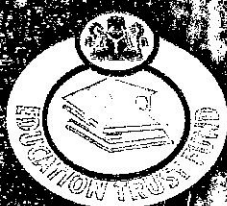


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ILORIN EMIRATE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF GROUP DYNAMICS CLASSROOM SEATING ARRANGEMENT IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING VIOLENCE- FREE SOCIETY

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Abstract

The paper investigates the Ilorin Emirate teachers' perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence-free society. 357 teachers were randomly selected from 20 Upper Basic Schools in Ilorin Emirate. Researchers designed questionnaire was used to for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using mean rating, t-test and ANOVA. Among others, it was discovered that the respondents had positive perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence-free society. From the research hypotheses tested, the findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the teachers' perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence-free society based on gender, experience, ethnicity and school type. The study recommended that, teacher should employ classroom learning structure that will promote tolerance, self-respect, respect for others, and their dignity as well as development of social interaction among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Introduction

The sound and sight of bomb explosions were alien to most adult Nigerians when they were growing up except the ones they heard from other countries and the ones they probably watched in movies. Anytime a bomb-related story was read in the newspapers, it must be from another country. Then, throwing bombs was synonymous with countries at war, especially those in trouble spots in the Middle-East. But that which used to be a foreign culture has been gradually domesticated in Nigeria. Today, terrorism and terrorists are right here in our midst, and the effects of their machinations are staring everyone in the face (Makinde, 2012).

Terrorism is unarguably very deadly, but the growing insecurity in Nigeria is not limited to this alone; robbers are on the prowl, raping, maiming and killing innocent people on the road, in their houses and even inside places of worship. Killing for ritual purposes has continued to be on the rise although the nation has embraced the computer age (Makinde, 2012). Political violence is on the increase, and many Nigerians have been mowed down by the bullets of assassins to settle political scores. Kidnapping has become a lucrative business in the country; none is exempted as people of high and low statuses are abducted daily for ransom by armed youths.

It is axiomatic to say that security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration will come to nought if there is no solution to the menace of insecurity ravaging the country. Nigeria has since been caught in the web of violent crimes and efforts to disentangle the nation from these social maladies have been futile, and this has made the problems to sink deeper into the recess of the country. The Nigerian security agencies appear to have little or no control over the situation; a situation that has made the ordinary law-abiding citizen to lose confidence in the capacity of the state to protect lives and property of the citizens. There is a strong scepticism that if the level of insecurity in our country is not scaled down, our vision to be among the best 20 countries of the world may be aborted.

In fact, the dimension which violence situation in the country has assumed is appalling. It is based on this fact that no one should expect the security agencies alone to tackle the problem of insecurity in the country. This called for why scholars, lawmakers, and academia consider education sector as an alternative to curbing societal violence. This is because sociologists of education like Durkheim (1961), Ottaway (1980) among others observed that there is a strong relationship between education and society. This observation is borne out of the fact that it is impossible to separate or draw any line of demarcation between the two concepts. Empirical evidence has shown that what happens to the educational system undoubtedly affects the society and whatever occurs in the society influences or shapes the educational system in all its ramifications (Meighan, 1986).

Thus, schools are established in many societies of the world to instill in the students those skill's which will afford them the opportunity of taking their rightful positions in the society. This is done through different strategies, which could be teaching methods, content of the curriculum as well as school setting and classroom seating arrangement (Lawin, 1999). Teacher in the school adopted any of these strategies in order to achieve it aims, depending on the nature and phenomenon that arise. According to Pinter (2009), seating arrangement is the way by which desks and chairs are arranged in a classroom. This could either be, traditional row seating, L-shape, U-shape, Horseshoes- shape among others.

Traditional fixed row seating arrangement is the most commonly used strategies that schools in Nigeria have adopted in the teaching and learning process over time. Ramsden (1999) pointed out that the traditional arrangement could no longer meet the societal need and at the same time promote cooperation and social integration which the society requires in recent times. Based on this, Forsyth (1990) and Perry and Bussey (1984) advocated for the use of group dynamics seating arraignment (cooperative learning) as the alternative, that is capable of promoting social interaction, integration, peace and unity which will eventually influence the students positively in the larger society. According to Montagu (1965), society cannot survive without the cooperation of its members, and the society of man has survived because the cooperativeness of its members made survival possible. It was not an advantageous individual here and there who did so, but the group. In human societies, the individuals who are most likely to survive are those who are best enabled to do so by their group.

How students sit and interact with one another is a neglected aspect of instruction. Much training time is devoted to helping teachers arrange appropriate interactions between students and materials (i.e., textbooks, curriculum programs) and sometimes is spent on how teachers should interact with students, but how students should interact with one another is relatively ignored. How teachers structure student-student interaction patterns have a lot to say about how well students learn, how they feel about school and the teacher, how they interact with and tolerate each other and their views, and how much self-esteem they have. It is in the researchers' opinion that group dynamic seating arrangement would go a long way in promoting cooperative living and learning in the classroom, school environment, immediate community and the Nigerian society at large.

In the mid-1960s, cooperative learning was relatively unknown and largely ignored by educators (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). Teaching at all levels was dominated by competitive and individualistic learning. Cultural resistance to cooperative learning was based on social Darwinism, with its premise that students must be taught to survive in a "dog-eat-dog" world, and the myth of "rugged individualism" underlying the use of individualistic learning. While competition dominated educational thought, it was being challenged by individualistic learning

largely based on B. F. Skinner's work on programmed learning and behavioural modification. Educational practices and thought, however, have to change. Research findings on cooperative learning structure (group dynamics) have confirmed that, the instructional model allows the teacher's attention to nurture and manage the classroom, student behaviour, and social aspects of learning that contribute significantly to promote an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. In addition, it has the capacity to promote social integration and unity (Diane, Smith and Brian, 2008). However, many teachers are used to group dynamic seating arrangement. It may be as a result of their perception.

Perception is our sensory experience of the world around us involves both the recognition of environmental stimuli and action in response to these stimuli. Through the perceptual process, we gain information about properties and elements of the environment that are critical to our survival. Hall and Langton (2006), studies revealed that, three main factors responsible to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside:

- a. In the perceiver (characteristics)
- b. In the Object or target being perceived or
- c. In the context of the situation in which the perception is made.

Cooperative learning structure is now an accepted and often the preferred instructional procedure at all levels of education. Cooperative learning is presently used in schools and universities in every part of the world, in every subject area, and with every age student (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). One way of promoting cooperative is through the use of group dynamic seating arrangement.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the perception of teachers on the use of group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society. Specifically, the study tries to investigate;

1. The perception of teachers on group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on gender.
2. The perception of teachers on group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on years of experience in the teaching service
3. The perception of teachers on group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on school type
4. The perception of teachers on group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on ethnicity

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of teachers on the use of group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society?
2. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on gender?
3. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on years of experience in teaching service?
4. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on school type?
5. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on ethnicity?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on gender
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on years of experience in teaching service
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on school type
4. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on ethnicity

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used in this study. The choice of the descriptive survey was in line with Akuezilo and Agu (2003), who maintained that it is concerned with gathering of information on peoples' opinion. The target population for this study comprised all the teachers of upper basic schools in Ilorin Emirate. There are 6,387 Upper Basic School teachers in Ilorin Emirate (which comprises of Ilorin south, Ilorin west, Ilorin central, Asa and Moro Local Government Areas) of Kwara State out of which 357 respondents were purposively sampled. This is in line with Research Advisors (2006) table for selecting the sample size. The respondents consisted of both male and female teachers. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 20 schools from the three senatorial district.

A 10-item four point-likert scale researchers designed questionnaire was used for eliciting the needed data from the respondents. The questionnaire items were validated by experts in the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin to ensure its face and content validity. This is in line with Sambo (2008) who maintained that the best procedure for validating research instrument is to give it to a panel of experts. A test- re-test reliability method was carried out with a sample of four secondary schools within Ilorin metropolis. Three-week interval period was given. The scores of the first were correlated with the scores of the second using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability index of 0.67 was obtained. The questionnaire contained two sections. Bio-data of the respondent constituted the first section while the second contained 10 items with 4 points responses (Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researchers in the company of trained research assistants. The data collected was analyzed using mean rating with 2.5 as accepted means value, t-test was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 while ANOVA was used to test hypothesis 4 at 0.05 alpha level using IBM SPSS 20 vision

Results

The research questions are answered as followed:

Research question 1: What is the perception of teachers on the use of group dynamics seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society?

Table 1: Responses of Teachers' on the perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society

s/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Group dynamics seating arrangement is appropriate for the multi- cultural Nigerian society.	219	116	17	5	3.57
2	With Group dynamics seating arrangement, students in each group learn from others.	312	45	-	-	3.87
3	Group dynamics seating arrangement promotes cooperative learning.	197	143	6	11	3.47
4	Group dynamics, as the new seating arrangement, can lead to friendship among the learners in the classroom if well managed.	178	97	51	31	3.18
5	Group dynamics seating arrangement allow the students from different ethnic background to understand their cultural differences	133	179	35	10	3.21
6	Group dynamics seating arrangement promote social interaction among students in the group.	301	45	9	2	3.80
7	Group dynamics seating arrangement promotes tolerance among students in the group.	257	87	5	8	3.66
8	Group dynamics seating arrangement encourages respect for other people views.	257	87	5	8	3.66
9	Group dynamics seating arrangement is an instructional strategy that promotes living together of students from different cultural backgrounds.	257	87	5	8	3.66
10	Group dynamics seating arrangement help students in the group to learn to settle their differences amicably.	227	93	20	17	3.48

Table 1 showed that the respondents had positive perception of group- dynamic seating arrangement as a means of promoting violent- free society. This is because the mean scores of all the items range from 3.18- 3.87. This indicated that teachers perceived group- dynamic- seating arrangement as a means of promoting violent- free society.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on gender.

Table 2: Responses of Teachers' on the perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society on the basis of gender

	N	Mean	Std.D	t-test	df	Sig (2-tail)	Decision
Male	124	40.91	2.98				
Female	233	40.46	1.81	-1.51	355	0.13	Accepted

Table 2 showed the t-test value of male and female teachers to be -1.51 with $P > 0.05$. Since $P > 0.05$ level of significant, the null hypothesis was accepted. Meaning there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society on the basis of gender.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence-free society based on years of experience in teaching service.

Table 3: Responses of Teachers' on the perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence-free society on the basis of years of experience.

	N	Mean	Std.D	t-test	df	Sig (2-tail)	Decision
10 years and above	237	41.20	2.08	-1.71	355	0.80	Accepted
less than 5 years	120	41.61	2.02				

Table 3 revealed t-test -1.71 thus, $P = 0.80 > 0.05$. This indicated that all the teachers regardless of their years of experience in teaching profession do not differ significantly in the way they perceived the use of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement in promoting violence-free society.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on school type.

Table 4: Responses of Teachers' on the perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society on the basis of school type

	N	Mean	Std.D	t-test	df	Sig (2-tail)	Decision
Public schools	202	41.98	1.26	1.06	355	0.29	Accepted
Private school	155	41.81	1.60				

The table above showed the t-test= 1.06, P-value: 0.29 > 0.05. In other words, the hypothesis was accepted. This means that there was no significant difference in the perception of public and private schools teachers of group dynamic seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence free society.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society based on ethnicity.

Table 5: Responses of Teachers' on the perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society on the basis of ethnicity.

	Sum square	of Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between group	1020.22	355	340.07	19.5	0.23	Accepted
Within group	6150.76		17.42			

Table showed Sig. value (F: 19.5) = 0.23. On the other hand $P > 0.05$. That is, respondents did not differ in their perception of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement as a means of promoting violence- free society on the basis of ethnicity.

Discussion

Teachers regardless of their gender, experience, as well as ethnic difference including school type where they are teaching perceived the adoption or use of group dynamics classroom seating arrangement, as a way of promoting social interaction and integration among students. Teachers' use of group dynamic classroom seating arrangement is perceived to be able to enhance tolerance, respect for others and their opinions. This finding is in line with the findings of Johnson and Johnson (2007) who found out that, cooperative seating arrangement fosters cultural understanding, emotional well being, and positive social interactions in the students. This would help them to be actively engaged in the general development of the society.

Findings also revealed that teachers irrespective of their gender, experience, type of school and ethnicity perceived group dynamics classroom seating arrangement positively. In other words, the respondents perceived group dynamic seating arrangement as possessing the capacity to shape students ability to live peacefully and harmoniously with others. Thereby developing the students to be able to tolerate and respect the dignity, views and opinions of others. This finding is in agreement with Harrison (2011) who observed that the conventional seating arrangement did not cultivate in learners sense of unity and national consciousness that is needed for our corporate existence as a nation devoid of violence. The findings also supported Vaughan and Hogg (2010) who noted that gender, ethnicity, and other consideration did not affect perception on promotion of unity, love and national integration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, the following recommendations are made;

1. Teacher should employ classroom learning structure that will promote interaction, among the learners.
2. Classroom activities should be geared towards promotion of self- respect, respect for others and their dignity.
3. Group dynamic seating arrangement should be encouraged in the classroom for effective and full participation of learners and as a consequence, development of social interaction among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.
4. Teachers should attend workshop to update their knowledge on the new pedagogical skills and dispositions which enhance social interaction, national consciousness and cohesion.

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