

Peace Building Process in Nigerian Universities: An Appraisal of Students' Performance in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi (2006 – 2014)

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Abstract

Many studies have investigated the factors influencing students' performance especially at lower school level. This study is an analysis of students' performance in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at tertiary level. The paper further investigates the importance of the course to peace building process in Nigeria. We find that the performance of students in the course was on the increase from 2006 – 2014. However the performance of faculty of Agricultural Technology is higher largely due to class size. In addition, cases of students' disturbances have reduced in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi and other Universities with the introduction of the course. We recommend reducing the size of GNS classes for effective teaching and learning; exposing students to a full range of materials including audio – visuals and documentaries to show the devastating effects of conflicts; engaging additional lecturers in the Directorate to address teacher – students ratio problem; and student centered and student friendly method of teaching should be adopted in GNS courses.

Keywords: Conflict, Peace Building, Student Performance, Tertiary Education and Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Many studies have been conducted on students' performance in schools especially in science subjects in Nigeria. But the increase rate of violent conflicts among groups calls for

refocusing of attention on the role of educational sector in peace building. The term Peace can be described as the absence of conflict or a state of stability. Conflict on the other hand refers to lack of peace. Conflict is seen as “to be in opposition to another or each other; disagree” (Oke 2011: 4). Imobighe (2003:20) argues that a conflict situation arises when there is disharmony within an interaction process usually as a result of a clash of interests between the parties involved in some form of relationship. Dudley (1988: 23) observed that conflict is an escapable part of our daily lives and result of our highly complex, competitive and often litigious society. But whenever conflict gets out of hand it results in to violence that may destruct the normal situation and create confusion among people. Violent conflicts are inimical to progress and development of the society because of negative consequences such as killings and loss of property.

It is believed that any society that fails to adapt with the norms of peaceful coexistence would have to contend with violence for a long time. The problem with African countries was that they failed to embrace democratic system of governance that guarantees the fundamental rights of citizens.

In Nigeria from independence to date, violent crises have occurred in various parts of the country with attendant consequences in loss of lives and destruction of property, in addition to several cases of displacements of people with negative impact on education. The most disastrous of these was the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 - 1970.

By 1980s, a decade after the civil war, ethno - religious crises had rocked different parts of the country. The nation has witnessed different ethnic and religious uprisings among groups that cohabit the same place or shares common borders such as, Kataf – Hausa crisis in Zangon Kataf and Kafanchan in Kaduna state, Birom - Hausa crisis in Jos, Plateau state, Ife – Modakeke crisis in Osun state, Aguleri – Omuleri crisis in Anambra state, Tiv–Jukun crisis in Taraba state, Sayawa uprising in Tafawa Balewain Bauchi state, the Ijaw militants’ uprising in the Niger Delta area and the current Boko Haram Islamists’ uprising in the northeast (Yinka,2013: 13).

Similarly, our educational institutions witnessed unprecedented wave of violent conflicts especially at tertiary level. Our educational institutions became theater of war resulting into constant closure of campuses all over the nation. Famous among such disturbances were the 1971 crisis at University of Ibadan, the “Ali must Go” crisis of 1978, the 1981 and 1986 ABU Zaria students’ unrest, and the 1988 nation - wide SAP crisis as well as the fuel subsidy crisis of 1990s (Ujo 1994: 20).

With the inception of democratic government in the country in 1999 much attention has been devoted to the educational system particularly the curriculum to address the roles the school is expected to play in the training of good citizens. Hence courses such as civic education and peace and conflict resolution studies were mounted at post primary and tertiary institutions. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi has started this course since 2006 with a view to changing the mind - set of the students right from the class room to embrace non-violent methods of agitation. This is the foundation of peace building process in the country towards national integration. Peace building is a process of conflict resolution that involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. The need for peace building education arise from a realization that many of the out of school children in the world were located in conflict zones and therefore achieving the Education for all objectives, and the educational Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were dependent on addressing educational access and quality in conflict affected countries (Kirk 2011:5).This study seeks to achieve a number of objectives such as:

- (i) To assess the performance of the students offering the course over the years;
- (ii) To identify the benefit of the course to peace building process in Nigeria; and
- (iii) To make useful recommendations on how to improve students' performance in the course at ATBU.

Two fundamental questions were addressed by this study as follows:

- (i) What is the extent of the achievement performance of students in peace and conflict resolution studies (GNS 222) at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University?
- (ii) What is the contribution of the course to peace building process in Nigeria?

2. Theoretical Frame Work

A number of theories have been formulated to explain the incessant conflicts that bedeviled African countries. For the purpose of this study, the structural conflict theory has been adopted as the frame of analysis. This theory was expounded by scholars such as Ander Gunder Frank, Walter Rodney, Samir Amin, as well as Emmanuel Wallenstein who expounded the "world system theory". The theory was situated within the world capitalist system was accused of being structurally exploitative, retarding the development of the Third World. Thus conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured and organized. Nigeria being one of the developing nations is faced with a lot of contradictions in its structural and organizational set-up. Social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, illiteracy, diseases, exploitation, inequity etc. causes conflict. Conflicts occur because of the exploitative and unjust nature of societies, domination of one class by another etc (Ademola 2011:4 & Abdullahi 2015:3). Nigeria, as a developing nation struggling to overcome such contradictions, becomes vulnerable to conflicts.

It is quite obvious that societal factor play great role in the life of students in campus. As such, socio-political events and economic issues in the society are always digested by students in their respective organizations. Some of the contradictions were transferred from the larger society to our campuses, making them volatile.

3. Data

The methodology used was based on the summary of GNS 222 results for a period of eight years obtained from the Directorate of General Studies, ATBU. The data collected from previous examination results were subjected to analysis using a simple percentage method to determine the rate of success and failure for the period of eight years.

Presentation and Analysis

This is an analysis of students' performance in Peace and Conflict Resolution studies (GNS 222) for 2006 - 2014, at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. There was no examination in 2009 because of adjustment of academic calendar due to industrial action by members of the academic staff. The analyses were guided by the research questions and objectives.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2006/2007 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	79	79	100%	Nil	Nil
Engineering Tech.	364	361	99%	3	1%
Environmental Tech.	394	373	95%	21	5%
Management Tech.	185	170	92%	15	8%
Sciences	213	201	94%	12	6%
Technology Education	227	214	94%	13	6%

Source: Directorate of General Studies ATBU, 2015

Table 1 shows that in the year 2006 when the course was introduced at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, the entire students demonstrated high level of performances in all the faculties. In the faculty of Agricultural Technology where a total of 79 students were registered a 100% pass was recorded in the course. In the faculty of Engineering Technology out of 364 students registered a total of 361 were successful giving a 99% pass. Only 3 students failed due to their negligence. In the faculty of Environmental Technology out of 394 students that sat for the course 373, representing 95% were successful and 21 students or 5% failed the examination. The faculty of Management Technology with a total of 185 students recorded 170 pass representing 92% and 15 students or 8% failed the course. Similarly the faculty of sciences with a total of 213 registered students recorded a 94% pass representing 201 students. Only 12 students or 6% failed. Also in the faculty of Technology Education out of 227 registered students 214 passed the course representing 94% while 13 students or 6% failed.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of Faculty Results for 2007/2008 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	79	79	100%	Nil	Nil
Engineering Tech.	307	303	99%	4	1%
Environmental Tech.	383	363	95%	20	5%
Management Tech.	177	163	92%	14	8%
Sciences	151	137	91%	14	9%
Technology Education	215	201	93%	14	7%

Table 2 shows the distribution of the result obtained in GNS 222 from the six faculties of the University in 2007. The result indicated that in the year the faculty performance of students was on the high side. This means that the lecturers have been up and doing to achieve positive result. In the faculty of Agricultural Technology a total of 79 candidates sat for the exams with a 100% pass. In the faculty of Engineering Technology out of 307 candidates that sat for the exams a total of 303 passed representing 99%. Only 4 candidates or 1% fail. The faculty of Environmental Technology with a total of 383 students recorded a 95% pass and 5% fail, representing a figure of 363 and 20 respectively. Also in the faculty of Management Technology out of 177 students that registered for the course 163 students or 92% passed, while 14 students or 8% failed. In the faculty of Sciences a total of 151 students registered for the course out of which 137 representing 91% passed while 14 students representing 9% failed. And in the faculty of Technology Education where a total of 215 students registered 201 passed while 14 students failed representing 93% and 7% respectively.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2009/2010 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	115	92	80%	23	20%
Engineering Tech.	204	127	62%	77	38%
Environmental Tech.	314	250	80%	64	20%
Management Tech.	143	140	98%	3	2%
Sciences	139	92	66%	47	34%
Technology Education	268	228	85%	40	15%

Table 3 represents the performance of students for the 2009/2010 academic session. It shows that in the faculty of Agricultural Technology which presented a total of 115 candidates 92 candidates have passed the course while 23 candidates have failed. Thus 80% pass and 20% fail. In the faculty of Engineering Technology a total of 204 candidates registered for the course out of which 127 candidates or 62% passed the course while 77 candidates or 38% failed. In the faculty of Environmental Technology 314 candidates registered for the course out of which 250 were successful while 64 failed. Thus 80% pass and 20% fail. The result of faculty of Management Technology indicated that out of 143 candidates 140 have passed the course while the remaining 3 candidates have failed. Thus 98% pass and 2% fail. In the faculty of Sciences 139 candidates registered for the course out of 92 or 66% passed while 47 or 34% failed. The faculty of Technology Education presented a total of 268 candidates out of which 228 or 85% were successful while 40 or 15% have failed.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2010/2011 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	95	93	98%	02	2%
Engineering Tech.	294	270	92%	24	8%
Environmental Tech.	437	409	94%	28	6%
Management Tech.	265	243	92%	22	8%
Sciences	227	200	88%	27	12%
Technology Education	257	211	82%	46	18%

Table 4 represents the faculty result of 2010/2011 session. In the table, the faculty of Agricultural Technology with a total of 95 candidates recorded a 98% pass and 2% fail. Thus 93 candidates passed and 2 candidates failed. In the faculty of Engineering Technology 294 candidates registered for GNS 222 out of which 270 candidates or 92% passed while 24 candidates or 8% failed. Also in the faculty of Environmental Technology a total of 437 candidates were registered out of which 409 candidates or 94% passed while 28 candidates or 6% failed. In the faculty of Management Technology a total of 265 candidates registered out of which 243 candidates or 92% passed while 22 candidates or 8% failed. And in the faculty of Sciences 227 candidates were registered out of which 200 candidates or 88% have passed and 27 candidates or 12% have failed. The faculty of Technology Education with a total of 257 candidates recorded 82% success and 18% failure rates representing 211 and 46 candidates respectively.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2011/2012 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	114	84	74%	30	26%
Engineering Tech.	400	287	72%	113	28%

Environmental Tech.	443	353	80%	90	20%
Management Tech.	291	182	63%	109	37%
Sciences	325	254	78%	71	22%
Technology Education	321	145	45%	176	55%

Table 5 shows the faculty results of 2011/2012 session. In the result, the faculty of Agricultural Technology has a total of 114 candidates out of which 84 or 74% passed while 30 or 26% of the candidates failed. In the faculty of Engineering Technology a total of 400 candidates were registered out of which 287 representing 72% passed while 113 candidates representing 28% failed. And in the faculty of Environmental Technology with a total of 443 candidates, 353 or 80% of the candidates have passed the course while 90 candidates or 20% have failed. In the faculty of Management Technology 291 candidates sat for GNS 222 exams out of which 182 candidates or 63% passed while 109 candidates or 37% failed. In the faculty of Sciences, out of 325 candidates that sat for the exams 254 candidates representing 78% have passed while remaining 71 candidates representing 22% have failed. In the faculty of Technology Education, out of 321 candidates that sat for the exams, 145 candidates or 45% passed while 176 candidates or 55% failed.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2012/2013 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	143	119	83%	24	17%
Engineering Tech.	509	481	94%	28	6%
Environmental Tech.	676	628	93%	48	7%
Management Tech.	360	295	82%	65	18%
Sciences	440	399	91%	41	9%
Technology Education	736	682	93%	54	7%

Table 6 shows the faculty result for 2012/2013 session. In the result the faculty of Agricultural Technology recorded a success rate of 83% representing 119 candidates and a 17% rate of failure representing 24 candidates out of the total 143 registered candidates. In the faculty of Engineering Technology, a total of 509 candidates were registered out of which 481 or 94% were successful while 28 candidates or 6% were not successful. In the faculty of Environmental Technology 676 candidates registered for the course out of which 628 or 93% were successful while 48 or 7% were not successful. And in the faculty of Management Technology 360 candidates sat for the exams, out of which 295 or 82% have passed while 65 candidates or 18% have failed. The faculty of Sciences with a total of 440 candidates recorded 91% pass and 9% fail. Thus 399 candidates were successful while 41 were not successful. In the faculty of Technology Education a total of 736 candidates sat for the exams out of which 682 candidates or 93% success rate was recorded while 54 candidates or 7% rate of failure was also recorded.

Table 7: Percentage distribution of Faculty results for 2013/2014 session

Faculty	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
Agricultural Tech.	129	127	98%	2	2%
Engineering Tech.	468	422	90%	46	10%
Environmental Tech.	646	636	98%	10	2%
Management Tech.	322	283	88%	39	12%
Sciences	442	389	88%	53	12%
Technology Education	554	513	93%	41	7%

Table 7 represents the faculty result of 2013/2014 session. In the result, the faculty of Agricultural Technology with a total of 129 candidates recorded 98% performance achievement while only 2% rate of failure was recorded. Thus 127 candidates have passed while 2 candidates have failed. In the faculty of Engineering Technology where a total of 468 candidates were registered, 422 candidates or 90% passed the course while 46 candidates or 10% failed. In the faculty of Environmental Technology 646 candidates were registered out of which 636 or 98% have passed and only 10 or 2% have failed the course. In the faculty of Management Technology 322 candidates registered for the course out of which 283 representing 88% have passed while 39 candidates representing 12% have failed. In the faculty of Sciences a total of 442 candidates registered for the course out of which 389 or 88% passed and 53 or 12% failed. And in the faculty of Technology Education a total of 554 candidates were registered out of which 513 candidates representing 93% were successful in the exams while 41 candidates representing 7% were not successful.

Table 8: Summary of students' performance by Academic Sessions (2006 – 2014)

Year (Session)	Total Number of Students	Total Pass	Percentage Pass	Total Fail	Percentage Fail
2006/2007	1462	1398	96%	64	4%
2007/2008	1312	1246	95%	66	5%
2009/2010	1183	929	79%	254	21%
2010/2011	1575	1426	91%	149	9%
2011/2012	1894	1305	69%	589	31%
2012/2013	2864	2604	91%	260	9%
2013/2014	2561	2370	93%	191	7%

Table 8 represents the summary of students' performance for the period 2006 to 2014. In the 2006/2007 session a total of 1462 candidates were registered for the course in all faculties. Out of that figure 1398 representing 96% were successful while only 64 candidates representing 4% were not successful. In the 2007/2008 session, 1312 candidates were registered for the course in the six faculties of the University. Out of that number, 1246 candidates representing 95% passed the course while 66 candidates representing 5% failed. In the 2009/2010 session 1183 candidates sat for the exams out of which 929 candidates or 79% passed while 254 candidates or 21% failed. During the 2010/2011 session a total of 1575 candidates were registered out of which 1426 passed the course with 91% success rate while 149 candidates failed the course with 9%. In the 2011/2012 session a total of 1894 candidates registered for the course out of which 1305 or 69% passed while 589 or 31% of the candidates failed the course. In 2012/2013 session, a total of 2864 candidates registered for the course out of which 2604 or 91% of the candidates passed while 260 or 9% of the candidates failed. For the 2013/2014 academic session a total of 2561 candidates were registered for GNS 222. Out of that number 2370 candidates representing 93% passed the course while 191 candidates representing 7% failed.

4. Discussion of Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

- (i) That the rate of failure is insignificant in all faculties compared to the success rate.
- (ii) That the faculty of Agricultural Technology recorded higher performance in GNS 222 due to small size class.
- (iii) In general, there is a remarkable achievement in students' performance in GNS 222 in the various faculties of the university from 2006 to 2014.
- (iv) That the course contributes to peace building process in the country looking at the fact that students disturbances have reduced since the introduction of the course.

The fact that the students of faculty of Agricultural Technology had better performance due to limited number of students per class supports the educationists' view that a small size class is better managed for best results. James & Roberts (2010: 4) observed that the conventional wisdom of the benefits of small size class persists in post - secondary education despite the lack of convincing evidence that class size has a significant impact on student outcomes.

This is the only parameter for measuring the performance because the entire students from the various faculties were trained by the same crop of lecturers. Thus, since the students of faculty of Agriculture received lectures separately in a small size class, they performed better. Even when faculty of Technology Education were merged with the faculty of Agricultural Technology at Gubi campus in 2013/2014, the performance was okay because the class is still manageable, unlike other faculties that were grouped in a big lecture theater at Yelwa campus. Thus, the group system used by the GNS Directorate in the teaching of GNS courses have not helped students in-terms of audience while teachers find it difficult to control and manage big and over - crowded classes.

5. Conclusion

The research focused on the performance of students in GNS courses at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. The sample of result of GNS 222 was collected for a period of eight years. All the faculties of the University were represented in the research making it a complete appraisal exercise. The faculty of Agricultural technology had an outstanding performance largely due to small size class. But the overall result shows that average performance was recorded in all faculties of the University. The research has also disapproved the complaint by some students that GNS courses are wide or bulky and difficult to pass.

Recommendations

- (i) For a more effective teaching and learning process, the Directorate of General studies should consider reducing the size of GNS classes to a maximum of two faculties per group.
- (ii) For the course to be interactive and for a more comprehensive teaching of the course, lecturer/student ratio should be addressed. Thus, the University should employ more lecturers to cater for the increasing population of students in GNS classes. This will reduce the heavy reliance on part time lecturers and markers in the administration of examination.
- (iii) In the delivery of component parts of the course the method of teaching should be student centered and student friendly. Students should also be exposed to a full range of materials including audio – visuals and documentaries to show the devastating effects of conflicts.
- (iv) Knowledgeable members of the general public and relevant NGOs should be occasionally invited to give a talk on special conflict and peace issues in order to enlighten the students more, and to create a means of avoiding violence both on campus and in the larger community. This will also enable the students to graduate to become peace ambassadors of their respective communities.
- (v) On their part students must give proper attention to GNS courses, more especially in – terms of class attendance and continuous assessment.

In conclusion, the study has highlighted the performance of students in GNS 222 being one of the new courses introduced in Nigerian Universities with the objective of achieving peaceful co-existence and national unity. This calls for concerted effort to eradicate the causes of conflicts through proper education and training of youths, in order to move our nation forward.

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