resource utilization:

- Set objectives for using available resources;
- Formulate plans for achieving the objectives;
- Categorize activities into groups or departments;
- Define tasks to be done;
- Group the tasks into jobs;
- Staff the jobs with people;
- Initiate work activities;
- Supply incentives to stimulate productivity;
- Set up controls for measuring achievement of objectives and monitoring performance; and
- Take remedial actions for unachieved objectives.

Conditions for Effective Resourcefulness

Conditions that are vital to the effective application of prudence in the management of education include a conducive work environment, resource maintenance, the recognition of resource input, staff maintenance and the provision of curriculum and instructional leadership.

(a) A Conducive Work Environment:

In view of the low level of statutory financial allocations available to school managers and the vast area of curricular coverage expected of them, the establishment of an environment that fosters positive interaction between the school and the host community is very important. In maintaining a positive and conducive school environment, the school head should be able to: act as the spokesman of the school to the public; interpret system-wide policies and develop supplementary policies; secure, present and interpret school and community information for staff use; develop a co-ordinated and positive programme for community relations; and encourage joint school-community discussions of policies, programmes and issues as they relate to schools. Such an environment is then conducive for establishing access to the resources available in the community.

(b) Reducing Resource Depreciation:

The value of most school resources depreciates with age and regular usage while others depreciate from poor management and non-utilization. Resource maintenance should be directed at keeping school materials in the proper places prepared for them. Maintenance processes should ensure that buildings are kept in sanitary conditions and that machines and electrical appliances are in good and safe working conditions. Resource maintenance also includes the provision of pest control and fire prevention services. All of this will enhance the protection and durability of school plant and instructional resources and minimize wastage that may arise from poor maintenance.

(c) Recognizing Relevant Resource Inputs:

The school head should be able to identify relevant resource inputs for the attainment of education goals. Human and material resources must be present in the proper proportions to facilitate the achievement of optimal efficacy in school management. This will help to minimize wastage from over-utilization and also eliminate the problem of under-utilization.

(d) Staff Maintenance:

Appropriate training, appropriate job placement and regular supervision should be given to members of staff (both teaching and non-teaching). This ensures the sustenance of desirable productivity levels. In the opinion of Ukeje (1992), a school principal should be able to tell when an employee needs to be retired, retrained, promoted or laid off. Regular supervision and evaluation of school personnel, with special emphasis on teacher performance, will enable the principal to perform this role effectively. The principal should also make the school open for inspection by higher authorities.

(e) Curriculum and Instructional Leadership:

The school head provides curriculum and instructional leadership in the school. His or her functions in this regard include:

- Promotion of quality instruction;
- Supervision and evaluation of instructional activities;
- Allocation and protection of instructional time;
- Curriculum co-ordination;
- Promotion of content coverage; and
- Monitoring of student progress.

Contemporary Challenges to Effective Resource Management in the Nigerian School System

The contemporary school manager in the Nigerian school system is faced with a number of problems, some of which include:

- a) The politicization of educational leadership positions. This is a situation in which school managers are appointed not by merit and professional qualification, but by political affinity.
- b) Pressure on existing resources: The demands on existing education resources far outweigh the supply and the ability of the school manager to acquire additional resources through non-statutory sources. Nigeria, under President Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda, is committed to reviving education in order to create more equality, and develop citizens who can function more productively in today's world. However, national expenditures on primary education, as a percentage of the GDP since 1999, have not yielded a substantial drop in youth illiteracy rates, even with the UBE scheme on course (Okojie, 2008).
- c) A lack of funding has plagued the education sector since the history of formal education in Nigeria. As Nwadiani (1998) observed, public schools in third world countries (Nigeria included) are heavily affected by macro-economic aggregates such as budget deficits, fluctuating foreign exchange rates, inflation, and increasing debt burdens. This situation is made worse by the fact that public schools are non-competitive and slow to change. Additionally, public school managers exercise very limited powers of initiation in the procurement of education resources.

- d) Political instability makes education policies as tentative as the political environment in which they are executed. From 1977 to 2004, the national policy on education in Nigeria has been revised three times to accommodate social, political and economic changes in the country (FRN, 2004).

The school head therefore needs to regularly update his knowledge of education policies and programmes by participating in national workshops usually organized for such purpose and at which education policies and programmes are interpreted.

Since state resources for education are not always adequate, a resourceful education manager should be able to explore all available resource sources. The purpose of this exploration is to attract more resources to the school than would have been the case if he/she were to depend only on statutory sources. To achieve efficiency in resource utilization, there is also the need to adopt an effective method of resource distribution, utilization and monitoring. At the top structural level, where education management involves making major decisions and developing education policies and programmes, resourcefulness includes a clear identification of the resource needs of education programmes, the acquisition of the identified resources and the appropriate distribution of such resources to areas of education need vis-à-vis policies and programmes.

Recommendations

In view of the discussion presented in this paper, the following recommendations are deemed necessary for the achievement of prudence in educational resource management.

1. **Professional training:** All managers of education, irrespective of the level at which they are operating, should be professionally trained. This ensures that they have adequate knowledge of relevant resources for particular education programmes. Opportunities for regular retraining should be provided by government to enable managers to update their knowledge of education resources and how to manage such resources.
2. **Appropriate location of physical resources:** Physical resources like libraries, laboratories and workshops should be located as close to learners as possible. For instance, if a school has three campuses located in three different towns with only one library located at one of the campuses; the use of the library by students and staff at the other two campuses is hampered by distance. Ideally, each of the campuses should have a library that takes care of its own research needs.
3. **Regular supervision and inspection:** These are system monitoring activities that enable the school manager to identify areas of resource need and maintenance. Instructional supervision and regular inspection of the school also enable the manager at the policy level to identify areas of resource misallocation and thence to correct the situation. Supervision of instruction and inspection of school facilities should be carried out on a regular basis.
4. **Resource relocation:** This involves the movement of resources from an institution where they are not needed to an institution where they are most needed. The problem of misallocation of resources often occurs at public primary and secondary levels of education. At these levels every school is assumed to deliver the same recommended curriculum. The fact remains that some schools are more favoured than others in terms physical structures and education facilities. Consequently, the irregular inspection of schools may result in a general distribution of resources in a way that renders some resources redundant in some schools and inadequate in other schools. In this case, the school manager with the redundant facilities should facilitate the relocation of such facilities to institutions where they are needed by reporting to the appropriate quarters (primary schools board, post primary schools board, state Universal Basic Education Board, etc).
5. **Maintenance of school-society rapport:** In the successful exploration of all available resources, the school head should establish a conducive environment for positive interaction between the school and members of its host community. Anti-social behaviour by members of the school should be discouraged and due respect should be given to the norms and values of the society. This is very important because no society desires to spend its resources on a school that produces what are regarded as deviants.

6. Liaising with non-governmental organizations: The school administrator should make the resource needs of the school known, not just to statutory education management agencies, but also to national and international non-governmental organizations who are interested in facilitating the development of education as a social service.

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Transfigurations of Nigerian Federalism

Agha Eresia-Eke

Department of Philosophy, Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State

&

Shagamu Saturday Eberiyé

Department of Philosophy, Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State

Abstract

The debate concerning Nigeria's political life has, in recent years, pervaded several fora as Nigeria's political life remains under the shadow of an enigma. The basic tenets of federalism touched by a global wind of democracy, quite forceful in some regions of the world, are said to be a field and sweeping across all continents. But in contemporary Nigeria, as in Africa generally, authoritarianism reigns. Federalism critical arguments hold, in spite of its many global 'bastard' incarnates which in Nigeria shows as weak, emaciated and a pitiable thing. This paper argues that the body politic of Nigeria is congenially unreceptive to the reproductive seeds of a largely potent federalism. It is this 'unreceptive environment' that this paper has characterized as the transfigurations of Nigerian federalism.

Keyword: Nigeria, Federalism, Transfigurations, Politics, Independence

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INTRODUCTION

Federalism was adopted in Nigeria as a compromise device to help the country avoid the prospects of piecemeal independence from the British. Some contend that it was a clever imposition by the British to appease the reactionary North. Despite what may or may not have been the real reasons or causes, four things are incontrovertible.

One, Nigerian federalism was not arrived at through social contract or plebiscite. It was a model agreed to by a handful of political leaders at the pre-independence London constitutional conferences. Two, Nigerian federalism is very sick, unbalanced and lopsided especially in terms of the over-centralization of power. Three, national integration has remained an illusion at best, even after forty-nine years of independence, with few prospects for change. Ethnicity has been elevated by some people to the level of religion and so Nigeria has remained a state rather than a nation. Four, pronounced injustices exist in the Nigerian federation.

It is largely these facts that inspire the advocacy of political autonomy as a platform for finding answers to such questions as: Where do we go from here? How do we best live together? Implicit here are also the issues of resource control and management agitation. These issues cannot be wished away or glossed over. They will continue to haunt Nigeria until it courageously and sincerely addresses them and finds meaningful answers.

In general terms, one of the variables in this equation, apart from a civic political culture that connects the democratic idea and democratic practice, is political restructuring. This concept, in particular, means different things to different political leaders in contemporary federal systems. This is especially evident in those countries (including post

June 12, 1993 Nigeria) where most nationalities seek a radically restructured federation in which the power of the federal state is reduced.

Such political restructuring appears to be informed by the poor praxis of an admittedly formal federal system. In other words, the clamour for restructuring is more stringent in countries with a federal form of government – and perhaps also a federal constitution but with a unitary practice. As Williams Riker (Stepan, 1997) has noted, what counts is not the rather trivial constitutional structure, but rather the political and economic culture.

The political and economic culture of a federal system can be antithetical to the wishes, aspirations and goals of individuals and nationalities. This is in relation to the aggregate premises – both value and factual – of governance to varying degrees depending on the nature and character of the federal state. Divergences between the federal system and the inclinations of citizens and groups brings into focus Linz (1997:21) claim that “federalism can only assure that nobody could be fully unhappy but certainly not that everybody will be happy with the solution”.

However, when a neopatrimonial federal logic makes only state officials and their acolytes happy, and cuts across ethnic, religious, regional, class and gender cleavages, pockets of dissent, dissidence and contestations will naturally emerge. Following this, it becomes necessary to recognize that the crises in Nigerian federalism are not just about bickering ‘tribes’ but also about social injustices. Thus, although federalism has brought several nations together within the Nigerian polity, federal practice has hardly been able to keep them that way happily.

In what follows, we examine the specific utterances and attitudes of political leaders that clearly demonstrate Nigerian federalism to be a peculiar manifestation of this form of governance.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a philosophical analysis which examines the language involved in any discourse. The essence of this method shows that our understanding of philosophical issues, as well as their intelligent examination, depends to a large extent on our ability to understand the proper use of language. This perspective underscores the intent of this research to analyze the utterances and attitudes of Nigerian political leaders against the background of a civic culture that is germane to promoting federalism and constitutionalism.

This research also employs logical analysis and the eliciting of argument by analogy. These involve the validation of argument and conclusion using simple methods of inductive and deductive reasoning. Such must be the case because of the very nature of the philosophical enterprise in the contemporary milieu. Political philosophy is a rational enquiry into all that concerns man and his life in relationship with his fellow men in society. It is the rational study and evaluation of the elements of the state culminating in an enquiry into ideals. The tools of the outlined methods are therefore central to evaluating the actions of men in order to expose their implications.

The primary materials used for this research are collated utterances and speeches made by specific Nigerian leaders in one public forum or the other. The attitudes of select other leaders are also included. The consequences of these utterances, speeches and attitudes are then evaluated against the views of experts on federalism especially in terms of the pre-requisites for the successful operation of federalism.

Since the overriding method used in this research is descriptive, it renders unproductive the use of quantitative research instruments. In view of this, the reliability of the materials used for this research depends on the power of the descriptive analysis to correspond with the existent Nigerian realities. As such, the collated utterances, speeches, and the attitudes are not mere conjectures allegedly credited to those who either made or exhibited them, but authoritative document-materials in the public domain.

TRANSFIGURATIONS OF NIGERIAN FEDERALISM

Before the 1885 Berlin conference, the elements that were to become Nigeria remained autonomous political units, each one rich in culture and sophisticated socio-political systems and economically viable. These units counted the Amayanabos, Obis, Obas, Olus, and Emirs among the heads of their different governments.

It should be noted that these different units came under British imperial colonial rule on an individual basis. Separate treaties were also entered into between indigenous rulerships and the British so as to give legal backing to the new colonial dispensation. Although all of this predated the birth of Nigeria, these events continue to have significance for contemporary attempts at federalism.

In 1914, Lord Lugard amalgamated the disparate Northern and Southern provinces, each one comprising sophisticated indigenous rulerships, into a single Nigeria. This move was orchestrated purely for the administrative convenience of the colonial administration and the marriage “ceremony” that gave birth to Nigeria was deemed an amalgamation. This was portentous for, in chemical terminology, Nigeria has since functioned as an amalgam and not

a compound in terms of its evolution (or lack thereof) to nationhood. Nigeria's permanent amalgam state has great import in the quest for Nigerian federalism.

Jagun (1993) has rightly argued that "the genesis of today's discord over the fate of Nigeria was sown in the 1914 arbitrary amalgamation as well as the error of block independence granted in 1960 to a geographical entity called Nigeria which has no legal treaty with the crown (British)". Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (2001), contributing as Honourable member of the Legislative council in 1947, expressed similar sentiments noting that, "since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper. It is still far from being united".

Elder Statesman, Obafemi Awolowo (1947:133), opined that "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are 'English', 'Welsh' or 'French'. The word 'Nigeria' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not". He further observed that sectional "incompatibilities tend to grow in size as those concerned become more educated and civilized". This trend has continued several years after the sage made the observation and so what guarantee do we have that it will not be so in five or ten years to come if we fail to address the cosmetic farcical unity surrounding the deeper viruses of disunity?

Paden (1986), the biographer of the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, recounted an encounter between the Rt. Honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Sardauna during one of the constitutional conferences on independence. Zik was said to have suggested to the Sardauna that both should forget their differences and work together for Nigeria's unity. The Sardauna was quoted in his response as saying, "No, let us understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a Northerner. You are a Christian and a Southerner. By understanding our differences we can build unity in our country". Can anyone fault the Sardauna for such a perspective? While on the surface the statement seems to convey parochialism, it succinctly and effectively brings to the fore one of our greatest weakness, that of playing the ostrich when faced with crucial national challenges. In the end, this approach fuels our own disunity. It is possible further, to argue that the Sardauna's position is encapsulated in the contemporary demand for a National Conference to debate the National Question. Other comparable agitations include the quest for Rotational Presidency and Resource Control and Management. The earlier we accept the inevitability of these changes the better it would be for Nigeria.

These leaders and scholars have not been alone in their analysis of the consequences of early twentieth-century British decisions for Nigeria. In "My Life: An Autobiography", Sir Ahmadu Bello considers the Lugard's amalgamation of 1914 to be 'the mistake of 1914' (David-West 2001) while in 1948 Tafawa Balewa posited the amalgamation as a "British intention". Lt. Col. Odumegu Ojukwu, at a meeting of National Conciliation Committee led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1968:28) on May 6, 1967, reflected that: "The question which seems to bother us is the question of Nigerian unity. Can there be unity in Nigeria? To these two questions, the answer is No. Throughout there has been association not unity. The North has made it abundantly clear that no association which they are not controlling is acceptable to them". Graham-Douglas (1985), contributing at the 1983 National conference on Nigerian independence contended: "Ours is a plural society in which the desire for inter-group co-existence within a distinct territorial-constitutional framework tends to be prejudiced by inter-group animosities and suspicions, by the bogey of superiority, by the feelings of greater suitability for the fulfilment of roles of national leadership, and so on".

That year 1914 has continued to jinx all processes involved in the political evolution from country to nation, from disunity to unity, from amalgamation for administrative convenience to true federalism. Perhaps, it is time to ask if the Lugardian amalgamation of 1914 was intended to produce a political cohesion and integration that would eventually metamorphose to nationhood or if Lugard followed a hidden agenda. Elaigwu (1985) in "Nation-Building and Political Development in Nigeria: The Challenge of Unity in a Heterogeneous Society", a paper delivered at the National Conference on Nigeria Since Independence observes: "if the amalgamation of 1914 was aimed at a political fusion of the North and the South, it did not have the objective of building a united state, nor did the British envisage, by the remotest of imagination, that a 'nation' would emerge from the geopolity".

Grave doubts concerning Nigerian unity and the desires of the British were also expressed by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, in a 1953 contribution to the timetable for self-government. The Sardauna argued that "it is true that the politicians always delight in talking loosely about the unity of Nigeria. Sixty years ago, there was no country called 'Nigeria'. What is now Nigeria consisted of a number of large and small communities all of which were different in outlook and beliefs. In 1914, the North and the South were amalgamated although the administrations of the two sections were strictly different. Since then, no serious attempt has been made by the British or by the people themselves to come together and each Section has looked upon the other with suspicion and misgivings".

Finally, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon's National Broadcast on August 1, 1966, as the Supreme Commander and Head of the Federal Military Government, was a landmark query of Nigerian unity. He pronounced, "I now come to the most important point of this statement; I am doing it conscious of the great disappointment and heart-break it will

cause all true and sincere lovers of Nigeria, and of Nigerian unity, both at home and abroad, especially our brothers in the Commonwealth. As a result of the recent events and the previous similar ones I have come to strongly believe that we cannot honestly and sincerely continue in this wise, as the basis for trust and confidence in our unitary system of government has been unable to stand the test of time... Suffice it to say that putting all consideration to the test, political, economic as well as social, the basis for unity is not there, or is so badly rocked not once but for many times” (David-West, 2001).

Given the above doubts about Nigerian unity, from “faulty amalgamation of 1914” and “differences of the North and South” to “the basis of unity is not there”, on what premise(s) is the argument for the rejection of rotational presidency based? Our brand of federalism, its chequered historical antecedents and the quest for political autonomy should be addressed in the light of the realities outlined above.

It should be noted that all things being equal, federalism offers an ideal model of government for a plural society. And Nigeria, with at least 374 ethnic groups certainly qualifies for federalism should we find the political will to embrace the philosophy. Nonetheless, some argue that federalism was an imposition by the British government and perhaps not without some sinister motives – a hidden agenda to plant discord and disunity after independence so as to succeed in its policy of “Divide and Rule”.

The British government was not new to experimenting with federalism. It had been the model for several heterogeneous societies once under its rule. The first of such experiments was Canada in 1867 and subsequently Australia. However, in the cases of Canada and Australia a measure of similarity in blood bond, language or culture existed - one of the key conditions of federalism outlined by Appadori (1968).

Nigeria’s march towards constitutional democracy and federalism has been a chequered one. The Richard Constitution of 1947 was a watershed moment in terms of increasing political awareness. However, in place of resulting cohesive action Nigeria remained divided. Geo-ethnic rivalry was still the order of the day and this form of organization was fuelled considerably by the regionalism and self-government of the 1950s. However, given the acknowledged socio-political and economic asymmetry, especially in the context of ethnic geo-politics, federalism emerged as attractive. In the process several compromises were made, largely with a view to achieving corporate or collective political independence, what Dokun Jagun has called “block independence”.

The politics of minority groups also surfaced at this time and were articulated much more forcefully. Suspicion and fear of domination by majority groups were common and far from being figments of a xenophobic imagination. Such fears were founded in experience at the time as they are today and remain a potent cause of disunity. As a result we had the Mid-West State Movement, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) Movement and the Movement for Middle-Belt State. At the time of independence on October 1, 1960 these fears and suspicions were accentuated rather than diminished as both macro and micro geo-ethnic imbalances became more and more apparent. This potent cause of disunity is still very much present today and has, in fact, mutated into a number of more venomous forms.

The 1960 and 1963 Constitutions devolved tremendous powers to the regions, which unto themselves, became fulcrums of political power. Regionalism was nurtured or realized to the extent that the equilibrium between centrifugal and centripetal political forces, which true federalism addresses, became much more academic than real. This continues today.

The 1963 population census, like the 1914 amalgamation, continues to haunt present-day attempts at federalism. The census recorded the North as having 54% of the population thereby giving the North a considerable demographic advantage. In a political system which gave “one man one vote” this translated into a permanent numerical dominance by the North in the powerful Lower House of the central government. The South saw it as political “419” (deception). Expressed mathematically the Nigerian political equation thus became:

$$N = E + W \text{ (North=East + West)}$$

The South rejected and still rejects the North as more populated. Suspicions that the 1963 census was a 419, and its subsequent rejection by the South, have since been verified in the revelations of Harold Smith, a former British Colonial officer in Nigeria. He accepted that the 1959 federal elections and the 1963 population census were rigged by the British government in favour of the North (Akinkuotu, 2005:33). The consequences of the politicization of the census have been far reaching and even the most recent census in 2006 has not been free from controversy.

The North-South dichotomy grows with time, fuelled by Southern suspicions that the North has a hidden agenda, which includes always producing political leadership at the federal level.

MINORITIES AND THE NIGERIAN FEDERATION

There can be no multi-ethnic society without a minority group or groups and a majority group. Furthermore, it could be argued that the stability of any polity is measured by how it treats its minorities. That a chain is as stable as its weakest component is incontrovertible. As such, Nigerian federalism will continue to experience considerable strain unless and until the minority question is addressed.

Federalism as a political philosophy aims to create harmony from intrinsic or inherent political, social and economic asymmetry vis-a-vis ethnic heterogeneity. To have a situation of masters and servants, or a situation of graduated citizenship is a negation of true federalism. In 1980, Adamu Ciroma who was to become Minister of Industry in the Sani Abacha government was quoted as threatening that any ganging up by minorities would be met with counter and drastic reaction by the majority groups (Hausa-Fulani) (Elaigwu, 1985). This is common in Nigeria's form of federalism. It appears as though Ciroma has conveniently forgotten that oil, which accounts for more than 90% of federal foreign revenue and over 80% of the total national budget, is derived from the minority areas of the federation. Here we can observe another unsettling manifestation of disunity in Nigerian federalism - the public arrogance of dominant ethnic groups which looks very much, on the surface at least, like the tyranny of the majority. Awa (1993) highlights that "discrimination shown towards Nigerian citizens by some ethnic elite groups has grown in scope... All these reinforce in the mind of the average person a feeling of rejection and dampen his loyalty to the nation, leaving the nation severely segmented and weak".

In 1953 and 1966, the North voted in favour of confederation. On April 24, 1967 in a letter to Col. R.A. Adebayo, then Military Governor of the Western Region, Obafemi Awolowo argued that "the most realistic approach to our Constitutional problems, therefore, if we are to save the federation from complete disintegration, and the constituent units from mutual destruction, is to embark now on a four or five year venture of confederation" (1968:8). Decree 8 of 1967, for all practical purposes, created a veritable confederation.

The strident call for a national conference to address the national question is perhaps the strongest evidence yet that all is still not well with Nigerian federalism. The advocacy of political autonomy is a strong marker of the over-patronization of a section of the federation. It is also a marker of the differences and diversities of the peoples of Nigeria in terms of culture, language, and kinship. To talk about federalism without national integration is, as the above observations have shown, gibberish at best. Political autonomy is a way of nurturing the will and commitment to forging nationhood.

Ali Mazuri lists four imperatives for national integration: co-existence, contact, compromise and coalescence. We have mutually co-existed. We have had mutual contact. We have had some measure of compromise from time to time in spite of inflammatory anti-unity statements by some. We have however, not coalesced and this remains crucial to the founding of true nationhood.

Nigeria's is not a healthy federalism as it has long been plagued by "infection" from the 'viruses' of anti-federalism. As such, it must be tended carefully and tenderly if it is to survive contemporary strains and the stresses. Given this frail federalism, we cannot fail to agree with Jagun when he posits, "but we had better be true to admit that this union of sorts is bound to burst at the seams if left untended. The signs are with us" (David-West 2001). As it now stands, Nigeria's federalism could be described as farcical or a federalism façade being manipulated for self-serving ends. This manipulation is evidenced in the jealously guarded over centralization of power at the federal level, especially by those who stand to gain from such an anti-federal or "unbalanced and lopsided" design (Nigerian Tribune, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Eminent scholars with a progressive world view and familiarity with contemporary political trends continue to caution the country against accepting its current brand of federalism. For instance, Adekanye (1992) while admitting that "there is a strong desire among the diverse elements in the country to remain together", warned "we can no longer afford to take the unity of Nigeria for granted as something finally sealed and forever indissoluble". Madunagwu (1992) argued "preaching peace among Nigerians is useless and sometimes opportunistic and hypocritical". He insists that "the basis of discontent and discord must be removed". Awa (1993), in his three-piece "Thoughts on Nigerian Federalism", points to contemporary events in the Soviet Union, Canada, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and cautions Nigerians and their leaders to be mindful of the consequences of disunity.

From these weaknesses of the Nigerian state system, a new social compact needs to be negotiated between the state and civil society. In content, form, and process this must be an inclusive national dialogue. The new social compact should bring together key Nigerian actors and the international community in a synergy for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Unlike previous pacts, which were intra-elite, the new pact should be broad-based so that

people can identify with it and claim it as their own. This project would produce, in Nigerians, the spirit of consensus and commitment present in the Americans in 1787 when their union was forged.

An inclusive democratic process would allow for the development of consensus on major issues of national importance as well as expressions of disagreement. The principle behind this synergy can be stated as good governance and capacity-building for social justice and empowerment. It is only with such a social compact that Nigeria can be seen as a true federal state where democracy blossoms. Finally, in order to consolidate this pact, it is important to shift the focus from distributive politics, the popular demand for sharing the shrinking national cake, to productive politics, diversifying the economy to increase the size of the cake.

All constitutionalism demands a civic culture based on a fairly high level of popular education and a general shared belief in rules rather than power as a means for resolving conflict. Federalism, as exacting as constitutionalism, presupposes an additional measure of political tolerance and sense of responsibility. If the existence of such a civic culture cannot be counted on, the federal formula may not be viable. For a federation to be able to resist failure, the leaders, and their followers, must 'feel federal'. They must be moved to think of themselves as a people with one common self-interest, capable, where necessary, of overriding most other considerations of small group interest. It is not enough that units of a federation have the same ideal of 'the good' but that 'the good' for any one must be consciously subordinated to or compatible with 'the good for all'. This, then, is tantamount to an ideological commitment to the success of federalism. With such spirit, federalism will not only be seen as a means to gain independence or financial stability, as is the case with Nigeria, but as an end in itself.

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Democratizing Education for the Enhancement of Education for Sustainable Development: A Challenge in Botswana

Agreement Lathi Jotia
Dept. of Languages and Social Sciences
University of Botswana
jotial@mopipi.ub.bw, agreementjotia@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper registers that there is a strong relationship between the prevailing global discourse on Education for Sustainable Development and Democracy in Education. As such, in order for any nation to be seen to be having a relevant and quality education, its education system should be seen to be addressing the principles of democracy in a more direct and robust way. The role of education in advancing the global dream of sustainable development-which of late is also being marshalled by Environmental Education, cannot be overemphasized. However, the paper contends that unless we begin to democratize education to give learners a voice and a sense of being partners and key stakeholders in the process of educating and or advancing the state's socio-economic and political aspirations, the objectives of having sustainable development will remain an absolute nightmare.

Key Words: Education, Sustainable Development, Environmental Education, Democratic Education, Relevant Quality Education

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INTRODUCTION

We should not, must not, be complacent about the health and future of...democracy. Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens, our democracy is not secure. (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998).

Within the global discourse, relevant and quality education is undoubtedly a significant factor in the improving of the human conditions in both the socio-economic and political spheres. Globalization has become an ideological discourse that drives change within the nation-state and even beyond and in order for this change process to be effective, the ways of doing education has to change in order to align with the global dictates of producing citizens who are self confident and also morally and socially responsible. The education system that the nation-state chooses to follow, therefore; is highly influenced by the global wave and in order for education to be deemed effective, it has to be seen to be producing democratically conscious and self confident citizens who have values and skills of understanding. Education can only be deemed relevant and of quality if its products actively partake in the sustainable development of the nation-state.

In this case, sustainable development would entail among other things, the willingness to use the environment wisely together with its limited resources such that the future generations can also benefit from it. Burbules & Torres (2000:15) contend:

In educational terms, there is a growing understanding that the neoliberal version of globalization, particularly as implemented (and ideologically defended) by bilateral, multilateral, and international organizations, is reflected in educational agenda that privileges, if not directly imposes, particular policies for evaluation, financing, assessment, standards, teacher training, curriculum, instruction, and testing.

Taking the above argument into account, it could be asserted that the erosion of a nation-state's autonomy, especially in matters that pertain to education and policy, calls for more nuanced critical analysis in that if the nation-state loses control of the education system, then we are bound to see the emergence of "top-down" approaches to education which disempower and sideline the educators as well as the learners, thus producing products who are marginalized, frustrated and isolated from the sustainable development issues. Authoritarian education policies are undemocratic; they suffocate the chances of producing intellectually democratic citizens who are supposed to see themselves as partners in all sustainable development efforts.

According to Dewey (in Campbell, 2004), education systems which deem themselves democratic must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. It definitely breeds logic to charge that relevant education for sustainable development must firstly mandate environmental educators and learners with the ideological orientation that classrooms can be empowering democratic spaces where ideas, even those pertaining to the environment, can be exchanged freely both theoretically and in practice. Democratizing education liberalizes views even those relating to the environment especially regarding how best it could be conserved, rather than narrowing the environmental problems and solutions to a conservative logic that there can only be one solution to the problem which is dictated by "those who know it all" or the intellectual cultural bio-conservatives. Giving individuals the freedom to think critically opens up spheres for having an intellectually sustainable society whose views can impact the environment positively. Van Der Ryn and Cowan (1996, 65) concur:

Sustainability is embedded in the processes that occur over long periods of time and are not always visually obvious. It follows that ecological design works best with people committed to a particular place and the kinds of local knowledge that grow from that place. This knowledge is slowly accumulated, season by season, through active engagement with the land.

An educationally democratic philosophical orientation maintains that the classroom should be a place where a free flow of ideas about the environment and sustainable development should be allowed to evolve and can ultimately produce a more accurate environmental education and enlightenment on how best the general public should mingle with the environment for its future sustainability (Kester, 2009). According to Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1998), citizenship education should foster respect for the law, justice, and democracy and also nurture common good at the same time encouraging independence of thought as well as developing skills of reflection, enquiry and debate.

Empowering Citizens through Democratic Engagement in Environmental Education

In the case of Botswana, it could be contended that there is a greater divide between the goals of the education system and the goal of producing democratically active citizens. In as much as it is more of an open secret that Botswana is a shining example of a successful democracy in Africa, the relationship between democracy and education leaves much to be desired, hence the argument that in order for any nation to be seen to be having a relevant and quality education, its education system should be seen to be addressing the principles of democracy in a more direct and robust way. Citizens can only ascertain equitable and sustainable use of the environment if they are "democratically empowered" to realize that they have a significant role to play in the shaping of the future of their country. When that happens, they would come to the full realization of the fact that the futures of generations to come, as well as theirs, lie in their own hands. This has been and continues to be Botswana's greatest challenge especially that Environmental Education (EE) is just a new field in the curriculum and to date there is still so much confusion looming regarding whether there is a difference between Environmental Education and Environmental Science (ES).

Rosenberg (2004) poses an interesting and difficult question on how a nation can move towards a kind of development that will sustain people and planet and help them prosper without negatively tempering with the environment. Although Rosenberg admits that there are no easy answers to such a question, she sells the idea that sustainable development should be fuelled by ecological (to do with activities on the ecosystem), social (that majority

of the people should benefit from the environment not just the privileged few) and economic (have economic models that promote equity in the distribution of resources) sustainability. The contention here is that ecological, social and economic sustainability are intertwined and that the poor are the ones who more often than not are affected by the environment. While Rosenberg could be seen to be scoring some points on this argument, it should be argued vividly that democratic empowerment should be the basis of the citizen's ecological, social and economic sustainability's understanding. If citizens do not understand the fact that they have a democratic obligation towards their country and environment, there is no way they can pursue sustainable development initiatives in order to preserve and or conserve the environment. More often than not, they will consider themselves aliens in the shaping of the development process of their country.

Environmental issues such as increased environmental degradation, global warming, land degradation, fresh water contamination, desertification, drought, wildlife depletion, use of toxic products, drought, among others, are common especially to southern Africa and their remedy can only come from citizens who are democratically conscious and of the realization that they can be agents of change in as far as the unsound and abusive use of the environment is concerned. The need for citizenship education can therefore not be overemphasized. This is the form of education that enables the citizens to behave and act as citizens not just having knowledge of citizenship and civic society but rather having values, skills and moral obligation to do that which is right for their country (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). Citizenship democratic education in institutions of learning cannot be left to chance if at all we are to address the harm, danger and the deficit in quality of life that is caused by environmental degradation and or negligence around the globe generally and in Botswana in particular.

On another score, it often troubles one to learn that most of the environmental problems especially in Botswana are stated, identified and state defined as well. The question that should quickly spring to the mind is whether the citizens, especially the ordinary ones, do not have the lenses to identify the environmental problems which directly affect them? That is the problem with an education system that seems to be dictating what ought to be done without taking all stakeholders on board. The ultimate is that people tend to think that they cannot identify any other problem besides those that have been identified by the state and also await the state for solutions rather than taking an initiative towards the solution.

Atlhopheng et. al (1998) observe that state-defined problems in Botswana are inadequate and are highly problematic since they tend to focus on those identified by the ruling class and seem to undermine those that could be directly affecting the ordinary citizens. Therefore; the argument here is that if the education citizen were democratic enough, then the citizens could be realizing that they have a direct relationship with their environment and that environmental problems that affect them should not be left to anybody else to identify them but should be identifying them as the directly affected people and relaying them to the state and not vice-versa. Is it not logical that a person whose house is on fire should be the one yelling for help rather than strangers and or the neighbours? Undemocratic forms of educating breed passive citizens. Atlhopheng et. al (1998) further assert that there is absolute need for the democratization of the environmental question in Botswana whereby various affected groups can be allowed to define, identify and prioritize environmental problems confronting them. When the democratic paradigm is allowed to take course, then the citizens become empowered and the state also becomes a partner and not a demi-god in solution seeking for the environmental problems.

In view of the fact that the globalization force, which is significantly driven by the western life style, swiftly moves us to embrace "consumerist" lifestyle which is fuelled by advances in technology and has great impact on the environment, it is essential that our education systems are redirected to empower the citizens, especially our children to develop environmental consciousness and a sense of ownership to the environment. It is an indisputable matter that humankind is losing direction on how to develop a sustainable relationship with the environment. The environmental problems we face today are a living testimony that our behaviours and mindsets towards the environment should be evolved and that positive evolutionary endeavour can only be made possible by democratic ways of educating and empowering those who directly interact with the environment on a daily routine.

Educating for Sustainable Development: A Possibility or a Nightmare?

Taking into account the environmental problems facing human kind today, it is no surprise that the United Nations (UN) has decided to declare the period between (2005-2014) as a decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and that ESD should pay attention to quality basic education as well as sustainable development whereby a harmonious relationship should be developed between the environment and human beings. It is clear from the UN objectives that individual education systems should foster the idea of having quality education for sustainable development. Let me hasten to outline the fact that quality and sustainable education for development should be

directly linked to the democratic project of every nation-state. According to Southern African Development Community (SADC) (2004), there is a concern that there is no adequate debate and knowledge on education and sustainable development issues. In addition, there is also some evidence that whilst some policies on sustainable development do exist, the implementation of those policies leaves much to be desired. The question that begs to be answered therefore is; what role then are our education systems playing?

Hattingh (2004) advises that in the midst of all this environmental problems and failing policies, one key aspect of education for sustainable development must be to foster and promote open-ended critical review on ways in which sustainable development is being understood, interpreted and applied to various environmental contexts. A dialogue on sustainable development in this case should not just be narrowed down to the involvement of the state and other influential apparatus, but must accommodate the civil society organizations, educators, learners, environmentalists, social activists groups, to state a few.

Critical and democratic discussions should be held to focus on local, national and international environmental problems and how best they could be tackled. In the words of Hattingh (2004), a strong model of sustainable development should challenge all sectors of society to engage on a 'fundamental rethink' on how to establish a society characterised by ecological integrity, social justice and economic viability. It is my contention that this fundamental rethink should also embrace, among other things, the idea of liberalizing education so that we could accommodate even the marginalized voices who never see themselves as part of the environmental problems affecting us. Democratic education for sustainable development initiatives is an ideal provision for a new synthesis that attempts to solve the giant environmental problems we face today and will also squash the gender disparities we see even within environmental problems solution-seeking platforms.

A well-thought and democratized Environmental Education has the potential for contributing towards the birth of Education for Sustainable Development because it can raise the level of awareness amongst citizens, can also help shape attitudes positively, as well as creating a sense of responsibility among citizens which will also challenge them to participate actively in all matters that relate to their environment. Atlhopheng et al (1998) also add that environmental education should be promoted as part of a country's formal and informal education system although it is not the absolute panacea to all the environmental problems-can make a positive mark towards solving the problems. In view of the fact that environmental problems are broad and diverse, it would be a purely myopic analysis to claim that these problems can be solved without the promotion of a collective effort from all parties that matter. The 'miseducation' of the citizens on environment-related issues also warrants the guilty that should be imposed on our public education for failing to conscientize the masses on issues that pertain to their environment.

Educating for Sustainable Development can become a possibility if the process of educating can begin to prepare individuals for functioning in both professional and societal settings whereby they will be confronted with complex problems where they will have to work together with experts from different disciplinary domains and societal stakeholders (Samuelsson & Holmberg, 2006). Looking at this point within the context of Botswana, it could be argued that learners do not have a problem with acquiring knowledge related to whatever their field of study is. However, the giant problem is the implementation of the acquired knowledge. This is largely a problem triggered by our traditional ways of educating whereby the educator is seen as the fountain of knowledge and a provider of all. Traditional and/or conservative ways of doing education suppress the learners' ability to show their potential on problem-solving skills. Undemocratic ways of educating make learners complacent and teacher-dependent, hence making choices and acting independently becomes a challenge in many cases.

Making a case for the democratization of education, Davies (in Harber, 1998, p. 98), shares:

Education in the contemporary context must be transformative...Both genders must learn that to be socially responsible is not incompatible with being free, that to be successful does not necessarily require aggressiveness, that a true leader does not rule with force. This can only happen within the context of a democratic school culture that replaces slavish allegiance to authority with critical thinking and flexibility.

As such, a transformative educational agenda is what we need today in our "empowered schools" so that citizens, who are the products of the education system, can develop core values driven by a sense of hope for better possibilities within their environment. The voice of the products of our education system must be nourished by being given a platform to interact and debate diverse ideas and pave a way for a positive sustainable future development. If democracy is allowed to become an important part of the reform process in education for sustainable development, then we can rest assured that educating for sustainable development is a possibility and not a nightmare.

Corporal Punishment: A Danger to Democratic Education in Botswana Schools

Shmueli (2007) states that the use of corporal punishment during the educating process of a child is one of the most troubling issues which trigger discussions from sociologists, psychologists, jurists, educators, to state just a few. According to Shmueli's observations, the use of corporal punishment in the modern day teaching and learning environments should be abolished because of the emotional and physical damage on the learner. In a sense, the use of corporal punishment violates democratic ways of associating with learners in the school environment.

Botswana is doing well in the area of democracy although it has its own limitations. However, setting up structures that promote democracy in the education sector is a serious challenge. The goal of a school, as Dewey (1935) would put it, is to instill in each member an ability to think reflectively and critically, so as to become a successful member of a democratic society. The production of democratic critical thinkers in Botswana schools has been a challenge. The legalization of corporal punishment (which is indirect promotion of abuse) in schools, to a large extent suppresses and contradicts the ideals of democracy in education. Of late, cases of child abuse in schools have been rampant since teachers take the law into their hands by administering corporal punishment indiscriminately and without adhering to the rules of its implementation. This in some instances has triggered civil unrest in schools, strikes and violence which lead to vandalism of property and even violence against teachers.

According to Harber (1998), making reference to Dewey, he indicates that in cases where democracy has fallen, it was too exclusively political in nature. It had not become part of the bone and blood of the people in daily conduct. Unless democratic habits of thought and actions are part of the fiber of the people, political democracy is insecure.

Power and Authoritarianism in Schools

Children in our schools have a minimal say in the administration of the school as well as how the curriculum should be run or having an input on some of the development projects which are supposed to be instituted in school. Harber (1998) further contends that schools which are run by marginalizing the voices of the learners are just the same as prisons or factories whose pursuit is just mass production. Children are the hope for the future and are also the future of any democracy. Addressing the issue of *African Children and HIV/AIDS*, Howard and Singhal (2003:3) contend that 'a community's hopes and aspirations are embodied in their children; children present possibilities. They are a community's bright signal...' If children are to truly become bright signals in Botswana schools, then the manner in which they are treated should change so as to give them a platform where they can emancipate from being docile citizens to being critical thinkers who can pursue their country's democratic obligations without fear for being punished corporally or victimized otherwise. If Botswana's focus is really so much into the production of relevant quality and sustainable education, then children should be placed at the center of the democratic process in schools.

Teachers in our schools are often armed with sticks, sjamboks and board dusters during their teaching and even outside the classroom and it appears as though corporally punishing students even for minor offences is a tradition. In one of my studies; *The Quest for Deep Democratic Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in the Post-Colonial Botswana*, I came face-to-face with the brutality and authoritarian state of affairs of our schools. During some of my class observations, I saw teachers punishing students for failing tests, coming late to school and for talking to their colleagues in class. Democratic practices are rare to find and punishing students for such cases is absolutely abusive and contrary to the outlines of the penal code in as far as the administration of corporal punishment is concerned. Wouldn't it make sense to firstly establish the reasons why a student failed or came late rather than administering corporal punishment instantly? The diversity of children in schools should be taken into account prior to the administration of unjustified punishment more so not all learners learn the same and some might fail a test due to extraordinary circumstances at their homes.

If Botswana is to continue holding the crown of being a shining example of African democracy, then the manner in which the young democrats (students) are treated should definitely change. Subjecting children to abuse and silencing them through corporal punishment will never yield any positive results in as far as their attitudes and behaviors are concerned. If anything, the schools are going to produce rebellious people in society. The argument that corporal punishment is an African thing is misleading and is tantamount to claiming that African traditions or cultures are abusive or do promote abuse. We clearly have to draw a cutline between the proper administration of corporal punishment as a corrective measure and the haphazard, indiscriminant and abusive administration of corporal punishment. The current state of affairs in our schools is an eminent danger to any efforts geared towards relevant and quality education for sustainability.

In a study by Muchado (2002) on *The Perceived Needs for School Counseling Services in Primary and Secondary Schools in Botswana*, students generally indicated that they hate corporal punishment and that in some instances it makes them feel so angry, hateful and above all, they do feel that they are being oppressed. As though not enough, another study by

Tafa (2003); *Corporal Punishment: The Brutal Face of Botswana's Authoritarian Schools*, shows that the researcher observed students being caned for using vulgar language, coming late to school, fighting and for not doing their home work. Tafa mentions that the amazing thing is that in the same school, the school head was seen holding student's head with his left hand, then tilting it to the left and then whacking the student's right cheek three times.

Schools should be Democratic Spaces

In a democratic and a pluralist society, schools are expected to nurture participation and democratic engagements by both teachers and students. It is a violation of democratic principles of engagement to have schools that perpetrate imposition of fear and docility amongst students who are supposed to be the future leaders. One of the major weaknesses of Botswana's education system is that it promotes a state of affairs where teachers are supposed to be seen as superior 'monsters' who have the powers to educate and abuse. The situation is even worse when it comes to the girl child who is weak naturally and also gets oppressed by the dictates of culture which outline that girls are not supposed to be heard but rather should just be seen. In a sense, the girl child is denied an opportunity to engage in dialogue even in instances that affect her live directly. Deliberative democracy should be nurtured in schools so that students can learn how to participate in the democratic exercise in school and even beyond. This kind of a mindset will certainly move us closer to realizing the goals of sustainable education.

The issue of corporal punishment in schools stands out as one of the greatest enemy of nurturing democracy through pronounced social relationships. The use of corporal punishment to enforce and impose hierarchical dominance of teachers over students and specifically male teachers over female students is something that has to be bluntly criticized if at all democratic education is to become a reality in Botswana schools.

Botswana's education system needs to protect children's individual rights as well as civil liberties at the same time enhancing the flourishing of participatory democracy in the teaching-learning process. As Caldwell (2001) has correctly argued, the call for the democratization of education is a call that if taken into cognizance, would promote greater citizenship engagement. As such, there is absolute need to move away from school structures and policies or regulations which perpetrate undemocratic contexts of learning. The starting point should be the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment does not only affect the dignity of the learner but also endangers the existence of democracy in school and above all, it enslaves the teachers-some teachers cannot operate without using a stick.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above, the lack of progress in Educating for Sustainable Development initiatives is a clear signal that we have to reassess the role of education on sustainable development agenda. As earlier indicated, a relevant and quality education, and or environmental education, cannot be divorced from the principles of democracy. The improvement of the quality of education for sustainable development challenges the environmental educator to embrace and model democratic pedagogical practices in the classroom and even beyond. Hoffer (cited in Gerzon, 1997) posits that there is no right way to teach democracy unless we also practice it. Our obligation to the environment is a democratic assignment which can only be fulfilled by allowing democracy to be part of our teaching-learning process.

As UNESCO (cited in Ketlhoilwe, 2008,5) indicates, sustainability should be viewed in terms of ways of thinking about the world, and forms of social and personal practice that lead to ethical, empowered and personally fulfilled individuals, communities built on collaborative engagements, tolerance and equity as well as on a social system that promotes participation, transparency and justice. All this can become possible only if our education systems cherish the ideals of democratic education.

Whether environmental education is seen as the epicentre for sustainable development and vice versa is really not the issue. At the heart of the matter is that democracy should be lived and practiced by the citizens in their education system if at all we are to successfully account for both socio-economic and political factors that negatively impact the environment. Learners should be encouraged to investigate problems and come up with suggestions for solutions on their own on the basis of their hands-on experiences. This is one of the major deformities of Botswana's

education system which subscribes more to the “teacher-talks and student-listens” approach to teaching. Also there is just too much emphasis placed on testing than on educating.

Ketlhoilwe (2008) also subscribes to the ideal that environmental educators can embark on activities such as taking students to a poverty-stricken environment where they can carry out observations and later write reports based on their experiences. This is what democratic education entails. If democratic teaching and learning is not made part of the environmental education pedagogy, then the ultimate is that we will end up with so many degreed or certificated citizens who are not problem-solvers but rather are just passive maintainers of the dictates of the status quo. Such kind of action, in the long run can prove to be a hazard to our environment as well as to our democracy.

Finally, as Fien (2001) correctly observes, for sustainable development to occur, there is need not only to educate the head, but also the hand and perhaps most importantly, the heart (xiv). In order for the products of our education system to be able to pursue the dream of sustainable development, they should be trained in ways that allow them to experience environmental problems as theirs and then be helped to gain authority and confidence to act towards their solutions. If we are serious about teaching about the environment and sustainable development, then the environmental educator, especially in Botswana should educate in a way that democratically inspires the learner to engage in hands-on activities that turn the empirical realities into the lived democratic experiences. The ideal way of learning about democracy for sustainable development is by doing it in an environmental education teaching-learning process. Botswana’s education system’s greatest challenge therefore; has been the implementation of pragmatic and deliberative democratic ways of educating. This is truly the cancer of our time in our effort to educate for sustainable development. In order for our education system to be able to survive the modern dictates of globalization and environmental problems, there is absolute need to reform it for possible sustainability in development.

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Secret Cults at Niger Delta University

Stephen Nkereuwem Epkenyong
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examines secret cults in Nigerian Universities, using Niger Delta University as a case study. Both primary and secondary data were employed in this study. The primary data was gathered using structured and unstructured questionnaires distributed to the sample population. The sample population was arrived at using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected from 110 respondents over a period of one month. To analyse the data, the researcher made use of simple percentages and several descriptive tools of analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the collapse of the Nigerian economy is the major cause of cultism in the country. It is most often poor children who join cult groups to gain a sense of power. The study recommends, among other things, that government improve the funding of the education sector so that the universities will regain their former prestige and reputation as centres of debate and excellence.

Keywords: Secret cult; Higher education; Students; Niger Delta University, Government Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

All over the world universities have often been regarded as "citadels of learning". Until recently, this perspective also applied to Nigerian universities which have, as a result of incessant secret cult activities, become instead "centres of violence". Indeed, Gimba (2002) in referring to cult activities on campus contends that Nigerian universities now offer a B.Sc in violence and an M.A in cultism. As observed by Eneji (1996), it seems that each day new stories of devilish acts perpetrated by secret cults emerge. Cultism is, very broadly, a belief that individuals with the same ideological orientation gather together to practice.

In the early days of formal education in Nigeria, it was an honour and achievement for any young person to be offered admission into one of the few universities in the country; an occasion that everyone including their parents looked forward to. These were the glory days of Nigerian tertiary education. Today things are much different. It is common knowledge now that studying at university or any other higher education institution in Nigeria is a nightmarish but necessary evil.

Cult activities in Nigeria's education system can be traced back to 1952 when the First African Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, and his peers, popularly known as the G7, founded the Pyrates Confraternity. The objectives of the organization at that time were to fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively against the imposition of foreign conventions, to revive the age of chivalry, and to find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism. Little did Soyinka and his colleagues know that they were making history. Nor did they realize that student and indeed youth radicalism was being given a boost towards the unleashing of a national vanguard (Adejero 1995). While it was beyond their imaginations and far beyond their intent to lay the foundation for an explosion of gangsterism in Nigerian schools, this was in fact the effect.

Cultism in Nigerian universities has existed in many forms for several decades and has now evolved into an institution of violence. In describing the situation, Eneji (1996) notes that stories of violence, torture and unwarranted intimidation emanate from universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, other tertiary institutions and even a number of secondary schools. The Niger Delta University is no exception to this growing trend. This study is an attempt to provide much needed empirical insight into the problem of cultism in Nigerian universities using the Niger Delta University (NDU) as a case study.

Contemporary university campuses, and the university institution itself, are under intense pressure to change. Although some of the desired changes are meant to benefit society as a whole, the consequences of some of these current trends seem to out weigh the benefits. For example, while the rising demand for university education by Nigerians (Adeyemo, 2002 and Lebeau, 2000) is intended to create more job opportunities for Nigerians in the increasingly competitive global employment and information technology driven market, such demands have not been matched by expansions in infrastructure so as to make learning conducive for all students. Student enrolment in universities has quadrupled over the last two decades in spite of increasing joblessness in the employment market.

It is clear that the quality of higher education and the advantages students accrue from attending university depend not only on the content of teaching and the curricula, but also on campus life. Cultism, as a manifestation of student unrest, is quite different compared to its forms in the past. It has caused great concern among parents, university administrators, policy makers, researchers and educational planners. Former Minister of Education, Dr. Lyorcha Ayu, recognized the seriousness of the secret cult phenomenon in institutions of higher learning when he observed that our collective psyche has been assaulted by the tragic wave of secret cults on our school campuses whose blood sucking members have little respect for life and property. Owing in part to their criminal activities, they are wealthy enough to purchase guns, pay for expensive midnight parties where they engage in bizarre rituals, and kidnap heads of institutions and force them to sign agreements that violate the rules and regulations of a decent society (Ayu, 1994). In addition to official statements and perspectives, common observation reveals that many Nigerian newspapers and magazines have become bulletin boards for reporting the daily exploits of members of secret cults.

The consequences of such bizarre activities are far-reaching: many students have lost their study opportunities; others have died, while some still have been harassed, maimed, and raped. As a result of these hazards many well trained Nigerians and expatriates have left the services of the universities. Unfortunately, despite efforts to tackle the problem, secret cult activities in Nigerian universities persist. The solutions developed so far are akin to putting out an inferno without any proper attempt to identify the sources of the inferno. This paper attempts to identify those sources or the conditions that stimulate and promote cultism in Nigerian universities as well as students' perception of this social menace in the Niger Delta University (NDU).

Study Objectives

The study has both general and specific objectives. The general objective of the study is to provide empirical insight of the problem of cultism in Niger Delta University (NDU). The specific objective includes:

- i. To examine student perception on why students join secret cults;
- ii. To identify the causes of cultism at Niger Delta University;
- iii. To examine the mode of operation of secret cults;
- iv. To discover existing mechanism for tackling secret cults at Niger Delta University;
- v. To determine the effect of secret cult activities on learning at Niger Delta University.
- vi. To offer new solutions to secret cult problems in Nigerian Universities.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions offer direction to the researcher in carrying out the study:

- i. What are the existing mechanisms for tackling secret cult activities at Niger Delta University?
- ii. How do secret cult activities affect learning at Niger Delta University?
- iii. What are the modes of operation of secret cult members at Niger Delta University?
- iv. What is (are) the cause(s) of secret cultism at Niger Delta University?

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Secret Cultism in Nigerian Universities

The secret cult phenomenon is not new in Africa. As Aguda (1997) has observed, activities of secret cults such as the Human Leopards and Human Crocodiles have long been recorded in central Africa. In Nigeria, secret cults have likewise existed for some time in many parts of the country: the Ogboni cult among the Yoruba's of the South-West, the Ekine cult can be found in the Delta region, and the Ekpe secret cult can be found among the Efiks of the South-Eastern part of Nigeria (Adelola, 1997). Membership in these cults provides a source of status, and economic, social and political security to adherents (Aguda, 1997).

The origin of the secret cults in the Nigerian universities can be traced back to the Pyrates Confraternity, also known as National Association of Sea Dogs. It was founded at the university college of Ibadan (now called the university of Ibadan), in 1953 when the institution was still a satellite campus of the university of London (Rotimi, 2005). The Sea Dog Confraternity was similar to numerous other fraternities and sororities, which are ubiquitous in many American universities and colleges both in their membership requirements and activities (Thomas, 2002). In the United States, fraternities and sororities are sometimes called Greek clubs because of their Greek names and symbols. These Greek clubs promote, among other things, moral uprightness, patriotism, community service and high academic and intellectual standards.

The Pyrates (or Sea Dog) Confraternity was formed by the first African Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka and his peers, known as the G7. The original aims of the association were both lofty and noble. They sought to produce future Nigerian leaders who would be proud of their African heritage. As Thomas asserts, the Confraternity boasted of the cleanest, brightest, and the most politically conscious students. The main objectives of the Confraternity have been summarized by Orilusin (1990) as:

- i. To fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively against the imposition of foreign conventions to revive the age of chivalry.
- ii. To find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism.

Professor Soyinka was the first democratically elected Captain of the society under the title Captain Blood. Professor Muiyiwa Awe was Long John Silver. Many other prominent Nigerians were founding fathers of the confraternity including Pius Oleghe, Ralph Opara, and Aig I'moukhuede. Sea Dog outfits resembled those of the traditional pirates, though everything was done in a healthy, fun and harmless spirit. Soyinka (2002) notes that the Pyrates wanted to be different from the stodgy establishment and its pretentious products, the hypocritical and affluent middle class, and the alienated colonial aristocrat.

Soyinka also explains that confraternities are not cults (Dixon 1994). Confraternities were part of the social life of the university in eras past. As Adebayo (2001) likewise notes some students have since twisted the aims of this noble tradition. Soyinka further points out that the original confraternity did not swear any oath of secrecy, had no binding of blood, and the identities of members were known to both students and staff.

Long after the founding fathers had left the University of Ibadan, the Sea Dogs Confraternity continued to thrive. Unfortunately, towards the end of the 1960's the social, political and educational changes occurring across Nigeria began to affect the operations of the confraternities. Thus, according to Adelola (1997), the first notable departure came in 1968 with the formation of the Eiyeye Confraternity at the University of Ibadan. The Eiyeye Confraternity grew out of the Buccaneers which had developed from the Sea Dogs.

The major force behind the formation of Sea Dog splinter groups was the doctrinal adherence by original members to the organization's tenets. Thomas (2002) notes that members of the newer groups were not able to meet the high academic standard originally set by the Sea Dogs. The splinter groups regarded the Sea Dogs as elitist whose campaigns had outlived their usefulness. These splinter or protest groups included the Black Axe, Mafia, Buccaneers, Vikings, and Dragons. Subsequent female cults have included the Daughters of Jezebel, Temple of Eden, Barracudas, and Frigates (Rotimi, 2005). Today in Nigeria, there is hardly any tertiary institution which has not felt the adverse effects of the activities of secret and violent cults.

Erosion of Family: Influence and Secret Cultism

In modern Nigeria, the influence of the family has greatly receded. Increasingly and as a result, the average family fails in its function to provide a solid moral foundation for children. Children are thus weakly prepared to resist negative

peer group influences which they encounter on a daily basis. Commenting on the activities of "area" boys and girls - a sub-cultural deviant group of young boys and girls in urban centres in Nigeria - Rafiu (1993) highlights the inability of the modern family to equip children with effective socialization needed to conform to acceptable cultural norms. He goes on to note, with respect to mothers, that they are content sending their children to lesson teachers when the school hours are over, thus robbing them of the opportunities to be genuine children with time to play, mix with nature and be creative. He further indicts mothers for the children's loss of touch with nature: "no time to run after lizard, no time to swim to their hearts content, no time to play hide and seek game with their dogs in the nearby bush - indeed, there is no bush, there is no river. There are no plants to provide habitation for lizards". The focus is solely on school and special coaching and lessons to prepare children to face the powerful JAMB (Joint Admissions Matriculation Board) examinations for universities.

Rafiu (1993) concludes that, with the lack of contact with nature in a jungle of concrete, that is proof of affluence in our society, children become soulless. They lack moral instruction both at school and at home. Because they are soulless, they become blood thirsty monsters who prowl the streets and campuses at night, terrorizing innocent people.

Owoeye (1997) has established strong links between a weak and defective family background/influence and tendencies for students to join secret cults. In such cases, parents themselves may be members of secret cults and/or they may be the perpetrators child abuse and neglect. Likewise, Rotimi (2005) argued that children from broken or single parent homes often miss the much needed socialization process and as such fail to absorb the real social values of society, making them anti-social and aggressive.

Meeting the Challenges of Secret Cults in Nigeria

Over the last two decades, various attempts have been made to deal with secret cultism. These have included passing appropriate decrees, enacting legislations, the establishing of regulations by university authorities, and improving university infrastructure. One of the earliest official attempts aimed at curtailing cult activities was the enactment of Decree 47 of 27th December 1989. It is entitled the Students Union Activities (control and regulations) Decree of 1989 and was introduced by the General Babangida military administration. The Decree empowered the governing council of each university to pro-scribe any society operating within the campus and pursuing activities which are not in the interest of national security, public safety, order, morality or health. Unfortunately, this early attempt did little to curtail cultism, and instead drove cult activities underground.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed a more comprehensive bill aimed at dealing more effectively with secret cultism on the campuses of tertiary institutions across the country. The bill stipulates a penalty of five years in jail or a fine of N250, 000.00 (Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira) or both for students convicted of participating in secret cult activities (Oladeji and Ojewuyi 2001). The bill does seem to have borrowed from the abovementioned Decree 47 of 1989. For example, clause five (5) of the bill states that, "No cult or society by whatever name called or known shall pursue activities which are:

- a. Not in the interest of national security, public safety, public order, morality and public health,
- b. Illegal, inimical, restructured or unlawful.

Apart from enacting legislations, some state governments have also formed intelligence units, which, during the military interregnum, worked very closely with different tertiary institutions to fish out suspected cult members. Such activities have occasionally yielded results, for example, in the 20th March 1994 Guardian Newspaper, it was reported that suspected cult members were indeed apprehended in the then Ondo State.

Some universities, such as Niger Delta University, have also gone beyond government legislation and introduced clauses in the matriculation oaths in which students pledge not to be members of secret cults. In many universities, those caught engaging in cult activities are either rusticated or expelled (Awe 2001). In Lagos, the Commissioner of Police has suggested those students caught engaging in cult activities should be also banned from becoming members of professional bodies. Umanah (2002) highlights that President Obasanjo allocated funds to various universities for the improvement of sporting activities and repair of infrastructure. Some universities have undertaken the improvement of recreational activities with the hope that these will deter students from becoming involved with cults.

Recently, appeals have also been made for divine intervention in fighting secret cultism. Efunuga (2003) reports that, having exhausted all legal and other earthly means to curb the menace of secret cultists, the authorities of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic in Ogun State organized a retreat where both Muslim and Christians prayed fervently for

the eradication of secret cultism on campuses. They specifically prayed to God to deliver both the institution and the general community from the violence and mayhem of these groups (Efunuga 2003).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding structural relations in society is the realm of sociology. However, within sociology there are various theories that seek to explain this relationship including functionalism, Marxist political economy, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and phenomenology. The latter two are micro and non-structural in their explanations of social phenomenon and are not particularly useful in this study. Functionalism is pre-occupied with consensus among structures and has failed to account for conflict and violence in society. This renders it inappropriate in this context as well.

Based on the above, we are left with the Marxist political economy theory as the most appropriate framework of analysis for this study and so it is adopted here. Marxian political economy accords primacy to the material existence and production of society, especially the role of the economy in the study of society. In other words, it assumes that the mode of production of goods and services constitutes the basis for all social processes and institutions. Marxist theory takes the social relations in the production process as the key take off point for its analysis of all other social phenomenon in society. It attempts to show how the social class who own the means of production uses their position to exploit the masses who own nothing but their labour power. The theory draws our attention to the social evils of capitalism and the unequal relationships in it that foster the oppression and poverty of a large majority in society. It enables us to see how the gross exploitation of the masses generates the much needed ground for unending social economic crises.

Marxist political economy allows us to see how the whole idea of cultism is as a result of the hardship generated by a conscienceless ruling class and the impoverishment of the people. Youth from poorer backgrounds can find joining cults to be a means of expressing social power in place of the economic power they are marginalized from.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Setting

Niger Delta University is located at Wilberforce Island in Bayelsa State, about 32km from the State Capital of Yenagoa. It is made up of three campuses, the Glory Land Campus (the main campus), the College of Health Sciences Campus and the temporary campus of the Faculty of Law. The university was established in 2000 by a bill on the 15th of May 2000 put forward by the first Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Chief D.S.P. Alamiyeseigha. The university, which started academic activities in the 2001/2002 session, saw its pioneer set of graduates in the 2004/2005 academic year. Although, the student population was only 1,039 at inception, this increased to 4,639 in 2003/2004 and to 10,294 in 2006/2007.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed to analyze the perception of students on cultism at Niger Delta University. The study made use of an instrument known as the cult perception questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by the research supervisor.

Research Population

The population of the study was made up of the students of the Niger Delta University. During the time of this study, the students' union week was occurring and the population of students in school was 300. This served as the research population. The population used for this study was those students on campus and the sample population for this study is 120 students.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for this study is the simple random sampling method. Thus to select our sample population, the ballot system was employed. Each item in the sample frame was given a number on a piece of paper

and thrown into a basket, The researcher randomly selected participants by taking one item at a time from the basket with eyes closed until the required number was reached.

Data Collection Method

Primary and secondary methods of data collection were used in this study. Primary data was collected through a general survey that administered structured and unstructured cult perception questions. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were printed and one hundred and ten (110) were completed and returned. Secondary data was collected from textbooks, journals, newspapers and internet materials.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered from the field work will be analyzed qualitatively using simple percentages. Percentage values were calculated according to the numbers of responses from respondents to each question and these are presented in tables below. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed and one hundred and ten (110) were retrieved. Our analysis was based on the number of questionnaires retrieved.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section will present the data gathered through field work. The data is presented in simple percentage tables based on the response rate recorded in the questionnaires for each item. The percentage calculation will be carried out as follows:

$$\frac{\text{No. of Response}}{\text{No. of Respondents}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

The first section is comprised of the presentation of data on the personal characteristics of the participants. The second section presents data on the perception of cultism at Niger Delta University. The final section offers an evaluation of the study's research questions.

Personal Data of Respondents

Table 1: Age of Respondents

<i>Age Interval</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Below 19	15	13.6
20-29	35	31.8
30-39	31	28.2
40-49	19	17.3
50 and Above	10	9.1
Total	110	100

Table 1 shows that 15 (13.6%) of all respondents were below the age of 19 years, 35 (31.8%) were between 20 and 29 years, 31 (28.2%) were between 30 and 39 years of age and 19 (17.3%) belonged to the 40-49 years age bracket. Finally, 10 (9.1%) were 50 years or older.

Table 2: Gender of Respondent

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Female	40	36.5
Male	70	63.6
Total	110	100

The above table presents the sex status of students who took part in this study. The table reveals that 40 (36.4%) of participants were female, while 70 (63.6%) were male.

Table 3: Marital Status

<i>Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Single	65	59.1
Married	25	22.7
Widow/Widower	7	6.4
Separated	13	11.8
Total	110	100

As shown in Table 3, 65 (59.1%) of respondents were single at the time of the study, 25 (22.7%) were married, 7 (6.4%) were widows or widowers, while 13 (11.8%) were separated.

Table 4: Religion

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Christian	60	54.5
Muslim	20	18.2
Traditionalist	20	18.2
Others	10	9.1
Total	110	100

Table 4 above shows that 60 (54.5%) of respondents were Christians, 20 (18.2%) were Muslims, 20 (18.2%) were Traditionalist, while 10(9.1%) indicated other.

Cultism in Nigerian Universities

Table 5: Perception of the Contextual Existence of Cultism at Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
High	36	32.7
Moderate	61	55.5
Low	13	11.8
Total	110	100

Table 5 reveals the perception of cultism among students at Niger Delta University. It shows that 36 (32.7%) thought its presence was high, 61 (55.5%) thought it was moderate and 13 (11.8%) thought it was low.

Table 6: Causes of Cultism at Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Collapse of the economy	38	34.5
Collapse of Moral Values	32	29.1
Collapse of societal/institutional codes of conduct	20	10.9
Victimization	8	7.3
Others	12	18.2
Total	110	100

The above table displays information on the perceived causes of cultism at Niger Delta University. The data show that 38 (34.5%) believe the collapse of the economy has led people to indulge in cultism, 32 (29.1%) believed it was the collapse of moral values, 20 (10.9%) believed it was the collapse of societal/institutional codes of conduct and 8 (7.3%) saw victimization as the cause. Twelve respondents (18.2%) said it is caused by other factors.

Table 7: Reasons Students Join Secret Cults at Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Perpetrate violence	12	10.9
Drug peddling on campus	8	7.3
Protection from bullies and wicked lecturers	52	47.3
To terrorize lecturers to get good grades	38	34.5
Total	110	100

This table presents data on why students engage in cultism. The data reveal that 52 (47.3%) thought students join cult groups to protect themselves against bullies wicked lecturers, 38 (34.5%) thought it was to terrorize lecturers to get good grades, 12 (10.9%) thought it was to perpetrate violence, and 8 (7.3%) thought it was as an avenue for drug peddling.

Table 8: Mode of Operation of Cult Groups at Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Violently	78	70.9
Non-violently	9	8.2
Don't know	23	20.9
Total	110	100

Table 8 displays student perceptions on the mode of operation of cult members at Niger Delta University. Seventy-eight (80.9%) thought cult members operated violently, 9 (8.2%) deemed them to operate non-violently, and 23 (20.9%) said they don't know.

Table 9: Does Cultism Affect Learning in Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Yes	31	28.2
No	26	23.6
Don't know	53	48.2
Total	110	100

This table presents data on whether respondents believed cultism affected learning at Niger Delta University. It shows that 31 (28.2%) believed it affected learning, 26 (23.6%) thought it did not affect learning and 53 (48.2%) didn't know.

Table 10: Existing Mechanisms for Addressing Cultism in Niger Delta University

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
School security	54	49.1
Nigerian Police Force	16	14.5

State Security Service (SSS)	40	36.4
Total	110	100

Table 10 shows information on existing mechanisms for addressing cultism at Niger Delta University. The data reveals that 54 (49.1%) saw school security as a good mechanism for tackling cultism, 16 (14.5%) preferred the Nigerian Police Force, and 40 (36.4%) saw the State Security Service (SSS) as the best approach.

Table 11: Are Existing Mechanism for Addressing Cultism Effective?

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Yes	23	20.9
No	76	69.1
Don't know	11	10
Total	110	100

The table above shows the data on whether existing mechanisms for tackling cultism are seen as effective at Niger Delta University. The data shows that 23 (20.9%) thought the mechanisms were effective, 76 (69.1%) thought they were not effective and 11 (10%) didn't know.

Table 12: Do Parents Have a Role to Play in Reducing Secret Cults on Campuses?

<i>Answer Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Yes	99	90
No	4	3.6
Don't know	7	6.4
Total	110	100

Table 12 presents data on whether parents have a role to play in reducing cultism. Ninety-nine respondents (90%) thought parents had a role to play, 4 (3.6%) thought they did not have a role to play and 7 (6.4%) didn't know.

Evaluation of Research Questions

The information above was based on the use of the simple percentage method. The descriptive tool of analysis is used to support the percentage values already presented in the tables.

Research Question 1: Why do students join secret cults? This research question was measured with answer alternatives including perpetrating violence, drug peddling in campus, for security against bullies and wicked lecturers, and to terrorize lecturers to get good grades. The findings were presented in Table 7. The largest group of respondents, 47%, thought that students joined for protection against bullies and wicked lecturers. This finding could have implications for cult cessation and prevention programs as perhaps broader security in general is needed on campuses.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of secret cults? The data addressing this question was presented in Table 6. The finding showed that 43% thought the cause was the collapse of the economy while 10% thought the cause was the failure of societal/institutional codes of conduct.

Research Question 3: What are the existing mechanisms for addressing secret cults at Niger Delta University? The major reason for raising this question was to discover the sources for controlling cultism at Niger Delta University. The data on this question was presented in Table 10 and showed that 49% of respondents saw school security as the mechanism used to tackle cultism at Niger Delta University. A smaller percentage noted that the State Security Service (SSS) is also usually invited to monitor cult activities.

Research Question 4: What are the modes of operation of cults at Niger Delta University? The above question was presented in Table 8 and had violently, non-violently and do not know as answer alternatives. Seventy percent of

respondents felt that cults had violent modes of operation and 20% were not certain. Thus, there is an overwhelming association of violence with campus cults.

Research Question 5: Does cultism affect learning at Niger Delta University? The data for this question was presented in Table 9. More than 53% of the respondents said they did not know, while 23% said No and 28% said Yes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study has been to examine the menace of secret cults in Nigerian Universities using Niger Delta University as a case study. The aim was to determine the causes of cultism and the implications of cultism in order to outline useful recommendations to help reduce the problem.

A sample of 120 students was assembled using the simple random sampling technique. One hundred and twenty questionnaires (based around the variables of the study) were distributed to the respondents and 110 were completed and returned. In analyzing the returned questionnaires, the researcher employed simple percentages and descriptive tools of analysis. The findings of the study were used to evaluate the research questions which guided the study.

The first major finding of this study is that the collapse of the economy is perceived as the major cause of cultism in Nigerian universities. This finding supports other literature on the subject which contends that it is very often poor youth and students who join cults to gain a sense of power which they otherwise do not have due to their economic circumstances. The study also determined that students engage in cult groups so as to protect themselves from bullies and wicked lecturers.

As mentioned earlier, cultism is a symptom of a society where institutionalized and personal violence have become a way of life and where brute force has supplanted vigorous intellectual debate and where there is a conspicuous absence of dialogue as a veritable element of conflict resolution. Nigeria is a society where more money is allocated annually to defence than to social welfare and education. To successfully combat the problem of secret cults, changes must thus occur both in the general society and within educational institutions.

General citizen education focused on the corrosive effects of secret cultism must occur. Mosques, churches, school administrators and society at large must fuse efforts to combat this evasive and chronic problem. It is both necessary and urgent that the Committee of Vice Chancellors of the Nigerian universities adopt a common and uniform approach to eradicating cultism. This must involve thoroughly investigating and finding root causes of the problem. It must also involve strengthening university administrative powers to eliminate the scourge from the campus.

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) must be encouraged to channel their energies into virile student activism; the type of activism that encourages healthy intellectual debate on issues that affect students and society at large. It is also important that the government improve the funding of the education sector so that universities can return to their former glory as centres for critical debate and learning excellence. For all this to occur, the Nigerian government needs to structure an inquiry into the state of Nigerian tertiary education including a thorough and objective examination of funding, admissions policies and the general welfare of students and staff.

Finally, although this work has focused on cultism on university campuses, it must be noted that cult activities are also occasionally observed in polytechnics and colleges of education. It has even been reported that this scourge has extended to secondary schools. The significance of this study can be assessed in three ways: the Methodological, Educational and Theoretical significance. This study does not lay claim to any new methodology. Nevertheless, it seeks to extend our knowledge of the use of survey methods in research of this nature. It therefore re-affirms the continuous relevance of the questionnaire tool in eliciting useful data on cult related issues. This study will contribute to the existing body of literature on cultism in our universities. In this regard, the study will be of great importance to students of sociology, conflict studies and intelligence studies. This study will be very significant theoretically as it hopes to extend our knowledge and understanding of the political economy theory to encompass the causes and consequences of secret cultism in Nigerian Universities. The scope of this study is twofold: geographical coverage and contents. In terms of geography, the study addresses only the Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State and does not extend to any other tertiary institutions. In terms of content, the study covered only secret cult activities in tertiary institutions and not other cult activities like those in the streets or secondary schools. Likewise, the literature will be focused on issues related to university cults.

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