

**TRIPLE HELIX MODEL: AN INTEGRATED INNOVATIVE STRATEGIC TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract**

*Conflict, if not properly handled at the formation stage, has the capacity of escalating to the complex level. The uncontrollable stage with its ripple effect can result to negative cultural, environmental, social, economic and political impact ripping off the society sustainable peace-building that would pave way for overall sustainable development. Since it is now obvious that the government alone cannot proffer fruitful solution to conflict, hence, the introduction of a stronger synergy that is more result oriented even better than the usual linear method of Public Private Partnership (PPP) becomes imperative. This study therefore explores the efficacy of an innovative tool; Triple Helix model that can harness all the relevant stakeholders in detecting, preventing, avoiding and managing conflict that would hamper business education programme' effectiveness whose products (graduates) are expected to maximally contribute their competencies and proficiencies for sustainable development in Nigeria and beyond. It was therefore recommended among others that; all the parties to the triple-helix model should be actively involved and to also extend the model by applying the more comprehensive quadruplex and quintuplet models for optimum result in business education programme for peace-building.*

**Keyword:** Conflict, Peace-building, Business Education, Strategies, Triple-Helix Model, Sustainable development.

**Introduction**

Recently, there has been an upsurge of diverse conflicts globally. These conflicts are witnessed in the form of ethnic, religious, political, individual, family and organizational crises among others. Most times, these conflicts could emanate from the fact that personal interests tend to override collective interest in all

facets of endeavours. The escalation of these issues is tantamount to sustainable peacebuilding that would pave way for a sustainable development which we all yearn for. According to Okebukola (2016), to promote sustainable development, there must be peace, not ordinary peace as defined by 'the absence of "war", but as an atmosphere of tolerance, harmonious co-existence and mutual development, where people are genuinely dedicated to co-habiting and working together with understanding, not oblivion of their differences – the concept of peace clearly identified in the Swahili word: *Ubuntu*.

The *Ubuntu* concept clearly specifies that in the absence of war, some social conditions should also be absent, such as: poverty, exclusion, intimidation, oppression of the poor and the vulnerable, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary people by those in power, oppression of women, favouritism in employment opportunities, monopolization of resources and power by some sections of the society among others. Therefore, peace, apart from being crucial to human security, is also an essential condition for all development without which the social, economic and environmental triple bottom line of the global sustainable development goals will be hampered and unrealistic.

One cannot talk about peace-building without first grasping the meaning of the concept that necessitates it, which is conflict. Faleti (2016) revealed that conflict is a fluid and infinitely elastic concept which can be twisted into different shape and has become an issue over which scholars have not uniformly given a position. But David (2016) defined conflict as the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. Conflict comes in different forms. Catholic Relief Services (2018) broadly categorized conflict into intra and inter conflicts. An Intra-conflict consists of intra-personal conflict and intra-group conflict while inter-conflict is made up of inter-personal and inter-group conflicts. This categorization presupposes that conflict can generate from within an individual possibly due to some unmet needs, unachieved set goals, failed expectations among others. The effects of the unattainable goals could elude him peace of mind which can degenerate into transferred aggressions to his fellow individuals, down to group members and beyond. On this note, it is imperative to understand the various stages of conflicts for easy management.

### **Stages of Conflict**

**Stage 1:** Gathering Materials for the Fire – At this stage there is no fire yet. It is equivalent to potential for conflict. **Stage 2:** Igniting the Fire – At this stage the fire has been lit. It is equivalent to a trigger event that sets off confrontation.

**Stage 3: Bonfire** – At this stage the fire is burning with a lot of energy, consuming the woods that are fuelling it. This stage is equivalent to a conflict crisis. **Stage 4: Coals** – At this stage the fire is reducing, having burned out most of the woods, leaving some hot coals. This is equivalent to stage where conflict either continues to deescalate or, if there is another trigger and more fuel is added, then there is potential for further conflict. **Stage 5: Fire Out** – At this stage, the fire is completely out and there are no flickers of fire in the coals. This is equivalent to a stage where focus is no longer placed on the fire, but on reconstruction and regeneration. It is important to understand in which stage the conflict you are addressing is because each stage presents opportunities for certain sets of peacebuilding interventions (Neufeldt, Fast, Schreiter, Starken, MacLaren, Cilliers, & Lederach, 2002).

In order to effectively prevent any form of conflict from being violent and destructive, there is need to make deliberate effort towards analyzing it so as to achieve a sustainable peacebuilding. Conflict analysis is therefore a structured inquiry into the causes and potential trajectory of a conflict that seeks to identify opportunities for managing or resolving disputes (Catholic Relief Services, 2017).

### **Key Elements of Conflict Analysis**

When conducting a conflict analysis, Africa Peace Forum, (2004) stressed that it is important to examine the profile, causes, actors and dynamics. These are the basic elements, broadly agreed in the conflict analysis field. **Profile:** A brief characterisation of the context (political, economic, socio-cultural context including existing and emerging issues, affected areas and history). **Causes:** Structural and proximate / immediate causes as well as trigger events. **Actors:** All those engaged in or being affected by the conflict (groups, institutions, individuals), including their interests, goals, capacities and relationships. **Dynamics:** The resulting interactions between the conflict profile, the actors and causes including projected future scenarios. For CRS, these key elements are represented by the Profile, Problem (causes), People (actors) and Process (dynamics) – commonly known as the 4Ps analytical framework. However, CRS(2018) advocated for a participatory process – where data / information is gathered from carefully selected groups, including those directly involved and affected by the conflict.

The general ambition of peace-building is “to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into

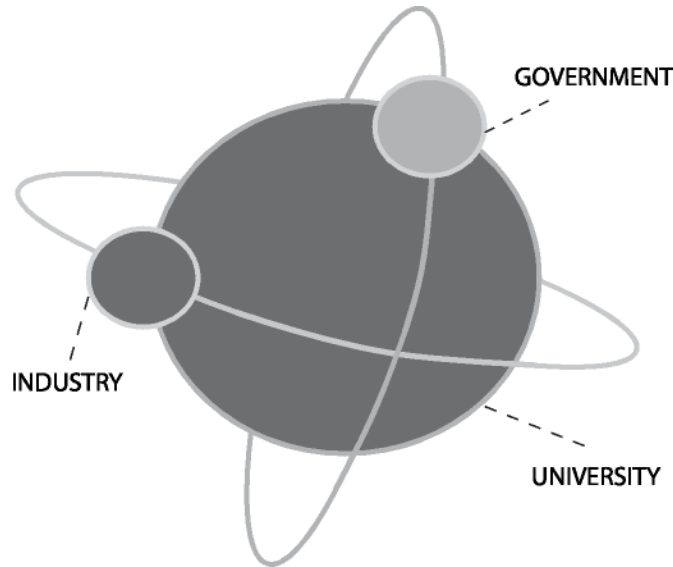
conflict.” It connotes activities that go beyond crisis intervention, such as longer-term development, and building of governance structures and institutions (United Nations for Peace). Peacebuilding includes a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national, and international levels to address the immediate impacts and root causes of conflict before, during, and after violent conflict occurs.” (Lisa, 2013). • Peacebuilding is both a process and a goal, and it is a means and an end. • It seeks not just the end of direct violence, but also the building of a just and sustainable peace—the positive peace that most of the drawing depict (Catholic Relief Service, 2018). Hence, peace-building that promote collaboration, compromise and ownership of the process are preferred. These could include informal discussions, dialogue, negotiation and mediation.

In achieving peace-building, conflict could be addressed using one method but oftentimes a mix of methods is employed to address a particular conflict. **Informal discussions** happen within everyday situations. It is a form of very informal negotiations. **Negotiation** is when the parties involved talk to each other to address a problem / conflict. It is an interactive process where there should be even power balance and parties want to reach a joint agreement. **Mediation** is a form of facilitated negotiation process where parties invite a neutral third party, acceptable to all, to help them reach a joint agreement and is appropriate in situations of unequal power balance. **Arbitration** is where an external third party (an arbitrator), someone with “wisdom” or expertise, is asked to solve the problem and makes a ruling on behalf of the parties. Adapted with modifications from African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), (2004)

Empirical studies have revealed that conflicts cannot be resolved only by the government especially by its popular method of imposing negative peace, by force. But to structurally deal with conflict, there is need for collaborative efforts of many stakeholders, hence the suitability of an integrated innovative strategic model known as *Triple Helix*. Innovation is ..... Strategy is a plan of actions designed to achieve a long term goal. It is a master plan or blue-print for the achievement of a set goal. In setting the goals, actions need to be determined and streamlined and necessary resources mobilized to for execution for effective result. Kiechel (2010) perceived it as the human attempt to get to desirable ends with the available means. In the views of Freedman (2015), strategy is a high level plan to achieve goals under conditions of uncertainty. It is a system of

finding, formulating and developing a doctrine that will ensure long term success it followed effectively (Rene, 2017).

**Figure 1: Triple helix Model**



The triple helix model of innovation refers to a triadic relationship between university-industry-government in the Knowledge Society. This framework was initiated in the 1990s by Etzkowitz (1993) and Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1995) with the introduction of “The Triple Helix, University-Industry-Government Relations: A laboratory for Knowledge-Based Economic Development”. Interactions between universities, industries and governments have given rise to new intermediary institutions, such as technology transfer offices and science parks. The triple helix also participated in the transformation of each institution (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1995; Etzkowitz, 2008). The Triple Helix Model sets the institutions in a pro-active stance in transfer of knowledge or putting knowledge to use, in creating new knowledge as well as initiating collaborative process. It operates according to an interactive rather than a linear model of innovation.

As institutions raise their technological level, they engage students in higher levels of skill development and knowledge transfer. Industries can act as venture capitalist by facilitating graduates’ employability skills as well as assisting in funding research. While the Government has traditional regulatory role by formulating policies and in setting the rules of the game as well as funding research (Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz, 1998). These interactions provide

students with new ideas, skills and entrepreneurial talent of wealth creation and self reliance. And these students turnout to become owners of tomorrow's industries contributing to sustainable economic growth and job creation in Nigerian society. Also these interactions enhance the capacity of the business education gradates to generate technologies that turn to become springboards to the formations of new industries thereby enhancing peace-building for sustainable development.

### **The conceptualization of the triple helix model**

The former contract, based on the linear model of innovation that assumed that the contributions of academic research to the economy would be solely long-term, is said to be giving place to one in which long- and short-term contributions are possible. A triple-helix-based mode of interaction emerges because 'a spiral model of innovation is required to capture multiple reciprocal linkages at different stages of the capitalization of knowledge'. The bottom line is that the Triple Helix model can be a driving force for innovation and economic development in a Knowledge Society, if the academia, business education play a proactive roles in the hybridization of elements from the academia, industry and government to generate new institutional and social structures for the production, transfer and application of knowledge.

In this context, institutions has the mandate of conducting fundamental research that creates new knowledge to unravel fundamental principles with the focus of serving the needs of the students in terms of skill development of the society leading to sustainable economic development of the industry in terms of knowledge transfer and production output. And to shape the curricular to teach skills which produce workforce relevant to the needs of employers, and sustainable economic development in the society. Business education as one of the programmes run in African higher institutions aligns to this pursuance of improved economy.

Business education is a broad and comprehensive discipline whose instructional program encompasses knowledge, skills, vacation and aptitude needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal businesses and also function in the economic system (Okoro 2013). In congruence with the above assertion, Udo (2015) corroborated that business education is an encompassing activity-based educational programme that is concerned with the acquisition of practical skills, understanding, attitudes, work habit and competencies that are requisite to success in a chosen business occupation. Through practical training,

Okolo (2014) maintained that business education graduates will be creative, innovative and business opportunity seekers that will transform opportunities and resources into useful goods and services.

From the sustainable development perspective, Ugwuogo (2013) revealed that business education programme supports its graduates in becoming active citizens and enables them to act responsibly and sustainably in their future work places. The author further buttressed that it enables its graduate to be more useful socially, economically, morally and politically to themselves in particular and to generally to their societies. Similarly, Gidado and Akaeze (2014) remarked that the programme exposes its recipients to the economic system of the country and equips them with lifelong skills that would enable them to make reasonable judgement as producers, entrepreneurs, employers, employees and consumers of goods and services. All these lifelong preparation will in no small measure strengthen the efforts towards sustainable nation.

Sustainable development is therefore a state of having well balanced, steady and effective use of human, material and capital resources for total economic independent of a nation without compromising the future (Umezulike and Okoye, 2013). In the same vein, Abubakar (2014) averred that sustainable development is a process of improving on the range of opportunities that will enable individuals and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potentials over a long period of time while maintaining the resilience of the economic, social and environmental system. Kundan, in Ugoh (2008) then posited that continued sustainability development is only feasible when concrete steps are taken to ensure that youths acquire skills that will enable them to be self-directed and thereby become the tools for achieving development and its sustainability. Ajisafe, Bolarinwa and Edeh (2015) noted that since the primary goal of business education is to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and business men and women that will effectively contribute to the national development; it can then be deduced that business education is an impetus for national development that will lead to a peaceful society.

Recognizing the place of innovativeness in achieving peace-building and a sustainable nation, Ogakwu and Isife (2013) expressed that sustainable development is a phenomenon associated with changes in human conditions through the use of their innovative and creative energies. These efforts are channeled an unending improvement of the capacity of individuals and society

to control and manipulate the forces of nature in order to live a better and more rewarding life.

In his view, Emeasoba (2017) suggested that university-industry should partner in areas such as curriculum development, improving practical training through SIWES, knowledge transfer, financial support for institutions developmental projects, scholarships, career guidance initiatives among others to enhance graduate skills and ensure a smooth and effective transition between university and the business environments through collaborations. With that students especially, business education students will have opportunities to find placement in industries, update new skills, and meet market needs, increases research and training among others. This will promote employment opportunities. And when these graduates are gainfully employed or set up their own various businesses as entrepreneurs, they will experience both internal and external peace which will have a positive ripple effect for sustainable peace-building which will enhance sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

When peace-building is not seen as participatory and transformative, but simply as a stop-gap measure left for the government alone to actualize, there is a strong tendency of it relapsing into conflict subsequently. This is in tandem with the United Nations' evidences which revealed that about quarter of all peace agreements fail in the first five years they have been signed and nearly 50% fail within ten years. But if business education programme, which produces societal responsible graduates, who have been rigorously equipped with up-to-date knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and competences, judiciously applies the Triple-Helix model, it will undoubtedly produce peaceful graduates. And these economically relevant graduate will not be part of the citizens indulging in anti-developmental behaviours such as: vandalism, stealing, cyber fraud, kidnapping among others, which endanger peaceful existence. Rather, they will positively affect other individuals by engaging in economic, cultural, environmental and political ethical activities that will maximally satisfy consumers, protect their rights, while adhering to the enabling laws and regulations of the government. Then will the triadic synergy form an enduring legacy that will be bequeathed to the future generations for sustainable peace-building that will ensure a sustainable development.

## **Recommendations**

Since the quest for sustainable peace-building as a pathway for attaining a sustainable development has emerged as one the priority areas in recent global issues, there is need for all the business education programme parties in the triple –helix model to:

- actively participate and constantly evaluate activities for early adjustments and realignment towards the individual and collective goals;
- apply more proactive efforts towards the programme by extending triple-helix model to a more comprehensive model of innovation which added 'community' to form Quadruplex-helix model. And also utilize quintuplex-helix model which is ecologically sensitive with the addition of the natural environment.
- devise/modify other innovative strategies that will suit the dynamic nature of the African continent.

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