

Effectiveness of Peace Education in Peacebuilding among Post-Conflict Communities in South-West Nigeria

By

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of peace education in peacebuilding among post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria. The study was prompted by persistent mistrust, weakened social relationships, intolerance, and fragile peaceful coexistence in communities where active violence has declined, raising concerns about how much existing peace education efforts contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. Conceptually, the study examined peace education as a holistic process for developing knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours that promote tolerance, dialogue, empathy, non-violent conflict resolution and peaceful relationships; peacebuilding as a multidimensional process of rebuilding trust, relationships, social cohesion and conditions for sustainable peace; and post-conflict communities as communities recovering from conflict where the effects of violence may persist. The study further examined how peace education can contribute to peacebuilding through changes in attitudes, behaviours, relationships, tolerance and social cohesion. Guided by Galtung's theory of positive and negative peace, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 16,000 teachers and school administrators in public secondary schools within selected post-conflict communities across the six states of South-West Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan sample-size table determined a sample of 375 respondents, and the study analysed 348 valid questionnaires using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Findings revealed a high perceived effectiveness of peace education, with an overall mean of 3.44. The study concludes that peace education is perceived as an important school-based contribution to peacebuilding, although the findings do not establish causal effects or statistical significance.

Keywords: Peace Education, Peacebuilding, Post-Conflict Communities, Positive Peace, Social Cohesion, South-West Nigeria

Introduction

Peace is a condition in which individuals and groups can pursue their social, economic, and political interests without resorting to violence. At the same time, positive peace also requires attention to justice, equality, inclusion, and constructive relationships. English and Rubenstein (2025) distinguish negative peace, understood primarily as the absence of direct violence, from positive peace, which concerns the social conditions that reduce structural and cultural sources of violence. This distinction is particularly useful in post-conflict communities because the end of open hostilities does not necessarily remove mistrust, fear, exclusion, grievances or other conditions that can contribute to renewed conflict. Therefore, achieving lasting peace in such communities requires interventions that go beyond the cessation of violence to address the knowledge, attitudes, values and relationships that shape how individuals and groups respond to differences and conflict.

One important avenue for developing these capacities is education. Education has been recognised as an important component of efforts to build peaceful societies. The 2023 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development emphasises that education should develop knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours that enable learners to contribute to peaceful, just and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2023). UNESCO's implementation guidance further stresses that peace-oriented education should extend beyond the classroom and involve curricula, teaching practices, learning environments, teacher development and wider community partnerships

(UNESCO, 2025). Thus, education is not only concerned with transmitting academic knowledge but can also develop the competencies and social relationships needed to transform negative peace into more sustainable forms of positive peace. This makes peace education particularly relevant to post-conflict settings where rebuilding relationships and social trust is as important as preventing overt violence.

Peace education refers to a deliberate process of developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours that enable individuals and groups to prevent violence, manage conflicts constructively, promote tolerance and respect diversity, and build peaceful relationships. It goes beyond teaching learners about the causes and consequences of conflict to equipping them with practical competencies for dialogue, empathy, cooperation, critical thinking, negotiation and non-violent conflict resolution. In Nigeria, peace education has been discussed and implemented through curriculum-related initiatives, teacher education and wider peacebuilding activities.

Research on Nigerian basic education shows that curriculum implementation is important to developing a culture of peace. However, teachers do not always employ peace-promoting instructional strategies consistently (Akudolu & Umenyi). Olowo (2016), in a study conducted in Ondo State, reported support for integrating peace education into the Nigerian education system to address violence and other social problems. Fabarebo et al. (2019) likewise argued for a peace-education curriculum that is responsive to Nigeria's religious and cultural diversity. These studies establish the educational relevance of peace education but do not, by themselves, establish its effectiveness in post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria.

The South-West geopolitical zone comprises Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States. The region contains communities with varied histories of communal, political, land-related and other forms of conflict. In such settings, peacebuilding requires more than suppressing violence; it requires processes that support tolerance, dialogue, empathy, non-violent problem-solving, and constructive relationships. Anyika & Ani (2023) also highlighted the role of peace education in peacebuilding and the importance of practical, context-sensitive approaches to conflict transformation.

Despite growing policy and scholarly interest in peace education, empirical evidence remains limited on how educators in post-conflict settings perceive its contribution to peacebuilding. Much of the Nigerian literature has examined curriculum content, implementation, or students' attitudes in individual locations rather than peace education's contribution across selected post-conflict communities in the South-West. This study therefore examines educators' perceptions of the extent to which peace education contributes to peacebuilding in selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Post-conflict communities often experience fragile stability even after open violence has declined. Mistrust, negative stereotypes, fear, intolerance and weakened relationships may persist, undermining peaceful coexistence. Fiedler (2023), reviewing 50 empirical studies, found that armed conflict generally weakens social cohesion by reducing social and political trust, cooperation and shared identities. These effects may continue after hostilities cease, leaving intergroup relationships weakened. Similarly, Fiedler and Mross (2023), examining 24 cases across 19 post-conflict countries, found that rebuilding social trust remains a major challenge and requires approaches that address the broader legacies of conflict through truth-finding and bridge-building. Their findings indicate that restoring trust and relationships is essential to move beyond the cessation of violence toward sustainable peace. This highlights the need for peacebuilding interventions that address not only violence but also the attitudes, relationships and social conditions shaping post-conflict interactions.

Peace education is expected to contribute to this process by developing tolerance, empathy, dialogue, conflict-resolution skills and respect for diversity. However, the existence of peace-related content in

curricula does not automatically demonstrate effective implementation or positive outcomes. Evidence from Nigerian schools indicates that peace-promoting instructional practices may not be consistently adopted (Akudolu & Umenyi, 2016), while studies of peace education curricula continue to emphasise the need for appropriate content and implementation strategies (Fabarebo et al., 2019).

This study therefore addresses the limited empirical evidence on how peace education contributes to peacebuilding in post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria. In particular, there is a need to determine whether teachers and school administrators perceive peace education as contributing to tolerance, reductions in aggressive behaviour and violence, discouragement of participation in communal clashes, and safer learning environments.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceived contribution of peace education to peacebuilding among selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the perceived extent to which peace education contributes to peacebuilding in selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria.

Research Question

To what extent do teachers and school administrators perceive peace education as contributing to peacebuilding in selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

Galtung's Theory of Positive and Negative Peace (Galtung, 1969)

This study is anchored on Johan Galtung's Theory of Positive and Negative Peace (1969). Galtung conceptualised peace as more than the mere absence of war or physical violence. He distinguishes between negative peace, the absence of direct or overt violence, and positive peace, which includes social justice, equity, mutual trust, human rights, inclusive institutions, and harmonious relationships that eliminate the structural and cultural conditions that produce conflict.

According to Galtung (1969), sustainable peace cannot be achieved solely through ceasefires or conflict termination; rather, it requires addressing the underlying causes of violence, including inequality, discrimination, marginalisation, prejudice, and social exclusion. The theory also identifies structural and cultural violence as critical barriers to peace, emphasising that lasting peace is attainable only when societies deliberately cultivate values, attitudes, and institutions that promote cooperation, dialogue, tolerance, and justice. Peace education therefore becomes an essential mechanism for transforming individuals' attitudes and behaviours, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to prevent violence and foster peaceful coexistence.

Galtung's Theory of Positive and Negative Peace is relevant to this study because it directly explains the relationship between peace education and sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict communities. Many communities in South-West Nigeria have experienced periods without active violence but continue to face deep-rooted mistrust, unresolved grievances, fear, and weakened social cohesion, conditions that reflect negative rather than positive peace. Peace education seeks to bridge this gap by promoting conflict resolution skills, empathy, tolerance, reconciliation, dialogue, and respect for diversity among individuals and communities.

The theory therefore provides a suitable framework for evaluating whether peace education has gone beyond reducing overt violence to fostering the behavioural and attitudinal transformations necessary for sustainable peace. Consequently, Galtung's framework offers an appropriate theoretical lens for assessing the effectiveness of peace education in promoting lasting peace and preventing conflict recurrence in post-conflict communities across South-West Nigeria.

Conceptual Analysis

Peace Education

Peace education is an educational process through which individuals develop the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours required to understand conflict, prevent violence, manage disagreements constructively and build peaceful relationships. It therefore extends beyond teaching learners about peace as an abstract concept to cultivating practical capacities such as empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, dialogue, cooperation, respect for diversity and non-violent conflict resolution.

Peace education is increasingly understood as a holistic process, recognising that what learners are taught, how they are taught, and the environments in which they learn can influence how they perceive and relate to others (Ndwandwe, 2024). The UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, adopted in 2023, identifies knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours as important learning outcomes that enable individuals to become agents of peace. It also emphasises that peace-oriented education should be reflected in curricula, teaching practices, learning environments, teacher development and assessment rather than being restricted to a single subject or classroom activity (UNESCO, 2023).

Peace education is also seen as a transformative process rather than simply transmitting information about conflict. Nesterova et al. (2024), drawing on the perspectives of local peace actors in conflict-affected and post-conflict societies, found that education can contribute to sustainable peace when it transforms people's attitudes, values and behaviours while also strengthening relationships between groups. They emphasise that such education may take place through both formal settings, such as schools, and non-formal community-based programmes. Arnøy (2023) further argues that peace education requires critical reflection because poorly designed peace initiatives can unintentionally reproduce exclusion or structural inequalities. Thus, effective peace education should not merely encourage learners to avoid violence; it should equip them to understand differences, question prejudices, engage constructively with others and participate in creating more inclusive social relationships.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding refers to the processes and interventions through which societies address the consequences and underlying causes of conflict, rebuild relationships and institutions, prevent renewed violence and establish conditions for sustainable peace. It is broader than simply ending hostilities because the cessation of violence does not automatically resolve the grievances, inequalities, mistrust and damaged relationships that may have contributed to conflict. Rhodes (2023) notes that peacebuilding has multiple meanings and may involve different actors and approaches depending on the context. Still, its central concern is transforming conflict and creating conditions that sustain peaceful relations.

Nesterova et al. (2024) describe peacebuilding as processes, approaches, and stages aimed at transforming conflict into sustainable peaceful relationships and addressing relational, structural, and social problems. These processes may include strengthening institutional capacities, rebuilding damaged systems, promoting reconciliation, restoring inter-group relationships and addressing the underlying issues that contributed to conflict. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2024) emphasise that peacebuilding can extend from addressing immediate and root causes of violence to laying foundations for sustainable peace and development, including everyday actions through which community members strengthen peaceful relationships.

Peacebuilding is therefore not exclusively the responsibility of governments, security institutions or international organisations. Schools, teachers, community leaders, civil society organisations, religious institutions, families and young people can all participate in processes that strengthen peaceful

relationships. Johnson (2023) identifies reconciliation, good governance, security, conflict management, and transformation as processes relevant to peacebuilding in post-conflict communities. This matters to the present study because it examines peace education not as an isolated educational activity but as a mechanism that can contribute to the social and relational dimensions of peacebuilding.

Post-Conflict Communities

Post-conflict communities are communities emerging from a period of organised or armed violence in which active hostilities have declined or ended but where the social, institutional and relational consequences of conflict may continue to shape everyday life. Rulska-Kuthy (2024) describes post-conflict societies as societies that have recently experienced armed conflict and notes that they face numerous challenges whose management influences their well-being and the possibility of relapse into violence. Therefore, the term post-conflict should not be interpreted as meaning that conflict-related problems have completely disappeared. Rather, it describes a transitional context in which communities attempt to recover, rebuild relationships, and establish conditions for sustainable peace.

The post-conflict period may involve damaged social relationships, weakened trust, displacement, trauma, institutional weaknesses, economic disruption and unresolved grievances. Fiedler (2023), in a review of empirical research on the social consequences of armed conflict, found that conflict can negatively affect social cohesion, including trust, cooperation and relationships across social groups. This demonstrates why the end of physical violence does not necessarily mean that a community has achieved durable peace. Similarly, Fiedler and Mross (2023) found that rebuilding social trust remains a key challenge in post-conflict societies, highlighting the importance of processes that address conflict legacies and rebuild relationships.

Post-conflict communities consequently require interventions that address both the visible and less visible consequences of conflict. Yu and Wyness (2023), examining Sierra Leone, show that peace education was promoted during the post-conflict period as part of efforts to address grievances, change attitudes, and consolidate stability. Their study also shows that education can contribute to peacebuilding but cannot resolve structural problems such as inadequate institutional and infrastructural capacity on its own. This observation matters because it positions education as one component of a broader peacebuilding process rather than a stand-alone solution.

Impact of Peace Education on Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Communities

The relationship between peace education and peacebuilding can be understood through education's capacity to influence the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and relationships that shape how individuals and groups respond to conflict. In post-conflict communities, where mistrust, prejudice, fear and damaged relationships may continue after the end of violence, education can provide a structured environment for developing the competencies required for peaceful interaction. UNESCO (2023) recognises education as a potential pathway to lasting peace and emphasises learning outcomes such as empathy, critical thinking, intercultural understanding and respect for human dignity. The 2025 implementation guide calls for a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-society approach in which education systems, communities, and other stakeholders work together to foster education that contributes to a just and peaceful society (UNESCO, 2025).

Nesterova et al. (2024) found that local peace actors in diverse conflict-affected societies considered education particularly valuable when it transforms attitudes, values and behaviours and strengthens relationships between groups. Their findings matter for post-conflict settings because they show that education's peacebuilding value lies not simply in teaching about peace, but in creating opportunities for learners to develop relationships and behaviours that support peaceful coexistence. Similarly, Yu and Wyness (2023), examining Sierra Leone's post-conflict experience, found that peace education was used to address grievances, change attitudes and contribute to the consolidation of stability. However, they also recognised limitations arising from wider structural constraints.

The impact of peace education on peacebuilding can therefore occur through several interconnected pathways. First, it can promote tolerance and reduce prejudice by exposing learners to perspectives different from their own and encouraging respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. Second, it can strengthen conflict-resolution skills by equipping learners with communication, negotiation, dialogue and problem-solving capacities. Third, it can influence behaviour by discouraging aggression, violence and participation in destructive collective actions. Fourth, it can strengthen social cohesion by creating opportunities for cooperation and constructive interaction among individuals and groups that may have previously been divided by conflict. Finally, it can contribute to safer learning environments, providing a foundation for wider community reconciliation and peaceful interaction.

However, the relationship should not be interpreted as automatic or purely causal. Nesterova et al. (2024) explicitly caution that not every form of education necessarily contributes to peace; the content, purpose, methods and social environment of education matter. Education can potentially reinforce social divisions when curricula reproduce stereotypes, exclusion or hostile narratives. This makes the quality and orientation of peace education particularly important. Arnøy (2023) similarly stresses the need for critical reflection in peace-education practice to avoid reproducing structural violence through unexamined assumptions about peace, inclusion and rights.

Consequently, this study conceptualises the impact of peace education on peacebuilding in post-conflict communities as the extent to which peace-oriented educational processes are perceived to contribute to peaceful attitudes, non-violent behaviour, tolerance, reduced aggression, discouragement of participation in communal violence, and safer interpersonal relationships. Peace education is therefore viewed as a school-based contribution to broader community peacebuilding, rather than as a single intervention capable of independently producing sustainable peace. This distinction matters for the present study because the respondents are teachers and school administrators. Their responses provide evidence of perceived effectiveness within the educational settings represented in the selected communities; they do not, by themselves, establish a causal effect on the entire community.

Empirical Review

Peace Education and Curriculum Implementation in Nigeria

Akudolu and Umenyi (2016) investigated the implementation of peace education in junior secondary schools in Enugu North and South Local Government Education Authorities in Enugu State. Using a survey design and a sample of 200 teachers, the study examined instructional practices including interactive instruction, cooperative learning, conflict resolution and empathy. The findings indicated that many respondents did not consistently adopt peace-promoting instructional strategies. The study is relevant because it demonstrates that the potential contribution of peace education depends substantially on how peace-related content is translated into classroom practice. However, it focused on curriculum implementation in Enugu rather than post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria.

Olowo (2016) examined the effects of integrating peace education into the Nigerian education system in Ondo State. The study used 200 respondents drawn from secondary schools and higher institutions, a 20-item four-point questionnaire, and descriptive statistics. The findings supported including peace education in the Nigerian school curriculum as a strategy for addressing crime, violence, and related social problems. The study is directly relevant to the present research because it was conducted in Ondo State and addressed the educational role of peace education. Nevertheless, it did not specifically examine post-conflict communities or community-level peacebuilding outcomes.

Fabarebo et al. (2019) examined the peace-education curriculum desirable for Nigerian pre-primary and primary schools from a religious perspective. Through content analysis and critical discourse analysis, the authors argued for curriculum content that reflects Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity and promotes unity, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Their work strengthens the conceptual basis for

treating peace education as a process of developing values, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours for peaceful living. Its primary focus was curriculum content rather than empirically measuring perceived effectiveness in post-conflict communities.

Ifenweobi (2022) examined peace education curriculum and attitudinal change among secondary school students in Government Secondary School Tudun-Wada Zone 4, Wuse, Abuja. The study reported high levels of agreement that peace education contributes to peaceful coexistence, tolerance, reasoning and resilience. The study provides useful Nigerian evidence on the relationship between peace education and attitudinal outcomes. However, it was conducted in a single school and did not address the distinctive conditions of post-conflict communities in the South-West.

Anyika and Ani (2023) examined the role of peace education within Track Five diplomacy and peacebuilding in Ebonyi State. Using interviews and secondary sources, the study highlighted training, research and peace education as components of broader peacebuilding processes. The study demonstrates that peace education can operate as part of wider peacebuilding architecture rather than solely as a classroom subject. However, its setting and qualitative approach differ from the school-based descriptive survey used in the present study.

Odey, Gimba and Odey (2025) investigated peace education curriculum implementation and the culture of peace in Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State. The study used a survey design and a census of 112 Social Studies and Civic Education teachers, with 100 usable responses. The study used Pearson product-moment correlation to test the hypotheses. The findings showed mixed relationships between specific peace-education contents and the culture of peace, including a weak significant relationship for empathy and a non-significant relationship for cooperation. The study is important because it cautions against assuming that the presence of peace-education content automatically produces broad peace outcomes. It also supports the need to distinguish descriptive perceptions from statistically tested relationships.

The reviewed studies collectively show that peace education has substantial conceptual and practical relevance to peacebuilding, but they also reveal important contextual and methodological limitations. Existing Nigerian studies have examined curriculum implementation, attitudes, curriculum design and specific peacebuilding initiatives, often within individual states or institutions. The present study contributes by examining respondents' perceptions across selected post-conflict communities in the South-West geopolitical zone. Nevertheless, because the present study uses descriptive statistics, its findings should be understood as evidence of perceived effectiveness within the sampled school settings rather than proof of causal community-level impact.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain and summarise respondents' perceptions concerning the extent to which peace education contributes to peacebuilding. The design does not permit causal conclusions or tests of statistical significance unless inferential procedures are additionally conducted.

Population of the Study

The population comprised 16,000 teachers and school administrators in public secondary schools located in the selected post-conflict communities across the six states of South-West Nigeria. The population figure was based on administrative education records. The unit of response was therefore teachers and school administrators, not all residents of the post-conflict communities. This distinction matters because the findings reflect the views of education personnel in the selected communities and should not be generalised automatically to the entire community population.

Sample Size and Sampling

A sample of 375 teachers and school administrators was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample-size table. For the selection of the study locations, the six states of South-West Nigeria, namely Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti, were considered. From each state, post-conflict communities were purposively selected based on evidence of previous communal, political, ethnic, land-related or other forms of organised conflict and the existence of ongoing or completed peacebuilding or reconciliation efforts. Public secondary schools in the selected communities formed the sampling frame. Teachers and school administrators in these schools were then selected to participate in the study. A total of 375 questionnaires were administered; 348 were accurately completed and retrieved, representing a 92.8% response rate. The 348 valid questionnaires constituted the basis for the data analysis.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing four-point response categories: Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2), and Very Low Extent (1). The items assessed respondents' perceptions of peace education's contribution to tolerance and harmony, aggressive behaviour, communal-clash tendencies, student violence, and the creation of safe and supportive learning environments.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The researchers submitted the research instrument to experts in Peace Education for validation. The experts examined the items for clarity, relevance, adequacy, and appropriateness in relation to the study's objectives and research question. The researchers incorporated their observations and suggestions into the final version of the questionnaire before administration. To establish the instrument's reliability, a pilot test was conducted with respondents similar to, but excluded from, the study sample. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87. This coefficient indicates good internal consistency among the questionnaire items and was considered adequate for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The returned questionnaires were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. For the four-point scale, mean scores of 2.50–4.00 were interpreted as High Extent, while mean scores of 1.00–2.49 were interpreted as Low Extent. Higher mean scores therefore indicated a greater perceived extent of effectiveness.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question: To what extent do teachers and school administrators perceive peace education as contributing to peacebuilding in selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria?

Table 1**Perceived extent to which peace education contributes to peacebuilding in selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria (N = 348)**

S/N	Item	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Peace education programmes implemented in our school have successfully reduced cases of student-on-student physical violence.	185	130	20	13	3.40	0.76	High Extent
2	Students who undergo formal peace education demonstrate a noticeable decline in aggressive behavioural patterns inside and outside school.	198	120	18	12	3.45	0.73	High Extent
3	Formal peace education lessons have established a safe, supportive and non-violent learning environment within this post-conflict community.	180	135	19	14	3.38	0.75	High Extent
4	The introduction of peace studies has helped discourage local youth from engaging in communal clashes.	215	92	25	16	3.45	0.82	High Extent
5	Formal peace education has proved highly effective in instilling tolerance and harmony among students from diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds.	225	92	19	12	3.52	0.74	High Extent
	Overall mean/SD					3.44	0.76	High Extent

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that respondents rated all five indicators at a great extent. The highest mean score was recorded for the item on tolerance and harmony among students from diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds ($\bar{x} = 3.52$). This was followed by the reported decline in aggressive behavioural patterns ($\bar{x} = 3.45$) and the discouragement of youth tendencies to participate in communal clashes ($\bar{x} = 3.45$). The reduction of student-to-student physical violence recorded a mean of 3.40, while the establishment of a safe, supportive and non-violent learning environment recorded the lowest mean of 3.38. The overall mean of 3.44 indicates a great perceived extent of effectiveness.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that respondents perceived peace education as highly effective is consistent with the broader literature, which presents peace education as a means of developing values, attitudes, and skills relevant

to peaceful coexistence. UNESCO (2023) identifies education as a pathway for developing the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours needed for peaceful, just and sustainable societies. UNESCO (2025) further emphasises that peace education should operate across curricula, teaching practices, learning environments and community partnerships.

The high rating for tolerance and harmony is also consistent with Fabarebo et al. (2019), who emphasised the need for peace education that responds to Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity. Similarly, Ifenweobi (2022) reported high levels of respondent agreement concerning the contribution of peace education to tolerance, peaceful coexistence and related attitudinal outcomes among secondary school students. These similarities suggest that tolerance and peaceful coexistence are among the outcomes most readily associated with peace education in Nigerian educational settings.

The findings relating to aggressive behaviour, student violence and communal-clash tendencies are broadly compatible with Olowo's (2016) argument for integrating peace education into the Nigerian education system to address violence and other social problems. However, Akudolu and Umenyi (2016) caution that peace education's potential depends on classroom implementation, noting that peace-promoting instructional strategies were not consistently adopted in the schools they studied. The implication is that positive perceptions of peace education should be accompanied by attention to teacher capacity, instructional practice and institutional support.

The results should also be considered alongside Odey et al. (2025), whose study in Yala, Cross River State found mixed evidence on relationships between specific peace-education content and a culture of peace. This comparison matters because it shows that peace education should not be treated as an automatic or universally sufficient solution to conflict. Its contribution is likely to depend on curriculum quality, implementation fidelity, teacher competence, the wider school environment and the broader social conditions surrounding the school.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers and school administrators in the selected post-conflict communities in South-West Nigeria perceive peace education to be effective to a great extent in supporting peacebuilding-related outcomes within their educational settings. The strongest perceived contribution concerned tolerance and harmony among students from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, followed by lower aggressive behavioural tendencies, discouragement of communal-clash tendencies, reduced student violence and the creation of safer learning environments. The overall mean of 3.44 provides descriptive evidence of a favourable perception of peace education among the respondents.

The conclusion is deliberately limited to the evidence generated by the descriptive survey. The study does not establish statistically significant relationships or causal effects, nor does it demonstrate that peace education alone has produced sustainable peace across the wider post-conflict communities. Rather, the findings suggest that peace education is perceived as an important school-based component of broader peacebuilding efforts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the limitations of the evidence, the study recommends that:

Government and education authorities should strengthen the implementation of peace-education content through adequate instructional materials, teacher development and practical classroom activities focused on dialogue, empathy, tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution.

Schools in post-conflict communities should establish or strengthen peace clubs, peer mediation, cooperative learning and structured dialogue activities that allow learners to practise peacebuilding skills rather than only learn them theoretically.

School administrators should build partnerships with community leaders, parents, civil society organisations, and relevant peacebuilding institutions so school-based peace education connects to wider community peacebuilding processes.

Education authorities should regularly monitor and evaluate peace-education implementation, including measures of teacher practice, learner attitudes, and school climate, rather than relying only on programme presence.

Future studies should include residents and community stakeholders, use clearly documented criteria for selecting post-conflict communities, and, where feasible, employ longitudinal, quasi-experimental, or mixed-method designs to assess behavioural and community-level outcomes more rigorously.

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