



Early Childhood Education in the World of Violence and Crises: Implications for Global Competitiveness

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ABSTRACT

Violence and crises has become a global phenomenon and Nigeria in particular. The paper is concern with its effects on early childhood education and implication for global competitiveness. The paper identifies children as innocent, peaceful organisms whose education, development and achievements depends on sustainable peaceful atmosphere, such as peaceful physical and bio-social environment. Violence and crises are destructive to children life, survival, growth, development which impact negatively on sustainable progress and global competitiveness in every aspect of life. The paper highlighted that though adults are usually responsible for initiating and indulgence in various form of violence and crises, but children are mostly affected at whatever level or forms it is exhibited or it occur. The paper identifies different kind of violence and crises such as family, community, inter-tribal, inter-religious, child abuses and trafficking and it also indicates several ways in children are affected by violence and crises to include physical, social, health, intellectual, psychological, moral and emotional development which hinder their capacities, wellness, wellbeing, and impede on personal development and capacity for global competitions for attainments and success in sustainable development parameters. The paper recommends the need for the adult to observe restrain in initiating crises and violence even at the level of films, movies, cartoons, play materials, family and to ensure adequate measures are taken to manage conflicts in any form under any disguise. The paper concludes that violence, crises and conflicts are devastating to children's survival, education, and overall development. So rather than initiating and managing violence, crises and conflicts, efforts should be made to prevent and stop the occurrences so as to facilitate sustainable development and global competitiveness.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: June, 2019

Received in revised form: July, 2019

Accepted: August, 2019

Published online: September, 2019

KEYWORDS

Violence, Crisis, Children, Global competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Literatures are available in diverse field of Early Child Care Development Education. The issue of violence and conflict as it affect provision of ECCDE in Nigeria and globally have not received adequate attention. Therefore the purpose for this paper is to bring to lime light, the effect of current high incidences of crisis and violence in Nigeria and beyond on children development and education, Precisely ECCDE and its implication for global competitiveness.

Article 19 of the UNO and WHO on convention on the right of child define violence as all form of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, mal-treatment or exploitation including sexual abuse or exposure of children to intimate partner violence (UNO,WHO 2007).

This paper hinges the ecological model in understanding and interpreting violence to children. The theory explains violence as interplay

between society, community, relationship and individual. The relevance of the theory could be inferred from preview of cross-section of communities, groups and individuals involved in various manifestations of crises and violence in Nigeria as a federation.

Violence and crises have become a global phenomenon and an evil that does no good to anyone. More especially when the encounter befalls children who are by no mean powerless, dependent and defenceless. Violence and crises have eroded the peace and harmonious coexistence that is supposed to exist among human beings with specific reference to Nigeria. The current wave of crises and violence is so widespread, Literatures available on Global peace index and information on list of on-going conflicts as at 2016 indicated that 67 countries are involve in war comprising 767 militants, guerrillas, terrorists, separatist and anarchic group. In Africa alone there are 29 war groups with 233 militants,

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insurgents or anarchic groups, the countries are Southern Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Northern Korea, Ukraine, Egypt, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Cameroon, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda. In Asian continent there are 16 countries in war these included: Afghanistan, Burma-Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Europe the hot spot includes Chechnya, Dagestan, Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Northern-Ireland, Russia, Spain, and Turkey. In Middle East countries affected by war are seven namely Iraq, Israel, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia. In America areas of Conflict are six, which includes Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador (Schwab, 2013, Mahun 2013)

The world has become a global village thus human being irrespective of where they live are affected directly or indirectly by the positive or negative happenings elsewhere. Many countries are in war or freshly out from war that has turned human into wild creature and rendered human society into jungle where the slogan is 'survival of the fittest'. More especially when the encounters befall children who are by no means powerless, dependent and defenceless.

The most vulnerable are children and they are more affected by the events of crisis or violence. It is worth to note that the effect of violence on humans begins even before birth (NCTSN 2014, UNESCO 2015, WHO 2017,). Similarly, early brain development or defect (in utero to age 5-6) can have lasting impact on health, learning, and behaviour throughout life (Richard 2002). Because most of brain and nervous system development occurs in the uterus and crisis and violence experience by mothers are as well detrimental to the unborn baby,

The incessant violence and crises in Nigeria had made it difficult for government to adequately fund the health sector, with high bulk of budget allocated to solve insecurity problems. On the same vain current security challenges also pose threat to pregnant mothers to access health facilities. In addition, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps have become a place of terror, victimisation and danger zone for displaced parents and children, some of whom are orphaned in a most horrible way by their parents killed in their front. Some do not know the whereabouts of their parents or are left with no relations around. The recurring challenges are, the children

have no adequate feeding, clothing, shelter, or bio-social relations, no care, affection, attachment desirable for growing children. They have no adequate access to education, health and welfare with government and non-governmental agencies interventions being mismanaged and misappropriated causing a lot of setbacks. All these constitute very serious challenges toward ECCDE, sustainable development and of course global competitiveness.

Types and effects of Violence and Crisis in Early Childhood Years

Literature and studies (Richard 2002, Akingboye and Osakwe 2017, UNICEF and WHO 2008) shows that conditions during prenatal, perinatal, neonatal, post-natal and early childhood aged 1-3 years are substantive factors responsible for violence tendencies among children. Because being exposed to violence before and after birth, a child who is a direct recipient of violence is likely to be also violent. Adriana (2011) further revealed that even when they are not direct victims of violence they can be affected by violence that they see, hear, and observe within their environment or through watching violent films or scenarios.

Accordingly exposing children to disagreements, heated arguments, confrontations, and frequent hostile interaction and conflicts between parents or adults are sending wrong signals to the child that the environment is not safe, it frightens children and causes them to have toxic or chronic stress, develop poor socio-emotional skills and other psychological problems.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (2004) indicated that exposure to violence and conflict in early years can deter infants' ability to control his brain stress response system which can affect his long term psychological and physical wellness and wellbeing. Neurologists confirmed that the experiences in the first three years of child life are strong determinants of the pattern of early brain development with high rate of conflict and violence posing as toxic that produce negative consequences on a child. In this regard, excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain. Similarly, traumatic events have profound sensory impact on young children.

Furthermore, their sense of safety is shattered by frightening visual stimuli, loud noises, violent movement, and other sensation associated with unpredictable frightening events. The frightening images tend to reoccur in form of night terrors, new fears, or in actions, or play that reenact the event. Similarly, domestic, community, natural disasters, neglects, abuses at home or

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school, violence, terrorism and traumatic grief are bound to have serious consequences on children.

Therefore, visible and the invisible scenes usually cause grief and pains in children, some of which cannot be calculated, because they are invisible, example satellite technology has made certain types of violence – terrorism, wars, riots and civil unrest visible to television audiences among whom are children. Some children are often exposed to much more violence in homes, workplaces and even in the medical and social institutions set up to care for people. Children victims are too young, weak or ill to protect themselves. Example, the killings of parents in front of their children that took place in Borno by Boko Haram insurgents are brutal and sorrowful scenarios. Children are forced by social conventions or pressures to keep silent about their experiences, no protection, no rescue and no succour. Some efforts being made for supports and assistance are ruined by adults in charge or their caregivers.

Etienne, Dahlberg, James, Anthony and Rafael (2002) pointed that violence are deeply rooted in the social, cultural and economic fabric of human life, while biological, personality, environmental factors explain some of the predispositions to violence, more often these factors interact with family, community, cultural and other external factors to create a situation where violence is likely to occur.

Actually, some cause and effect of violence in children could be found in every human community inform of attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, cultural practices, victimization, discrimination in social set-up, often over population density, low levels of income and education, unemployment rates, divorce rates, divorce rates, activities of security, law enforcement and judiciary personnel, faulty functions of educational, political and other systems in Nigeria.

The role of biological and demographic factors, such as impulsivity, poor environment, substance abuse, and prior history of aggression and abuse are factors that could lead to violence. In other words, the ecological model focuses on the characteristics of the individual or groups that increase the likelihood of being a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

According to Warwick (2012), Violence affects children from early years into later life on all aspect of development physical, social, emotional. Around 670000 children and adolescent under 15 years die annually from unintentional injuries occurring in low income families and middle income countries.

Similarly, WHO and UNICEF (2008) joint report shows that everyday more than 2000 children and teenagers die from injury that could have been prevented the report reports five most important causes of unintentional injury as road traffic, drowning, burns, falls and poisoning.

Payne (2002) and Mahun (2013) indicated that the 20th century is marked by violence, with legacy of mass destruction, violence on a scale never seen or never possible before in human history. Some violence are legacies resulting from new technologies used in the service of ideologies of hate, these trend could said to have continue into 21st century, which witness a lot of violence at local, national and international level such as Anti-Sikh riots 1984, 1987 Mecca incident, Syrian civil war still ongoing, Iraq war that led to brutal end of Saddam Hussein, Boko haram insurgency in Nigeria. All these left indelible imprint on the life of innocent people especially children.

In Nigeria, crises and violence by Boko haram, Niger Delta and avengers and activities of kidnapers, Cattle rustlers, suicide bombers, incidents of killing and maiming of adults have led to wide spread suffering, poverty, anti-social and immoralities with high consequences on children. Reports Akingboye and Osakwe (2017) shows increase in number of children who are orphan, neglected or abused by those who are supposed to protect them. The early child hood as the most vulnerable period, once they survive the tendency of inter-generation violence may be inevitable. Those who do not enjoy peace are not likely value and bring about peace. The need to revive the legacy where a new generation took after the past generation is very vital. Turning the world into cycle of regenerative violence in which every home, community, state, nation, or country is not spared or is involved is disastrous. This a crucial issue as it seem now is sustainable culture of violence for global competitiveness rather than sustainable development for global competitiveness,

In a global summary of large scale violence, WHO(2017) reported that 1,6 million lives are lost and countless are damaged annually in ways that are not always apparent, other faces of violence includes interpersonal, collectives and self-directed violence.

Violence affect not only health, but all facet of child development, where violence prevail children are deprived of humane instincts and imprint and they grow to see violence and crises as part and parcel of human encounters that are inevitable and unpreventable. It quite disturbing, how violence or insecurity as popular called has transcend every aspect of human endeavour in

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Nigeria. The issue is when parents encounter problem it ultimately affect children, as such fear, anxiety and hopelessness are common symptoms.

UNO report in 2002 indicated that precise cost of violence are difficult to estimate but it is said to translate into billions of US Dollars when translated into annual health care expenditure worldwide , and billions lost on national economies in term of days lost at work , cost of law enforcement and lost in investment. Therefore, Nigeria is losing a lot ton going insecurity issues. On children perspectives many are affected by incapacities encountered by their parents this include inability to provide for the needed essentials of life in-terms adequate feeding, clothing, care, affection, attachment and positive emotions. The effect extends to damages to sense of self, loss to personalities, economies, occupations, intellectual capacities, health hazards, distress, depression and death to numerous adults parents and by extension it automatically transfer to diverse effects on children in various ways. The experiences of being rejected, neglected or suffering usually put children at greater risk to aggressive and antisocial behaviour, including abusive and violence behaviour when they become adults. Jalongo, Fennimore, Pattnaik, Laverick, Brewster, Mutuku (2004), shows strong associations have been found between suicidal behaviour and several types of violence, including child maltreatment.

Research findings(UNESCO 2015) indicated that children care , development and education are intertwined with parental background as poor care ,sanitation, affection, health, nutrition, lack of psycho-social and physical attachment, inadequate physical-emotional security are inimical to educational attainment in terms of impaired perceptual-cognitive and behavioural capacities, mental retardation, difficulty in attention and concentration, inhibit the memory capacity developmental delay and depression. While quality ECCDE help children to overcome development trajectories, as they complement home inadequacies. Children who were opportune to access quality are found to be healthy, well, happy, curios, well prepared and ready for schooling , overcome earl life and later life adversities to advance and grow into successful long life learners and achievers.(UNESCO 2015).

Early Childhood Education and Global Competitiveness: Implications

There are series of global programmes meant to address issues related to children such as the child right act, Education for All, Antenatal

Programmes, Millennium Development Goals, and Sustainable Development Goals. However the global competitiveness index (GCI) is a global survey on the basis of ranking of countries in term of economic competitiveness. The GCI is determined by numerous and diverse factors which were divided into three sub-indexes namely

1. basic requirement sub -index (factor driven economies) comprising four pillars namely: Institution, Infrastructure, Macro-Economic Stability, Health and Primary Education,
2. .Efficiency enhancers sub-index (efficiency driven economy),comprising six pillars as: Higher Education and Training, Good Market Efficiency, Labour Market Efficiency, Financial Market Sophistication, Technological Readiness, Market Size,
3. Innovation and sophistication factors sub-index (Innovation driven economies) composed of two pillars namely: business sophistication, and innovation (Schwab, 2013).

All together there are twelve pillars of competitiveness which are interrelated as they influence all aspects national activities, weakness in one area may invariably affect others within the sub-index and other aspect of development premises. This implies that low index figure in any sub-index impact negatively on provision and success of ECCDE. The statutory policy of ECCDE is reflected in EFA, MDG and SDG, thus each member country(including Nigeria) is involve in the race to provide quality ECCDE. Specifically, the philosophy and rational for ECCDE in Nigeria as specified in National policy on Education revised edition (2013) included

1. Effect a smooth transition from home to school;
2. Prepare the child for primary school level;
3. Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, markets or offices.
4. Inculcate social norms;
5. Inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music, and playing with toy.
6. Develop sense of co-operation and team spirit;
7. Learn good habits ,especially good health habit and
8. Teach the rudiment of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms etc through play.

Nigeria has a stake in Global goal of Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE). It is very crucial and relevant for assessment of indices of development and

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progress made by Nigeria as a member country. This means that indices of global competitiveness and sustainability could also depend on how well Nigerian children are catered for in respect of parental or geographical, or socio-economic background. The National Policy on Education (2013) outlines provisions that have to do with quality care, adequate development and education. Buzoma and Achole (2016) have confirmed the multidimensional and multifaceted benefits of ECCDE in areas of health, personality, education, moral, emotional, capacity development, social wellness and wellbeing, as well as relevance to societal development and progress in areas of employment, economy, science and technology. Reduction of crime rates, poverty, political awareness and reducing illiteracy, disease and ignorance. Also UNESCO (2015) has acknowledged ECCDE as an indispensable tool for harnessing and building wealth on nations. ECCDE has been used to track trajectories of illiteracy, poverty, diseases and other adversities.

Currently, ECCDE have received global attention by use of holistic, multinational, multilateral, multi-sectoral, multiple approaches to give each child early start, sure start, strong foundation not just for survival but for attainment and success. This made provision of high quality Early Childhood Care and Education imperative, the global call is for all countries to pursue common goals in ECCDE. Thus a uniform framework to guide each country in the dimension of globalisation and spirit of competitiveness were set out by a group of experienced early childhood educators that represent diverse international background in conjunction with Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). The rationale was to provide attributes of high-quality early childhood education programme for universal application in areas of philosophies and goals,

Some of the demands to be pursued by countries are: high quality physical environment, developmentally appropriate and effective pedagogy and curriculum, attention to basic and special needs, respect and empowering families and communities, training and provision of professionally prepared teachers and staff, rigorous programme evaluation. Countries are subjected to series of comparative assessments and analysis in different areas by different agencies on global programmes

In the assessment of indices for global competitiveness, Nigeria scored 3.39 points out of 7 on the 2016/2017 global competitiveness report published by the World Economic Forum. On ranking Nigeria was ranked 98 in 2005, but it

dropped to 124 out of 140 countries in global competitiveness index (GCI) in 2015/2016 and in 2016/2017 it further dropped to 127 position out of 138 countries surveyed by World Economic Forum (WEF) (Schwab, 2013). The implication is that Nigeria is dropping back instead of progressing this symbolised significant setback not only for economic but in other indices of development including early childhood education attainments.

Globalisation has become more rapid and widespread movement involving exchange of information, ideas, services and products. Though globalization has eroded the functional and political borders that separated people into sovereign states, it has promoted global competitiveness, this has driven a massive expansion in world trade accompanied by a demand for increased economic output, creating millions of jobs and raising living standards in some countries in a way previously unimaginable.

The effects of globalization have been remarkably uneven because in some parts of the world, globalization has led to increased inequalities in income and helped destroy factors such as social cohesion that had protected against interpersonal violence. The insecurity issue in Nigeria is case for reference. Rather than helping Nigeria, globalisation has become obstacles for violence prevention and contributed to increase of insecurities with its decisive effects on development and education of our children.

It further increases the negative effects Nigerian societies which already have high levels of inequality between northern, western and southern regions, the insecurities experienced more in the north has further widened the gap. The use of media to spread mischief and incite people against each other along with political terrain has helped to cause more rifts and interpersonal conflict between individuals and groups. Similarly, globalisation has led to removal of market constraints, and increased incentives for profit which our business tycoons have misused to impede on economic, social, health, political life of Nigerians for example, import of out-dated products, smuggling of ammunition, alcohol, expired and fake drugs, these have increased security and other related challenges, with more devastating effects on weak and vulnerable children whose present and future life is being ruined.

These backward trends of ECCDE in Nigeria as relate to sustainable development and global competitiveness can be attributed to number of factors, which includes among the problems identified by Buzoma and Achole (2016) to impinge on ECCDE are poor funding,

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poor policy implementation and politics in ECCDE administration. Other challenges of ECCDE include inadequate professionally qualified caregivers and teachers, resources, curriculum, professional development, supervision, staff-child ratio, and funding.

Virtually, Children are worst heat by insecurity, crises and violence, it has negative on physical, health, social, emotional, educational and general wellbeing, which ECCDE seek to promote. Similarly, Nigeria is still rated among countries with high prevalence of infant and childhood mortality and even maternal morbidity. In addition, inadequate parental awareness, and proper parenting skills have resulted in child neglects and abuse by parents and guardians. There is inadequate machinery to deal with security issues, creating scenario where children are used for suicide bombing, more killings of adults' results in to more orphans. Children who are supposed to be enjoying quality care, development and education are left to suffer in IDP camps and society thus and becoming easy recruits by criminals.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that the rate of violence, crises and conflicts claiming millions of life and damaging properties, halting activities necessary for living are quite devastating especially to children's survival, education, and overall development and capacity for global competitiveness. About twenty million school age children out of school, high rate of illiteracy, poverty, corruption, insecurities, child abuse and high infant mortality rate, and insurgency killings rendering children orphans and hopeless. These factors are playing negative roles such that indices of education and development are generally so low for global competitiveness. The damages caused are enormous, the condition of our children today signifies our future, and they are supposed to be our assets not liabilities. So our present and future are at stake. Rather than managing violence, crises and conflicts, efforts should be made to prevent and stop the occurrences so as to facilitate sustainable development and global competitiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The spirit of global competitiveness for positive outcomes should be harnessed properly, rather than the negativities. Actually, globalization has tendency to increase broad information sharing and enhance new international networks and alliances that have the potential to improve

the scope and quality of data collected on violence. This can be used to build strong synergies to address security challenges through corroboration with other countries.

2. Literature shows that globalization has raised living standards and helped reduce inequalities in advanced countries. The need greater possibility of economic interventions from them to be used to lessen tensions and conflicts both within and between countries is very vital. Furthermore, globalization can be used create special policies on social, economic and political factors that transcend national boundaries to curtail and subdue violence and its effects on a regional or global scale. In this regard international laws and treaties designed to reduce violence should be promulgated and implemented properly.
1. 3. Because violence is a multifaceted problem with biological, psychological, social and environmental roots, it needs to be confronted on several different levels. The ecological theory model is suggested, because serves multi- purpose as it engages every person as stake holder in facilitating or addressing any form of crisis and violence that pose threat to human life especially in early childhood. This means that since each level in the ecological model represents a level of risk, then similarly each level should also be used as a key point for intervention.
3. Multi-sectoral partnerships are highly desirable at the national level as much as at the local level. A variety of government ministries, agencies and parastatal not only those concerned with law enforcement, social services, education and health to join effort to contribute in preventing violence and ECCDE provisions. Example, ministry of finance, Ministries for labour and productivity, commerce and industry are obvious partners in harnessing job creation to empower parents, because poverty and unemployment have constituted high reasons for parents not meeting the needs of children adequately.
4. Parenting education should be incorporated as general studies course in senior secondary and tertiary institution to prepare them. Mosque and churches should be used to educate people on parenting skills. Child neglect and abuse should be prosecuted and punished accordingly
5. Security agencies and personnel should be people with proven integrity, should be properly trained, and enumerated, with proper check and balance machinery to enhance service delivery. Need for

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partnership with selected people of proven integrity from community members to ensure proper security.

6. The youth who are major activists in violent and conflict activities should be properly sensitised, educated and engaged in worthwhile ventures and meaning activities that could yield positive reward. Should be given workshop or capacity training. Commuters of violence, Criminals and especially those who partake in major crises and violent acts like the boko haram insurgency, Niger delta avengers, arm robbery, kidnapping which have affected many Nigerian children should be properly made to face the wrath of the law, amnesty approach should be used with caution rather de-radicalisation process should be used.
7. Responsibility and needs of children should be a priority task by all adults. Irresponsible parents should be prosecuted and punished. Every parent should be provided with skill and empowered to keep to parenting mandate. All children should be handled with special regard by all. Provision of care, affection and quality training of children should be made policy with punishment to defaulters.

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