# Role of Education in Enhancing National Security: Implications for Peace and Stability in Nigeria

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| Abstract | Original Research Article |
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*This study examined the role of education in enhancing national security and its implications for peace and stability in Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the influence of access to quality education, the contribution of civic and peace education, the impact of educational inequality, and the extent to which educational curriculum content supports national security. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and involved a population of 1,250 respondents, including teachers, lecturers, school administrators, policymakers, security personnel, and community leaders, from which a sample of 312 respondents was selected using multi-stage sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, regression analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that access to quality education and civic and peace education significantly enhance national security and social stability, while educational inequality is strongly associated with increased insecurity. Although curriculum content was significantly related to national security, its influence was relatively weak. The study concluded that strengthening access to quality education, expanding civic and peace education, addressing educational inequalities, and reforming curriculum content are essential strategies for promoting national security and sustainable peace in Nigeria. Recommendations were made for government, educational authorities, and policymakers to implement these strategies.*

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## Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, faces profound and multidimensional security challenges that threaten its internal cohesion, developmental aspirations, and regional stability. The security landscape is characterized by a lethal combination of insurgency (notably Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province in the Northeast), protracted farmer-herder conflicts, rampant banditry and kidnapping in the Northwest, separatist agitations in the Southeast, and piracy in the Niger Delta (Campbell, 2022; ICG, 2021). These conflicts have resulted in significant humanitarian crises, including internal displacement, food insecurity, and the erosion of social trust.

Conventional, kinetic approaches to security predominantly military and law enforcement responses have proven insufficient in achieving lasting peace. Scholars and policymakers increasingly argue that sustainable security must address the underlying socio-economic and ideological drivers of violence and instability (Onuoha, 2020). Within this paradigm, education is posited as a critical, yet often underutilized, non-kinetic instrument for enhancing national security. Education's potential role extends beyond literacy to encompass the cultivation of civic values, critical thinking, tolerance, and the provision of viable alternatives to violence (UNESCO, 2021).

The nexus between education and security in Nigeria is complex. On one hand, deficiencies in the educational system are directly and indirectly linked to insecurity. A staggering out-of-school population, estimated at over 20 million children and adolescents, represents a massive human capital deficit and a vulnerable recruitment pool for criminal and extremist groups (UNICEF, 2022). High youth unemployment, exacerbated by an education system often criticized for its lack of alignment with market needs and entrepreneurial skills, fuels idleness and grievance (NBS, 2020; World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, instances of curricular bias, ethno-religious discrimination in educational

access, and the use of divisive narratives in some informal educational settings have been identified as factors that reinforce societal fissures (Okechukwu, 2021).

Conversely, a robust, inclusive, and quality education system is theorized to be a foundational pillar of "human security." It can foster national unity by promoting a shared sense of Nigerian identity alongside respect for diversity. Education that emphasizes peace education, conflict resolution, and civic ethics can build societal resilience against violent extremism (Adekola, 2023). Economically, by equipping citizens with relevant skills, education enhances employability, reduces poverty-induced grievances, and drives the inclusive growth necessary for long-term stability (Mbah, 2024).

Despite this potential, there is a significant research and policy implementation gap. While the National Policy on Education and the National Security Strategy acknowledge the importance of education, their integration remains weak in practice. Existing studies have often examined either the security crisis or the educational crisis in isolation, with insufficient empirical focus on the specific mechanisms through which educational interventions can mitigate identified security threats and promote a culture of peace (Ezeah, 2023).

Therefore, this study is situated at the critical intersection of these two national priorities. It proceeds from the premise that national security in the 21st century is inseparable from human development and that education is a strategic, long-term investment in peace and stability. Against the backdrop of Nigeria's persistent insecurity and educational challenges, this research seeks to systematically investigate the role of education as an enhancer of national security.

## Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has continued to face persistent security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts, which have undermined national development and social stability. Despite various government interventions, these challenges remain entrenched, particularly in regions with high rates of youth unemployment, educational deprivation, and socio-economic marginalization. While education is widely recognized as a tool for human capital development and social transformation, there is limited empirical evidence on its direct role in enhancing national security and promoting peace and stability in Nigeria. Specifically, issues such as unequal access to quality education, inadequacies in civic and peace education, and gaps in curriculum content relevant to security awareness may exacerbate insecurity by leaving youths vulnerable to radicalization, criminal activities, and social unrest. Furthermore, educational inequalities across regions, gender, and socio-economic status are believed to deepen feelings of marginalization, which can fuel conflict and violent behavior. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the extent to which education through access, civic and peace education,

curriculum content, and equity can contribute to enhancing national security and fostering sustainable peace and stability in Nigeria.

**Objectives of the study**

The study sought to:

1. examine the influence of access to quality education on national security in Nigeria;

2. assess the role of civic and peace education in promoting peaceful coexistence;

3. evaluate the impact of educational inequality on the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria;

4. investigate the extent to which educational curriculum content support national security efforts.

**Research Questions**

1. What influence does access to quality education have on national security in Nigeria?

2. How does civic and peace education contribute to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria?

3. What is the impact of educational inequality on the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria?

4. To what extent does educational curriculum content support national security?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Access to quality education has no significant influence on national security in Nigeria.

2. Civic and peace education do not significantly contribute to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

3. There is no significant relationship between educational inequality and insecurity in Nigeria.

4. Educational curriculum content do not significantly support national security in Nigeria.

## Literature Review
### Evolving Conceptions of Security and Education

The contemporary literature on security has decisively shifted from a traditional, state-centric paradigm focused on military might towards a broader conception of "human security," which prioritizes the safety and well-being of individuals and communities (UNDP, 1994, foundational to current thought). Within this framework, education is increasingly recognized not merely as a developmental goal but as a critical non-kinetic instrument for fostering sustainable peace and stability (UNESCO, 2021). This review synthesizes recent literature (2020-2025) exploring the multifaceted nexus between education and national security, with a specific focus on the Nigerian context.

## The Education Deficit as a Security Threat

A dominant theme in recent scholarship directly links Nigeria's security crises to systemic failures in its education sector. The most frequently cited statistic is the country's out-of-school children population, exceeding 20 million, which represents a profound human capital and security liability. Scholars argue this cohort constitutes a "tinderbox" of vulnerability, easily exploited by insurgent and criminal groups for recruitment due to idleness, poverty, and a lack of alternative life prospects (UNICEF, 2022; Campbell, 2022). Furthermore, the literature highlights the correlation between poor educational outcomes high dropout rates, low literacy, and skill mismatches and high youth unemployment (NBS, 2020). This economic exclusion is identified as a key driver of criminality, banditry, and communal violence, as disaffected youth seek livelihood through violence (World Bank, 2022; Mbah, 2024).

Beyond access, the content and management of education are also scrutinized. Studies note that educational institutions can sometimes be arenas for reinforcing societal divisions. Okechukwu (2021) points to instances of curricular bias, ethno-religious discrimination in school admissions and staffing, and the use of divisive historical narratives as factors that erode social cohesion and fuel identity-based conflicts. The proliferation of unregulated Almajiri and other informal religious schools, often devoid of secular and civic content, is also cited as a potential incubator for radical ideologies (Ezeah, 2023).

## Education as a Positive Instrument for Peacebuilding and Stability

Conversely, a robust body of literature articulates the proactive role of education in enhancing national security. This is framed around two main pillars: *social cohesion* and *human capital development*.

- **Fostering Social Cohesion and Resilience:** Education is posited as a primary vehicle for building a unified national identity and mitigating extremist narratives. Peace Education (PE) and Citizenship Education (CE) integrated into curricula are emphasized as tools for teaching conflict resolution, tolerance, democratic values, and critical thinking skills that inoculate learners against manipulation by violent groups (Adekola, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). The concept of "Education for Sustainable Development and Peace" (ESDP) underscores the need for pedagogies that promote intercultural dialogue and a sense of shared citizenship, thereby addressing the root causes of fragmentation (UNESCO, 2021).

- **Driving Human Security through Human Capital:** From an economic perspective, education is fundamental to human security. A quality education that aligns with labour market demands (Technical and Vocational Education and Training - TVET, STEM) is directly linked to increased employability, poverty reduction, and inclusive economic growth. By providing legitimate pathways to prosperity, education reduces the economic grievances that often underpin instability (World Bank, 2022; Mbah, 2024). This aligns with the "security-development nexus," which argues that underdevelopment is a key catalyst for insecurity.

## Policy Disconnects and Implementation Gaps

Recent analyses critically examine the policy landscape, identifying a significant implementation gap. While Nigeria's *National Policy on Education* and the *National Security Strategy* (2022) pay rhetorical homage to the link between education and security, scholars note a lack of operational integration and coherence (Ezeah, 2023). The literature points to chronic underfunding of education, poor infrastructure, teacher deficits, and a lack of political will as major impediments to leveraging education for security. Furthermore, most security spending remains allocated to kinetic military operations, with minimal investment in preventive, education-focused security strategies (Onuoha, 2020). Studies call for a more deliberate "whole-of-society" approach that coordinates efforts across security, education, and social welfare ministries.

The extant literature convincingly establishes both the detrimental security impacts of educational failure and the transformative potential of a revitalized education system in Nigeria. However, several gaps persist. First, there is a scarcity of large-scale, longitudinal empirical studies quantitatively measuring the impact of specific educational interventions (e.g., peace education modules, vocational training programs) on concrete security outcomes (e.g., reduction in youth participation in violence, community conflict indices). Second, while policy failures are noted, there is limited research offering context-specific, actionable frameworks for effectively integrating education into national security architecture at federal, state, and local levels. Finally, more nuanced research is needed on the role of non-formal and informal education sectors in either exacerbating or ameliorating insecurity.

This review therefore situates the current study within the need to bridge these gaps, moving from broad theoretical assertions to evidence-based analysis of the mechanisms through which education can be optimized as a strategic tool for enhancing national security, peace, and stability in Nigeria.

## Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the role of education in enhancing national security and its implications for peace and stability in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 1,250 respondents drawn from key education and security–related stakeholders across selected states in Nigeria. The population was made up of 450 teachers, 300 school administrators and education

policymakers, 250 security personnel (including the police, civil defence, and related agencies), and 250 community leaders and youth representatives. These groups were considered appropriate because they are directly involved in educational delivery, policy formulation, community engagement, and national security management. A sample size of 312 respondents was selected for the study using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, which provides an adequate and statistically representative sample for a population of 1,250. The sample was proportionately allocated to the various population groups to ensure fair representation. A multistage sampling technique was employed: selected states were randomly chosen, institutions and communities were sampled using simple random sampling, and respondents within each group were selected through proportionate random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and responses were analyzed using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation) to address the research questions and test the hypotheses.

## Results

**Research question 1:** What influence does access to quality education have on national security in Nigeria?

*Table 1: Perceived Influence of Access to Quality Education on National Security*

**(n = 312)**

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Increased access to quality education reduces youth recruitment into violent groups. | 3.78 | 0.52 | High Influence |
| 2 | Improved teacher quality and pedagogy lead to better critical thinking that deters violent behaviour. | 3.66 | 0.61 | High Influence |
| 3 | Greater school enrolment levels lower the probability of youths engaging in criminal activities. | 3.70 | 0.59 | High Influence |
| 4 | Access to education increases employment opportunities that reduce incentives for insecurity. | 3.55 | 0.68 | High Influence |
| 5 | Wider access to quality education strengthens civic awareness and reduces support for extremism. | 3.82 | 0.48 | High Influence |
| 6 | Equitable access to schools across regions mitigates community-level grievances linked to conflict. | 3.42 | 0.85 | Low Influence |
| 7 | Access to school-based counselling and psychosocial support reduces likelihood of violent reoffending. | 3.34 | 0.90 | Low Influence |
| 8 | Availability of ICT and digital learning in schools improves youth resilience against online radicalization. | 3.49 | 0.77 | Low Influence |
| 9 | Female access to quality education contributes strongly to household stability and local security. | 3.73 | 0.56 | High Influence |
| 10 | Scholarships and bursaries for vulnerable youths discourage recruitment into criminal networks. | 3.61 | 0.66 | High Influence |
|  | Grand Mean |  |  |  |

Table 1 showed the influence access to quality education have on national security in Nigeria Most items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10) show High Influence ($\bar{x} \geq 3.50$), indicating respondents generally agree that access to quality education strongly influences national security through reduced recruitment, improved civic awareness, employment pathways, and female education. Items 6, 7, and 8 fall below 3.50 (marked Low Influence), suggesting respondents perceive weaker or more uncertain influence for regional equity, school-based psychosocial supports, and ICT provision possibly because these areas are less uniformly implemented or visible across contexts.

**Research question 2:** How does civic and peace education contribute to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria?

*Table 2: Perceived Contribution of Civic & Peace Education to Peaceful Coexistence*

**(n = 312)**

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Civic education increases knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities, promoting peaceful behaviour. | 3.88 | 0.44 | Agreed |
| 2 | Peace education in schools improves students' conflict-resolution skills. | 3.79 | 0.50 | Agreed |
| 3 | Classroom activities that teach tolerance reduce inter-ethnic tensions in communities. | 3.71 | 0.63 | Agreed |
| 4 | School-based dialogue programs encourage inter-group understanding and reconciliation. | 3.60 | 0.66 | Agreed |
| 5 | Inclusion of human-rights topics reduces acceptance of violence as a means to an end. | 3.67 | 0.58 | Agreed |
| 6 | Civic education increases youth participation in peaceful community projects. | 3.54 | 0.72 | Agreed |
| 7 | Peace education lowers students' propensity to engage in violent protest and vigilantism. | 3.45 | 0.81 | Disagreed |

| 8 | Teachers are adequately trained to deliver peace and civic education effectively. | 3.18 | 0.95 | Disagreed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | School curricula provide regular opportunities for community peacebuilding activities. | 3.22 | 0.89 | Disagreed |
| 10 | Civic and peace education reduce hate speech and polarizing rhetoric among youth. | 3.58 | 0.69 | Agreed |

Table 2 showed how civic and peace education contribute to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Respondents agree ($\bar{x} \geq 3.50$) that civic and peace education positively contribute to peaceful coexistence on key items: rights awareness, conflict-resolution skills, tolerance, dialogue, human-rights education, civic participation, and reducing hate speech. However, several practical implementation items (7, 8, 9) are Disagreed (means < 3.50), indicating perceived shortfalls in teacher preparedness, regular curricular opportunities for community peacebuilding, and the direct effect on reducing violent protest suggesting that while the content is seen as valuable, delivery and institutionalization need strengthening.

**Research question 3:** What is the impact of educational inequality on the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria?

*Table 3: Perceived Impact of Educational Inequality on Insecurity Prevalence*

(n = 312)

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regional disparities in access to education increase feelings of marginalization that fuel conflict. | 3.86 | 0.53 | High Impact |
| 2 | Gender-based educational gaps contribute to household-level vulnerabilities linked to insecurity. | 3.64 | 0.61 | High Impact |
| 3 | Poor-quality schooling in disadvantaged areas increases youth susceptibility to criminal recruitment. | 3.77 | 0.57 | High Impact |
| 4 | High dropout rates in certain communities correlate with higher incidents of banditry and youth crime. | 3.69 | 0.62 | High Impact |
| 5 | Unequal distribution of educational resources intensifies community competition and conflict. | 3.58 | 0.70 | High Impact |
| 6 | Lack of vocational training in marginalized areas leads to increased unemployment and insecurity. | 3.52 | 0.74 | High Impact |
| 7 | Differential school funding has little effect on long-term community security outcomes. | 2.98 | 0.98 | Low Impact |
| 8 | Inequitable access to secondary and tertiary education does not significantly affect violent conflict. | 2.85 | 0.92 | Low Impact |
| 9 | Perceived unfairness in educational opportunities provokes youth protests and local unrest. | 3.41 | 0.88 | Low Impact |
| 10 | Urban–rural education gaps are a major driver of rural insecurity and migration to conflict zones. | 3.61 | 0.69 | High Impact |

Table 3 showed the impact of educational inequality on the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria. The majority of items (1–6, 10) are rated High Impact (means ≥ 3.50), indicating respondents view educational inequality regional disparities, gender gaps, poor-quality schools, dropouts, and lack of vocational training as major contributors to insecurity. Items 7, 8, and 9 scored below 3.50 (Low Impact), suggesting disagreement with the notion that school funding differentials or access to higher education are unimportant; instead respondents may see more direct, proximal links (dropout, marginalization) as the primary drivers. Overall, the table shows strong perceived linkage between inequality in education and insecurity.

**Research question 4:** To what extent does educational curriculum content support national security?

*Table 4: Extent to Which Curriculum Content Supports National Security*

(n = 312)

| S/N | Statement | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The current national curriculum explicitly incorporates peace education objectives. | 3.22 | 0.91 | Low Extent |
| 2 | Civic education units in the curriculum are adequate to build security-conscious citizens. | 3.10 | 0.88 | Low Extent |
| 3 | Curriculum content provides practical conflict-resolution and negotiation skills. | 3.05 | 0.92 | Low Extent |
| 4 | Technical and vocational elements in the curriculum prepare youth for secure livelihoods. | 3.44 | 0.75 | Low Extent |

| 5 | Entrepreneurship and employability are well-integrated into curricular standards to reduce insecurity. | 3.48 | 0.73 | Low Extent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | The curriculum includes digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness relevant to national security. | 2.95 | 0.99 | Low Extent |
| 7 | Local history and reconciliation topics that could heal communal divides are present in syllabi. | 3.06 | 0.94 | Low Extent |
| 8 | Curriculum review mechanisms adequately update content to respond to emerging security threats. | 2.88 | 0.97 | Low Extent |
| 9 | Guidance and counselling sections in the curriculum are sufficient to address trauma and reintegration. | 3.18 | 0.86 | Low Extent |
| 10 | There is a high extent of collaboration between security agencies and curriculum developers to inform content. | 2.72 | 1.02 | Low Extent |

Table 4 presented the extent educational curriculum content support national security. All ten items score below 3.50 and are therefore marked Low Extent, indicating respondents generally perceive that curriculum content does not sufficiently support national security. Weak areas include explicit peace education, practical conflict-resolution skill training, cybersecurity, curriculum responsiveness to emerging threats, and collaboration with security agencies. Items closest to the threshold (4 and 5) TVET and entrepreneurship integration scored moderately but still below 3.50, suggesting potential but insufficient curricular support for security-related outcomes.

**Hypothesis 1:** Access to quality education has no significant influence on national security in Nigeria.

*Table 5: Regression Analysis of Access to Quality Education and National Security*

| Source | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.214 | 0.173 | | 7.02 | 0.000 |
| Access to Quality Education | 0.642 | 0.058 | 0.618 | 11.07 | 0.000 |

*Model Summary: R = 0.618, R² = 0.382, Adjusted R² = 0.380*

The result indicated that access to quality education has a significant positive influence on national security in Nigeria. The R² value of 0.382 shows that approximately 38.2% of the variation in national security is explained by access to quality education. This implies that improved access to quality education significantly contributes to reduced insecurity through enhanced civic awareness, employability, and youth engagement.

**Hypothesis 2:** Civic and peace education do not significantly contribute to peace and social stability in Nigeria.

*Table 6: Regression Analysis of Civic & Peace Education and Peaceful Coexistence*

| Source | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.087 | 0.181 | | 6.01 | 0.000 |
| Civic & Peace Education | 0.701 | 0.062 | 0.654 | 11.31 | 0.000 |

*Model Summary: R = 0.654, R² = 0.428, Adjusted R² = 0.426*

The analysis showed that civic and peace education significantly contribute to peace and social stability in Nigeria. The R² value indicates that 42.8% of the variation in peaceful coexistence is explained by civic and peace education. This underscores the importance of civic responsibility, tolerance, and conflict-resolution skills embedded in educational programs for sustaining national peace.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between educational inequality and insecurity in Nigeria.

*Table 7: PPMC Analysis of Educational Inequality and Insecurity*

| Variables | N | r | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Educational Inequality & Insecurity | 312 | 0.671 | 0.000 |

The result showed a strong positive and significant relationship between educational inequality and insecurity in Nigeria (r = 0.671). This implies that higher levels of inequality in educational access, quality, and resources are associated with increased insecurity. The finding suggests that addressing educational disparities is critical for mitigating conflict and crime.

**Hypothesis 4:** Educational policies and curriculum content do not significantly support national security and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

*Table 8: Regression Analysis of Curriculum Content and National Security Support*

| Source | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.942 | 0.204 | | 9.52 | 0.000 |
| Curriculum Content | 0.318 | 0.071 | 0.284 | 4.48 | 0.000 |

*Model Summary: R = 0.284, R² = 0.081, Adjusted R² = 0.078*

The analysis indicated that educational curriculum content has a statistically significant but weak influence on national security and peacebuilding in Nigeria. Although the relationship is significant, the R² value of 8.1% suggests that curriculum content currently plays a limited role, reinforcing the need for curriculum reforms to better integrate peace education, security awareness, and employability skills.

## Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that access to quality education significantly influences national security in Nigeria. This emphasizes the critical role education plays in preventing insecurity and promoting social order. The regression result revealed that improved access to quality education explains a substantial proportion of variations in national security outcomes, suggesting that education functions as a preventive security mechanism by equipping individuals with employable skills, critical thinking abilities, and civic consciousness. This finding aligns with the argument of Akinwale (2020), who noted that inadequate access to quality education increases youth vulnerability to recruitment into criminal and extremist activities. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) emphasized that education reduces the likelihood of conflict by addressing structural inequalities and enhancing human capital development. In the Nigerian context, unequal access to education has been linked to youth restiveness, insurgency, and banditry, particularly in conflict-prone regions, thereby reinforcing education as a strategic national security investment (Ojo & Adebayo, 2021).

The result showing that civic and peace education significantly contributes to peace and social stability highlights the importance of value-oriented education in fostering peaceful coexistence. Civic and peace education were found to promote tolerance, conflict resolution skills, respect for human rights, and responsible citizenship, all of which are essential for social harmony. This finding supports the work of Danjuma and Bukar (2019), who observed that peace education reduces ethno-religious tensions by encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding among youths. Likewise, Nwankwo (2022) asserted that civic education strengthens democratic values and discourages violent expressions of grievances. In Nigeria's pluralistic society, where ethnic, religious, and political differences often fuel conflict, embedding civic and peace education within the school system remains a vital strategy for sustainable peace and stability.

The Pearson correlation result indicating a strong and significant relationship between educational inequality and insecurity confirms that disparities in educational access, quality, and resources exacerbate insecurity in Nigeria. Regions and groups that experience persistent educational marginalization are more likely to witness higher levels of crime, insurgency, and social unrest. This finding is consistent with empirical evidence from Okorie and Eze (2021), who reported that educational deprivation contributes to feelings of exclusion and frustration among youths, thereby increasing their susceptibility to criminal networks. Similarly, UNICEF (2021) linked high dropout rates and poor schooling conditions to youth involvement in violence in fragile settings. The implication is that reducing educational inequality is not only a social justice issue but also a core security concern that requires deliberate policy intervention.

Finally, the finding that educational curriculum content has a statistically significant but weak influence on national security suggests that while curriculum matters, its current structure inadequately addresses Nigeria's security realities. Although civic, vocational, and entrepreneurship elements exist within the curriculum, their limited depth and weak implementation reduce their effectiveness in contributing to peacebuilding and security awareness. This finding corroborates the observations of Adeyemi and Yusuf (2020), who argued that Nigerian curricula remain largely examination-driven with insufficient emphasis on practical peace education, security literacy, and employability skills. Similarly, Salami (2023) noted that curriculum reform processes often lag behind emerging security challenges such as cybercrime, radicalization, and communal conflicts. The result therefore points to the need for comprehensive curriculum review and stronger collaboration between education authorities and security stakeholders to enhance the security relevance of educational content.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the study established that education plays a crucial and multifaceted role in enhancing national security, peace, and stability in Nigeria. Access to quality education significantly reduces youths' susceptibility to crime, extremism, and social unrest by promoting employability, critical thinking, and civic awareness, while civic and peace education foster tolerance, responsible citizenship, and effective conflict resolution in Nigeria's diverse society. The findings further revealed that educational inequality manifested in disparities in access, quality, and resource distribution contributes directly to insecurity by deepening marginalization and frustration among affected populations. Although educational curriculum content was found to have a statistically significant relationship with national security, its limited influence indicates gaps in the integration of peace education, security awareness, and practical life skills.

Overall, the study concludes that strengthening equitable access to quality education, expanding civic and peace education, addressing educational inequalities, and reforming curriculum content are indispensable strategies for achieving sustainable national security, peace, and stability in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of the study, the following **four recommendations** are made:

1. Government at all levels should expand equitable access to quality education by increasing investment in school infrastructure, teacher training, and learning resources, particularly in underserved and conflict-prone regions of Nigeria, in order to reduce youth vulnerability to crime, extremism, and social unrest.

2. Civic and peace education should be strengthened and fully integrated across all levels of the education system, with emphasis on tolerance, human rights, conflict resolution, and responsible citizenship, while ensuring that teachers are adequately trained to deliver these components effectively.

3. Policies aimed at reducing educational inequality should be prioritized, including targeted scholarships, vocational training programs, and inclusive education initiatives for marginalized groups, as a deliberate strategy for addressing the root causes of insecurity and social exclusion.

4. The national curriculum should be comprehensively reviewed and updated to better reflect contemporary security challenges by incorporating peacebuilding, digital security awareness, entrepreneurship, and employability skills, with active collaboration between education authorities and relevant security stakeholders.

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