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## CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE

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***Abstract:** This paper is concerned with a discourse on how education is being managed or manipulated to achieve peace and conflict resolution. The concept of conflict and the various types of conflict including the causes of conflict, education and conflict resolution. The concept of peace and the various types of peace were also highlighted with a view of extracting the impacts of education in peace and peace building. The paper examined most of the processes of resolving and achieving peace and conflict resolution through education with a view of achieving a lasting peace in the society.*

**Keywords:** Concepts, Education, Conflict, Resolution, Peace

### Introduction

In the history of man, education is undisputedly the most significant in the sense that education is undoubtedly the bedrock of all developments and that is why government all over the world try to pay serious attention to it [Mađumere-Obike, & Uchechi, 2009]. Education provides the necessary knowledge and skills for man to manipulate the forces in the society to enable man achieve desired goals. Hence Okeke [2007] noted that "education is a battle ground" where every other forces/sectors rally round for survival, Okeke emphasised that no matter who you may be or what you intend to become, it is only education that can lead you to your desired destination. According to Galtung, in peace and conflict studies (N.D) education also helps in developing or inculcating in man, a culture of peaceful co-existence through a deliberate and conscious education programme, it is counter productive in nature and in most cases leads to death. On the contrary, it is also argued that education is the genesis of conflict in the society; this assertion was made by the careful observation of the remote and immediate causes of crisis in the society where knowledge is seen as one of the causes of conflict. In his ability to live in peace with other members of the society, man tries to map out or initiate some measures or strategies of conflict resolution, upon the realisation of the causes of conflict [since it is widely believed that a problem identified is half solved]. Man carefully promulgates laws to guide actions that will ultimately prohibit encroachment on the fundamental rights of others. It is therefore opined that to achieve peace relatively or absolutely, conflict resolution education should be taken seriously.

### Concept of Conflict

One key and inevitable aspect of human existence is conflict, because human beings must live together, share ideas in common, support each other to grow and survive, because no

man is an island, man needs the services and the assistance of the next man in the course of his existence, because man during the process of growth has divergent backgrounds of training which has ultimately affected the thinking system, attitude, psychology, even during creation, man was created differently by God. The concept of conflict dates back to creation where in the garden of Eden God was tempted by Adam via Eve, a situation which eventually saw Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden by God as an indication of God's anger on them. The above excerpt is a brief account of man's attitude and lifestyle, given us an insight of the inevitability of conflict which has become an integral part of man's life. Conflict is therefore seen as disagreement, fierce argument, a quarrel, a clash between different aims, interest, ideas etc. [Robinson, & Davidson 2006]. This definition in relation to our earlier position implies that conflict is a product disagreement, fierce argument, quarrel, clash of arms, interest and ideas as long as human beings live together. As observed in the work, understanding conflict and peace [ND] "conflict is present when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes or pursue their interest through actions that damage the other parties". These parties may be individuals, small or large groups or countries. In a corroborative stance with our previous assertion the author here is very emphatic about the interest of the parties involved as being incompatible. The incompatibility of interest is noticed in what the authors describe as;

- **Resources**, which is simplified to be territory, money, energy and sources of food etc. It is associated with whom; the when and how these resources will be allocated.
- **Power**, to control these resources and determine the mode of distribution. Also to get involved and participate fully in the political and decision making process.
- **Identity**, concerning the cultural, social and political community to which people feel tied.
- **Status**, whether people believe they are with respect and dignity and whether their traditions and social positions are respected and
- **Values**, particularly those embodied in systems of government, religion or ideology.

The concept of conflict could best be understood as an individual or group phenomenon manifested by human activities, it is an embodiment of posing threat with orderliness, life and property in the society which may be planned, organised or spontaneous every where is anti-progressive, anti-development and counter productive and should be discouraged at all times [Nwanna - Nzewunwa, 2008].

### Types of Conflict

Irrespective of one's perception about conflict, there are degrees of conflict which vary from one level of hostility to another among individuals, groups etc, the variation in the degree of conflict could be seen, observed or told depending on one's position at the time in question. Pertinently, the inter play of forces involved in the conflict also determines the degree of conflict which could also be described as types of conflict.

There are various types of conflict which include: 1. Latent conflict, 2. Manifest conflict, 3. violent conflict 4. Peaceful or non-violent conflict

1. **Latent Conflict:** This type of conflict occurs when there is a serious crisis or disagreement between individuals and parties yet unnoticed by observers who may be nursing a notion of compatibility. An example of latent conflict is "cold war".
2. **Manifest Conflict:** The direct opposite of latent conflict is manifest conflict. In this type of conflict, conflict is not perceived. It is visible, noticed and observed that all is not well among the individuals and parties concerned. Example of this type of conflict is "crisis".
3. **Violent Conflict:** Conflicts can be described as violent when individuals and parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully and try to destroy or dominate the opposing parties ability to pursue their own interest. This type of conflict in most cases leads to loss of life and properties, destruction of valuables whose memory remains indelible. Example of this type of conflict is "war".
4. **Peaceful or Non-Violent Conflict:** This type of conflict occurs when the conflict is being noticed at the point of occurrence and is handled with various resolution mechanisms like constitutional provisions and laws, family and clan structures, court systems etc, to prevent the conflict from escalating.

### Causes of Conflict

As a phenomenon, conflict does not just occur from the blues or an act of imagination, there are some under-lying factors responsible for the occurrence of conflict. These causes which can also be described as remote and immediate, external and internal are the major determinants of conflict in the society. Some of the causes or determinants of conflict as identified by Wehr, [2005] is "population pressure" which might be the leading cause of conflict increase, if one sees each human new born as additional need and thus makes conflict potential". Wehr, also identified the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution as one of the causes of conflict, this was as a result of enormous demographic dislocations, extreme poverty and a wide gap between workers and owners of business outfits, the rate of oppression, humiliation, discrimination, and exploitation by the owners of business outfits provoked Karl Marx who vehemently opposed the rash capitalist tendencies meted on workers, the industrial revolution. Other causes of conflict include;

**Knowledge:** This could be referred to as the art of knowing or becoming aware of something or understanding phenomena through teaching and learning or observation or research, as one formidable cause of conflict, the assertion "knowledge is power" is not absolute, it is relative because knowledge on the other hand is responsible for a number of conflicts recorded in the society given rise to some confessional statements like "Had I Known". Among others, a case in point is the crisis rocking the Niger Delta region, it is a fact that the crisis is not unconnected with the oil exploration activities in the area by the Federal Government of Nigeria via multinational firms, it is also a fact that the exploration activities pre-ceded the Niger Delta crisis, the crisis erupted and escalated

when the people of the region became aware of the dangers the exploration activities are causing on the eco-system arising from oil spillage or pollution as well as the economic gains associated with the exploration activities by multinational oil companies. Another credible instance of knowledge induced conflict is the sectarian insurgence in the northern part of Nigeria where the members of the "BOKO HARAM" [meaning knowledge is forbidden] sect vent their anger through the destruction of lives and valuables with the claim that they were forced into western education which is anti-Islam. Objectively, the actions of the Boko Haram members are highly condemnable but the point we are trying to advance here is that their actions were driven by the knowledge of realising that western education is anti-Islam.

**Treating Equals Unequally:** By equals we mean people or phenomena having the same value, status, right, entitlement etc. which are naturally expected to be treated equally but are treated unequally. On the contrary, if these people are not given the desired treatment like their counterparts elsewhere there is also bound to be conflict.

**Ethnicity:** The identity felt by people as a result of language, tribe, clan, religion, region, race, culture is seen as a factor that drives many conflicts. This is as a result of the pursuance of policies, values, customs, rights, boundaries etc, of ethnic groups which eventually culminate into clash of interest.

**Ignorance:** Ignorance is the direct opposite of knowledge. It means not having knowledge of something or unaware of something. This is also one of the major causes of conflict because one perennial fact about ignorance is that it is generally seen as a disease which is capable of causing crisis both within and outside of a person. It is also true that because a man is unaware of the dangers involved in conflict he can easily get his or herself into crisis.

**Interest:** Often used in administration and politics, interest here could be either that of an individual or groups common aims and objectives which ultimately represents what the group or the individual intends to achieve or an integrity to uphold. Premised on the above, the individual or group intends to protect the values it desires to achieve. Frankly speaking, the achievement of these desired values is not without economic enrichment or values in some quarter which is certainly a sure way to conflict.

### Conflict Resolution in Education

Although man is also referred to as "animal" the practical difference between man and other animals is the ability of man to resolve his differences and live in peace and harmony within the shortest possible time. This makes man a higher or superior animal. This is exemplified in man's rational ability to fathom out ways, mechanism, tools and methods of resolving either looming or perceived conflict. The intension in man's desire to role out conflict resolution techniques was born out of his desire to live in peace and

harmony with one another. This he does through several means but not limited to also preparing for war upon perception of conflict.

The saying: "The best way to make peace is to prepare for war" is one strong indication and a manifestation of man's conflict resolution technique. Preparing for war at all times is a conflict resolution technique because when your opponent discovers that you are also ready for war or you are more prepared than he is, he will rather resort to making peace with you. Another technique for conflict resolution is peace building and peace keeping approach to conflict resolution. This approach is applied when the conflict is already on by imposing a superior force on the warring parties or applying force to broker truce or through dialogue. As part of conflict resolution mechanism, peace education plays a very important and fundamental role. The peace research society which later became peace science society was an interdisciplinary and international effort to develop a special set of concepts, techniques and data to better understand and mitigate conflict theories that is otherwise used to study and resolve conflict situations. The formation of the peace and Justice studies Association (P.J.D.A) in 2001 which drew its members from around the world with a predominance from United states and Canada with a determination to sensitize the world against conflict through the publication of a regular news letter (The Peace Chronicle) and holds annual conference on themes related to organization mission to create a just and peaceful world through research, scholarship, pedagogy and activism.

Conflict resolution studies allow for a proper examination of the causes of war as well as the nature of violence including social oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Through conflict resolution studies one can also learn peace-making strategies to overcome persecution and transform society to attain a more just and equitable society. As a confirmation to our earlier stance, rigorous approaches to peace and conflict studies emerged following the end of the world war II. Many Universities around the world began to develop courses both in their graduate and undergraduate programmes on peace and conflict resolution. Another notable peace and conflict resolution education process is the efforts by organization, NGO's etc, like the international institute on peace Education (I.I.P.E) United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE) and the Civic Education Project (CEP) through their Community learning programmes which offers Community inhabitants, students and young people an opportunity to learn and practice peace and conflict resolution by developing the knowledge, values and skills needed to make positive impact on society (Kester, 2009). In the position of peace and conflict studies (N.D:6) peace and conflict resolution education also spread to the combatants like the military where it was expressed that "One of the interesting developments within peace and conflict studies is the number of military personnel undertaking such studies". This poses some challenges, as the military is an institution overtly committed to combat. In the article "Teaching peace to the Military" published in the journal "Peace Review" James Page argues for five principles that ought to understand this undertaking namely, respect but do not privilege military experience, teach the just war theory, encourage students to

be aware of the tradition and technique of non-violence, help to deconstruct, demythologize and recognize the importance of military virtue.

### The Concept of Peace

Conceptually the meaning of peace is a complex phenomenon that has been defined and interpreted differently by different scholars at different occasions and intervals. Giving this position, some scholars see peace as the absence of war. This position may not be absolutely correct because even during war there are some periods of relief of which at some interval there seem to be some level of peace. Others see peace as a period of dependence where one does not spend time thinking of what to eat or wear or stay. Others think for their welfare. Another school of thought is of the view that peace in life can only be achieved at the point of death hence the tag "Rest in Peace". Away from the above views is the view of Kester, (2009:1) who described peace "as the absence of physical and structural violence and the presence of justice, this definition according Kester, is the affirmation of the opposite of war situation which is believed to be peace with emphasis on justice which depicts fairness and equity. In a related development, the concept of peace is also defined "as political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practice and norms" the definition here presents peace as a complex and formal phenomenon where justice and social stability is determined by political conditions through institutionalized frameworks, practices and social-cultural norms. (Peace and conflict studies N.D).

In a more encompassing manner, Robison, & Davidson, (2006:1015) defined peace as "the freedom from or absence of war, a treaty or agreement ending a war, freedom or absence of noise, disturbance or disorder, quietness or calm, freedom from mental agitation, serenity as well as peace of mind. Even though we contest the validity of this definition, we can convince our readers that the definition stands out among the previous definitions and it is the most comprehensive and all encompassing, this is because, the definition does not only look at peace from the angle of absence of war alone or the presence of justice and so on, the definition views peace from a wholistic point of view where all the paraphernalia associated with peace are highlighted.

### Types of Peace

Like every other phenomenon that has varying degrees of impact, peace also has its own significant degree of impact; the degree of impact could be noticed felt and observed depending on ones stand point. However, the degree of impact could also be determined by the associated threat for peace and security in the land. To this end, Galtung in peace and conflict studies (N.D) identified two types of peace called Galtung's negative and positive peace framework that is adjudicated to be the most widely used today. Galtung posits that negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence while positive peace refers to the absence of indirect and structural violence, and is the concept that most peace and conflict researchers adopt. Consequently understanding conflict and peace

identified four types of peace namely. (i) Harmony (ii) Durable peace (iii) Stable peace and (iv) Unstable peace.

**Harmony:** according to the author can be defined as the relationship between individuals, groups, communities and nations in which there are virtually no conflicts of interest or values.

**Durable Peace:** This type of peace is described as a lasting peace or a just peace which involves a high level of cooperation at the same time as awareness and pursuit of conflicting interest. Here parties value their overall relationships more than specific interests, separate interests are pursued within peaceful institutionalized dispute settlement mechanism.

**Stable Peace or Cold Peace:** This is a relationship of limited communication and cooperation within a context of basic order, mutual respect and general absence of violence. Groups or nations may compete in various ways but competition follows accepted rules, and disputes are generally worked out in a non-violent manner, more or less predictable ways.

**Unstable Peace or Cold War:** This involves peaceable tension and suspicion among parties possibly with sporadic over violence. There is a little physical violence but no friendship. The parties do not trust and value their relationship enough to guarantee not to use coercion or violence to achieve or gain particular objectives. Peace is tenuous. Levels of tensions rise and fall and parties maintain armed forces as a deterrent, there are few no explicit mutual agreements.

## Conclusion

This paper tries to discuss the various forms of education that is applied to achieve peace and conflict resolution. As a concept, conflict was x-rayed in the light of its perception with a pip into the causes and types of conflict where ignorance and knowledge were identified as some of the causes of conflict; latent manifest, violent as well as non violent conflict represents some of the various types of conflict. Conflict resolution education was also discussed. Here the role of education towards conflict resolution was highlighted as well as the efforts of institutions of lower and higher learning, religious organization, NGOs, International peace organizations, etc. The concept of peace was also discussed as well as the various types of peace where negative and positive peace was identified. Harmony durable, stable and unstable peace was also identified as types of peace.

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