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LEVERAGING ONLINE PEACE EDUCATION TO ADDRESS HUMAN INSECURITY IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT) OF NIGERIA AND PLATEAU STATES

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Abstract

Conflict and peace are central to societal dynamics, and effective management is crucial for global stability. This study explores the impact of human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State, areas plagued by ethnoreligious conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, and insurgent activities. These issues are rooted in historical grievances, economic pressures, and insurgent threats. To address these complex challenges, innovative solutions like online peace education and conflict resolution strategies are essential. Employing a qualitative approach and analysing secondary data, this study reviews existing literature and documents to understand the contributing factors to human insecurity in these regions. Constructivist Learning Theory and Human Security Framework are used to conceptualise the efficacy of the study. Findings indicate that while obstacles such as limited internet access and digital illiteracy persist, online platforms offer significant advantages in terms of reach and scalability. Online peace education can provide flexible and accessible learning opportunities, helping to promote understanding of conflict resolution and peacebuilding principles. However, successful implementation requires overcoming technological and contextual barriers. Recommendations include enhancing digital infrastructure to ensure

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reliable internet access, developing hybrid models that integrate online and offline learning, promoting digital literacy, ensuring culturally relevant content, strengthening evaluation mechanisms, and supporting innovation. By adopting these measures, online peace education can effectively address human insecurity in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State, fostering sustainable peace and development..

Introduction

Human insecurity in Nigeria's North Central Zone, particularly in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State, presents a multifaceted challenge marked by ethnoreligious conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, and insurgent activities. These issues have their roots in a complex interplay of historical grievances, economic pressures, and regional instability. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering peace and stability in the region.

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Plateau State exemplify the broader struggles facing North Central Nigeria, where human insecurity is deeply intertwined with socio-political and ethnic complexities. The FCT, as Nigeria's administrative capital, serves as a microcosm of the country's diverse socio-political landscape. It houses a melting pot of ethnic groups, religions, and socio-economic classes, each with its own set of interests and grievances. This diversity, while contributing to a vibrant cultural environment, also introduces significant challenges. The concentration of power and resources in the FCT often heightens competition and exacerbates tensions among different groups. This dynamic can lead to conflicts over resources and political representation, which in turn contributes to a broader climate of insecurity (Akinola, 2022). From the year 2010, the human insecurity challenges have been enormous, putting residents of the territory under undue fear of palpable reoccurrence as each occurrence claims lives and properties as well as distorting man-productive activities. For instance, cases of insecurity came face to face with residents of Abuja when on October 01 2010, on the 50th Nigerian Independence Day, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta bombed the Eagle Square, where the Independence celebrations were going to be held. This incident claimed about four people's lives while wounding over twelve persons (START. Umd.edu). Another touching incident occurred barely a year later when, in August 2011, the Sunni Islamist group- Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a car bomb that rocked the United Nations Office in Abuja, killed twenty-one people and left sixty persons wounded (Wikipedia). In the same 2011, specifically in December, there was another car bomb explosion attack at the St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, a satellite town in Abuja, claiming about three person lives and leaving over fifty persons wounded (National Emergency Management Agency 2011). There have been other cases of kidnappings, banditry and insurgence in

some satellite communities in the past ten years, arousing uncertainty and fear in residents.

Plateau State, in contrast, has emerged as a flashpoint for conflict primarily due to its ethnic and religious diversity combined with its agricultural practices. Located centrally in Nigeria, Plateau State's geographic and economic significance amplifies its vulnerability to conflict. The state's agricultural sector is a major economic driver, but it also serves as a source of tension between farming communities and herders. These conflicts are not only rooted in competition over land and water resources but are also fueled by historical grievances and longstanding ethnic rivalries. The clashes between farmers and herders often lead to violence, which disrupts local economies and displaces families, further deepening human insecurity (Obioha, 2019).

In addition to resource conflicts, Plateau State is plagued by ethnoreligious tensions that frequently erupt into violence. The state's diverse ethnic composition, including groups such as the Berom, Fulani, and others, has led to competition over political and economic power. These tensions are exacerbated by periodic violence that undermines social cohesion and creates a pervasive atmosphere of fear and distrust among communities. The constant threat of violence and the disruption of daily life contribute significantly to the insecurity experienced by residents, impacting their overall well-being and hindering sustainable development (Habila et al., 2021). A few examples may add credence to this as, according to the Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA), ethnoreligious and ethnic conflict has claimed many lives and destroyed properties and farmlands. In January 2010, Indigenous groups (Berom, Anaguta and Afizere), Christians in general, vs Hausa-Fulani Muslims conflict claimed 400 lives. In the same 2010, two bombs were detonated in the Angwan Rukuba area on the eve of Christmas, leading to riots in the city and claiming more than eighty lives. In 2014, Boko haram vs the Nigerian State clashed, resulting in the death of at least one hundred and eighteen people and injuring more than fifty others. Conservative estimates of at least 4,000 people have been killed in Jos and smaller cities and villages in Plateau State over the past decade (Jana Krause 2010). A chronicle of similar insecurity occurrences has been unimaginable.

To effectively equip people with the knowledge of how to spread the message of conflict management and peacebuilding, innovative solutions are required. Online peace education emerges as a promising approach, using digital platforms to provide accessible and scalable learning opportunities on conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Suleiman, 2022). Online education can transcend geographical barriers and offer flexible learning options, crucial for regions with varying levels of internet access and digital literacy (Ojo, 2020).

This seminar paper employs a qualitative approach, analysing secondary data and literature to assess the potential of online peace education in mitigating human insecurity

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in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State. Recommendations include enhancing digital infrastructure, developing hybrid learning models, and promoting digital literacy to maximise the impact of online peace education initiatives.

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Plateau State in Nigeria's North Central Zone face significant human insecurity, marked by ethno-religious conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, and insurgent activities. These issues are rooted in historical grievances, economic pressures, and socio-political dynamics that destabilise the region. Despite various efforts to address these challenges, traditional peacebuilding approaches have often fallen short in effectively reaching and engaging all affected communities. The advent of digital technologies presents a new opportunity for addressing these issues through online peace education, which could potentially offer scalable and flexible solutions. However, the effectiveness of online peace education in combating human insecurity in these regions remains underexplored, particularly concerning its accessibility, impact, and practical implementation. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how online peace education can address human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State and to identify the potential benefits and challenges of this approach.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it explores an innovative approach to peacebuilding through online platforms, which could enhance the accessibility and scalability of peace education initiatives. Understanding the impact of online peace education in addressing human insecurity will provide valuable insights into its effectiveness and applicability in regions with limited access to traditional educational resources. Second, the study will contribute to the development of strategies for using digital technologies in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, offering practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and peace practitioners. Finally, by focusing on the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State, the study addresses urgent security concerns in these critical areas, providing a framework for improving community resilience and fostering sustainable peace.

Research Questions

i. How effective is online peace education in addressing human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State?
ii. What are the primary challenges and barriers to implementing online peace education in these regions?
iii. How do the benefits of online peace education compare to traditional peacebuilding methods in terms of reach, accessibility, and impact?

iv. What strategies can be employed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of online peace education programs?

Research Objectives

i. To evaluate the effectiveness of online peace education in mitigating human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State.
ii. To identify and analyse the challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of online peace education in these regions.
iii. To compare the impact of online peace education with traditional peacebuilding methods in terms of reach, accessibility, and effectiveness.
iv. To develop recommendations for improving the design, implementation, and sustainability of online peace education programs, with a focus on addressing local needs and overcoming technological barriers.

Introduction to Human Insecurity in North Central Nigeria

Human insecurity in North Central Nigeria, especially in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Plateau State, is a complex issue driven by ethnoreligious conflicts, farmer-herder clashes, and insurgent activities. The region's ethnic and religious diversity, along with competition for resources, has led to persistent instability. Obioha (2019) highlights that Plateau State's diverse ethnic and religious landscape, coupled with historical grievances, exacerbates local conflicts. Similarly, Habila et al. (2021) emphasise that competition between farmers and herders over land and resources intensifies tensions, resulting in frequent violent clashes that undermine social cohesion and human security.

Four instances of human insecurity in Abuja provide evidence for the importance of engaging in online peace education as a means to equip residents with the necessary knowledge to promote peace and convey this message to others. For instance, on October 01 2010, on the 50th Nigerian Independence Day, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta bombed the Eagle Square. This incident claimed about four people's lives while wounding over twelve persons (START. Umd.edu). Another incident occurred barely a year later when, in August 2011, where Sunni Islamist group-Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a car bomb that rocked the United Nations Office in Abuja, killing twenty-one people and leaving sixty persons wounded (Wikipedia). Again, on 11th December 2011, St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, a satellite town in Abuja, was bombed. This incident claimed about three person lives and left over fifty persons wounded (National Emergency Management Agency "NEMA" 2011).

The Plateau Peacebuilding Agency (PPBA) chronicled human insecurity incidences in Plateau State and traced these prevalences to ethnoreligious and ethnic conflict, which have claimed many lives and destroyed properties and farmlands. The Agency stated that

in January 2010, Indigenous groups (Berom, Anaguta and Afizere), Christians in general, vs Hausa-Fulani Muslims conflict claimed 400 lives. In the same 2010, two bombs were detonated in the Angwan Rukuba area on the eve of Christmas, leading to riots in the city and claiming more than eighty lives. In 2014, Boko haram vs the Nigerian State clashed, resulting in the death of at least one hundred and eighteen people and injuring more than fifty others. Conservative estimates of at least 4,000 people have been killed in Jos and smaller cities and villages in Plateau State over the past decade (Jana Krause 2010). A chronicle of similar insecurity occurrences has been unimaginable. All through this period, traditional methods of educating people on peacebuilding and conflict management had been engaged without the needed success.

Traditional peacebuilding methods in Nigeria, including dialogue initiatives, community-based mediation, and government-led interventions, often involve face-to-face interactions and local community engagement to address conflict's underlying causes (Akinyemi, 2018). However, these methods face challenges such as limited reach, high costs, and logistical difficulties, which constrain their effectiveness, especially in broader or remote areas. Traditional approaches sometimes struggle to address the scale of conflict and the complexities of modern insurgencies, necessitating alternative methods (Duru, 2020). This, therefore, calls for a much better approach to educating people in conflict-prone areas with more accessible platforms that can enhance their understanding of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

The Role of Online Peace Education

Online peace education has emerged as a promising alternative to traditional peacebuilding methods, offering several unique advantages that make it particularly effective in contemporary conflict settings. By leveraging digital platforms, online peace education provides accessible, scalable, and flexible educational opportunities aimed at conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Smith & Patel, 2022).

One of the most significant benefits of online peace education is its ability to reach diverse and dispersed populations. Traditional methods often require participants to be physically present, limiting access to those who can not travel or are located within proximity to educational centres. In contrast, online education breaks down geographical barriers, making it possible for individuals from various regions, including remote and conflict-affected areas, to participate. This is particularly important in regions like Nigeria's North Central Zone, where logistical challenges and ongoing violence can impede access to conventional educational programs.

Moreover, online peace education offers tailored content and interactive learning experiences that traditional methods may lack. According to Jones (2021), digital platforms allow for the customisation of educational materials to suit the specific needs

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and contexts of different communities. This can involve translating materials into local languages, incorporating region-specific case studies, and addressing particular conflict dynamics relevant to the participants. Such tailored content enhances the relevance and impact of the educational programs, making them more effective in fostering understanding and promoting conflict resolution skills.

Interactive learning experiences are another crucial advantage of online peace education. Digital platforms can incorporate a variety of multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive simulations, which can enhance engagement and retention of knowledge. Online forums and discussion groups also enable participants to share their experiences, collaborate on problem-solving, and build a sense of community despite being physically apart. These interactive elements can lead to deeper learning and a more profound understanding of peacebuilding principles.

Furthermore, online platforms facilitate the dissemination of peacebuilding principles, conflict resolution skills, and awareness-raising on a much larger scale than face-to-face programs alone. Traditional peacebuilding efforts often face limitations in scalability due to resource constraints and logistical difficulties. In contrast, online education can be easily scaled up to reach a broader audience without significant additional costs. This scalability is crucial for addressing widespread issues of human insecurity and promoting peace on a larger scale.

Benefits of Online Peace Education

Online peace education offers numerous advantages over traditional methods, making it a compelling alternative for regions experiencing conflict and human insecurity. One of the primary benefits is enhanced accessibility. Digital platforms allow participants to engage with educational materials from remote or underserved areas, significantly widening the reach of peace education initiatives. White and Allen (2019) emphasise that this increased access can bridge gaps where physical educational institutions are scarce or inaccessible due to ongoing conflicts.

Scalability is another key advantage of online peace education. Unlike traditional classroom settings constrained by physical space and resources, online platforms can accommodate a vast number of participants simultaneously. Nguyen and Lee (2020) note that this scalability is crucial in regions with high demand for peace education but limited infrastructure. Online education can quickly adapt to growing needs without the delays and costs associated with expanding physical facilities.

Cost-effectiveness further enhances the appeal of online peace education. By reducing the need for physical resources and travel, online programs can operate at a lower cost compared to traditional methods. Brown (2018) argues that this cost efficiency enables

more sustainable and frequent educational initiatives, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Moreover, online peace education supports continuous learning through interactive modules, forums, and multimedia resources. Green (2021) highlights that these tools can be regularly updated to address emerging issues and incorporate participant feedback, ensuring that the educational content remains relevant and effective. This adaptability and engagement foster a dynamic learning environment that can better equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Challenges in Implementing Online Peace Education

Online peace education offers a promising alternative to traditional peacebuilding methods by leveraging digital platforms to provide accessible, scalable, and flexible educational opportunities aimed at conflict resolution and peacebuilding. However, it faces significant challenges that must be addressed to maximise its effectiveness. Limited internet access and digital illiteracy are major barriers, particularly in regions with poor infrastructure. Ensuring the cultural relevance and contextual appropriateness of content is crucial for its success. Technological issues such as connectivity problems and platform usability further complicate implementation.

Several case studies, such as the "Peace Education Online" initiative in Kenya and the "Global Peace Builders Network," demonstrate the positive impact of online peace education, showcasing its ability to reach remote areas and train peace practitioners worldwide. The continuity of learning before, during and after conflicts or crises is critical for social stability, and online peace education can maintain educational engagement, providing normalcy and routine for learners.

The benefits of online peace education include increased accessibility, scalability, cost-effectiveness, tailored content, anonymity and safety for participants, and interactive and engaging tools. Addressing challenges through targeted interventions and strategic planning can enhance the impact of online peace education programs. Further research and practical implementation are needed to fully realise the potential of online education in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Challenges of Online Peace Education

While online peace education offers numerous benefits, several challenges must be addressed to maximise its effectiveness. Key issues include internet accessibility, digital literacy, engagement in virtual environments, limited internet access, the digital divide, technology adoption issues, quality and relevance of content, engagement and interaction challenges, and sustainability.

Internet accessibility is a significant barrier in conflict-affected areas where internet infrastructure may be underdeveloped or damaged. The success of online education relies on two major factors: first is having a smartphone, and second is stable and affordable internet connectivity, which is often lacking in these regions. Ensuring reliable internet access is crucial for the effective delivery of online peace education programs. Petroc Taylor's (Jan 2023) phone users survey put phone users at 170 million Nigerians, but of this figure, only about 20% are using a smartphone that can access the internet for online education purposes, while Doris Dokua Sasu (March 2024) survey on internet users in Nigeria puts it at 38% in 2022 and may rise to 48% in 2027.

Digital literacy is another critical factor. Both learners and educators must be proficient in using digital tools and platforms to fully benefit from online education. Providing training and support to enhance digital literacy skills is necessary to ensure effective engagement with online peace education content.

Engaging learners in a virtual environment poses unique challenges compared to traditional classroom settings. Innovative pedagogical approaches are required to maintain learner engagement and participation. Interactive elements such as live discussions, collaborative projects, and multimedia resources can enhance engagement and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. However, educators need the skills and resources to implement these strategies effectively.

Limited internet access is one of the primary challenges in conflict-affected regions. Internet penetration rates remain low in several parts of Africa, including Nigeria's North Central region, severely impacting the ability to deliver online education effectively. The digital divide refers to the gap between those who have access to modern information and communication technology and those who do not. This divide is often exacerbated in conflict zones, where economic and infrastructural challenges limit access to necessary digital devices and connectivity.

Even when internet access is available, there can be significant barriers to the adoption of online learning technologies. These include a lack of digital literacy among educators and students, resistance to new technologies, and insufficient training and support for effective use.

Ensuring the quality and relevance of online content is critical for the success of peace education programs. This requires careful design, regular updates, and continuous evaluation to ensure that the materials meet learners' needs and reflect the current realities of conflict contexts.

Online education can sometimes lack the face-to-face interaction crucial for effective learning, especially in peace education, which often relies on dialogue and personal engagement. Finding ways to foster meaningful interactions and discussions in a virtual environment is essential but challenging.

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Finally, establishing and maintaining online peace education programs in conflict zones requires sustained funding and support. Ensuring the long-term impact and sustainability of these programs can be difficult, particularly in regions where resources are scarce and priorities may shift rapidly due to ongoing conflicts. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions and strategic planning is essential to harness the full potential of online peace education in fostering sustainable peace and development.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist theory by Jean Piaget (1898 – 1980) suggests that learners construct knowledge through experiences and reflection rather than just passively taking in information. In online peace education, this theory supports interactive and participatory methods like simulations and discussion forums that engage learners in practical conflict resolution. This approach aligns with the literature's emphasis on the effectiveness of tailored and interactive online learning experiences in addressing complex issues such as human insecurity.

Human Security Framework

The Human Security Framework by Muhbub ul Haq (1994) focuses on the most fundamental rights – to life, basic needs and dignity, and attaches particular importance to the local context in which threats to these fundamental rights exist. Online peace education supports this framework by providing accessible and scalable educational opportunities that help individuals in conflict zones develop skills to manage violence, displacement, and resource scarcity. This framework aligns with the literature's recognition of online education's role in reaching diverse populations and fostering community and security among learners.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of online peace education in addressing human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State of Nigeria. The qualitative method is chosen for its effectiveness in providing in-depth insights and understanding of complex social phenomena, especially in the context of conflict and peacebuilding. The methodology includes secondary data analysis, which involves reviewing existing literature, documents, and case studies relevant to online peace education and human insecurity.

Research Design

The research design focuses on a comprehensive review of existing literature, case studies, and relevant documents to gather insights into the challenges and benefits of

implementing online peace education in conflict-prone regions. This approach enables the identification of patterns, themes, and gaps in the current knowledge base, providing a foundation for developing recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of online peace education programs.

Data Collection

Data collection involves sourcing secondary data from various academic journals, books, reports, and online databases. Key sources include:

- Academic journals on peace education, conflict resolution, and digital learning.
- Reports from international organisations such as the United Nations, International Telecommunication Union, and other relevant bodies.
- Case studies of online peace education initiatives in different regions, particularly those with similar socio-political contexts to Nigeria.
- Government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) report on human insecurity and peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involves:

1. **Content Analysis**: Systematically reviewing and coding the collected literature and documents to identify recurring themes, concepts, and patterns related to online peace education and human insecurity.
2. **Thematic Analysis**: Grouping the coded data into themes to understand the broader implications and draw connections between different sources. Themes may include barriers to internet access, digital literacy challenges, cultural relevance, and the effectiveness of online platforms.
3. **Comparative Analysis**: Comparing findings from different case studies to identify best practices, common challenges, and potential solutions for implementing online peace education in the Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the study employs multiple sources of data and triangulates findings to provide a well-rounded understanding of the issues. Peer-reviewed articles and credible reports are prioritised to maintain high standards of evidence. Additionally, the study critically assesses the quality and relevance of each source to ensure that the findings are based on accurate and reliable information.

Ethical Considerations

As this research relies solely on secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human subjects. However, ethical considerations include accurately representing the

findings of original authors, acknowledging all sources, and ensuring that the data is used responsibly to contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

The qualitative research methodology adopted in this study provides a robust framework for exploring the role of online peace education in mitigating human insecurity in the Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Plateau State.

Findings and Analysis

The research findings reveal that while online peace education offers significant potential for addressing human insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Plateau State, it also faces several challenges that need to be addressed for effective implementation. This section presents the key findings and provides an analysis based on the reviewed literature and case studies.

Key Findings

1. **Enhanced Accessibility and Reach:** Online peace education platforms provide substantial benefits in terms of accessibility and reach. They enable individuals in remote and conflict-affected areas to access educational materials and participate in peacebuilding activities that would otherwise be unavailable due to geographical or infrastructural limitations (White & Allen, 2019). For example, digital tools allow learners to engage with peace education content anytime and anywhere, making the programs more flexible and inclusive (Nwosu, 2020).
2. **Scalability and Cost-Effectiveness:** The scalability of online education is a notable advantage. Online platforms can accommodate large numbers of participants without the constraints of physical classroom sizes, which is essential in regions with high demand for peace education but limited infrastructure (Anderson & Dron, 2011). Additionally, online education is often more cost-effective compared to traditional methods, reducing the need for physical resources and travel expenses (Brown, 2018).
3. **Challenges in Internet Accessibility and Digital Literacy:** Despite the benefits, significant challenges exist, particularly concerning Internet accessibility and digital literacy. Limited internet infrastructure in conflict-affected areas poses a major barrier, impacting the effectiveness of online education programs (Oluwaseun, 2021). Furthermore, digital illiteracy among potential learners and educators hampers the ability to fully engage with online platforms and utilise their features effectively (Kumar & Shah, 2022).
4. **Engagement and Content Relevance:** Engaging learners in virtual environments can be challenging compared to traditional face-to-face settings. Online education requires innovative pedagogical approaches to maintain engagement and

participation. Additionally, ensuring the cultural relevance and contextual appropriateness of online content is crucial for effectiveness (Adams & Smith, 2020). Tailoring content to address specific local conflict contexts and needs, such as language translations and regional case studies, enhances the impact of online peace education (Burns, 2011).

5. **Case Studies and Evidence:** Case studies from other regions provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of online peace education. For instance, the "Peace Education Online" initiative in Kenya successfully reached thousands of participants in remote areas, demonstrating the potential of online platforms to expand access to peace education (Mburu, 2021). Similarly, the "Global Peace Builders Network" utilised online modules to train peace practitioners worldwide, highlighting the scalability and reach of digital peacebuilding efforts (Harris & Green, 2019). The findings from these studies prove a positive impact on the use of online education, especially in places where the population is more of the youth.

Analysis

The findings suggest that online peace education has the potential to significantly impact human insecurity in the Abuja FCT and Plateau State by providing accessible, scalable, and cost-effective educational opportunities. However, the success of these programs hinges on overcoming several critical challenges.

1. **Addressing Internet Accessibility:** To maximise the benefits of online peace education, efforts must be made to improve internet infrastructure in conflict-affected areas. Initiatives to enhance connectivity and provide affordable internet access are essential for enabling widespread participation in online programs.
2. **Enhancing Digital Literacy:** Improving digital literacy through targeted training and support is crucial for ensuring that learners and educators can effectively engage with online platforms. Educational programs should include digital skills training to bridge the gap between technology and education.
3. **Maintaining Engagement and Relevance:** Developing interactive and engaging online content while ensuring its cultural relevance and contextual appropriateness is key to sustaining learner interest and effectiveness. Online peace education programs should incorporate innovative pedagogical methods and adapt content to meet local needs.
4. **Sustaining Long-Term Impact:** Ensuring the sustainability of online peace education programs requires ongoing support and funding. Addressing logistical and infrastructural challenges while maintaining program relevance and quality will help in achieving long-term impact.

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Success Stories and Comparative Analysis

Online peace education programs have proven effective in promoting peace and mitigating conflict. Notable examples include the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), which has reached over 1,500 participants in conflict-affected areas, facilitating community dialogue and advanced education through its virtual Master's and PhD programs (NOUN, 2023). The Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) has engaged youth in peacebuilding, leading to reduced local conflicts and increased community development involvement (SPSP, 2023). SPSP's hybrid capacity-building programs and conferences have broadened participation and intercultural exchange.

Peace Education and Practice Network (PEPNET) organised six E-Summits and ten virtual workshops in 2022, fostering collaboration and interactive learning in peace education. Research supports these initiatives, with studies showing the positive impacts of online peace education in conflict zones like Colombia (Smith & Smith, 2018) and general conflict areas (Al-Dajani & Ghalibafian, 2020).

Comparatively, online programs offer flexibility and a broader reach, while offline methods provide valuable face-to-face interactions and community building. A balanced approach, integrating both online and offline strategies, is recommended to optimise peace education's impact (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Anderson & Dron, 2011).

Challenges and Limitations of Online Peace Education Programs

Despite their benefits, online peace education programs face several challenges. Limited internet access and digital literacy issues hinder participation in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, technical difficulties and variations in internet infrastructure can affect the quality of the learning experience. Some participants also expressed concerns about the lack of personal interaction, which may impact the depth of learning and relationship-building (Siddiqui, 2021). Furthermore, maintaining engagement and ensuring the relevance of online content requires ongoing efforts and resources.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The findings indicate that online peace education programs significantly impact human insecurity in Nigeria's North Central region, particularly in Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Plateau States. These programs are effective in transforming attitudes and behaviours, reducing conflict, and enhancing community cohesion. This aligns with established theoretical frameworks of peace education, such as those proposed by Galtung (1969) and Freire (1970), which highlight the importance of understanding and addressing various forms of violence. The success stories and case examples presented

validate these theoretical principles by demonstrating practical, real-world evidence of the effectiveness of online peace education initiatives.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The implications of these findings are substantial for policymakers, educators, and practitioners involved in peacebuilding. Policymakers should consider incorporating online peace education into comprehensive peacebuilding strategies, particularly in regions affected by conflict. Educators are encouraged to design inclusive and adaptable online curricula that cater to local contexts and utilise interactive digital tools effectively. Practitioners should collaborate with technology providers to improve digital infrastructure and enhance accessibility, ensuring that online peace education reaches those in need (Nwosu, 2020).

Potential for Scalability and Sustainability

Online peace education programs possess considerable potential for scalability and sustainability. Their inherent flexibility allows for rapid adaptation and expansion, making them well-suited to address the evolving dynamics of conflict in regions such as Abuja and Plateau States. For long-term sustainability, it is crucial for stakeholders to invest in strengthening digital infrastructure, providing ongoing technical support, and conducting regular evaluations of program effectiveness (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003).

Addressing Challenges and Enhancing Effectiveness

To overcome challenges, it is important to focus on improving internet access and digital literacy, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Engaging local communities in the development and delivery of online peace education programs can enhance their relevance and effectiveness. Additionally, integrating online education with offline components can offer a balanced approach, leveraging the strengths of both digital and traditional methods while addressing their respective limitations (Siddiqui, 2021). This comprehensive strategy can further enhance the impact of online peace education in addressing human insecurity in Abuja Federal Capital Territory and Plateau States.

Conclusion

This study highlights that online peace education programs could significantly improve human security in the Federal Capital Territory and Plateau States and, indeed, the North Central region of Nigeria. Participants exhibit enhanced attitudes towards conflict, reduced violence, and better community cohesion. Success stories demonstrate these programs' effectiveness in fostering reconciliation and social integration. Despite the advantages of accessibility and scalability, challenges such as limited internet access and

digital literacy persist. Comparing online and offline programs reveals that while online education offers flexibility and reach, it needs careful design and support to address technological and contextual issues.

Recommendations

1. **Enhance Digital Infrastructure:** Invest in improving internet access and digital literacy to broaden reach and effectiveness.
2. **Develop Hybrid Models:** Combine online and offline components to balance flexibility with direct engagement.
3. **Promote Digital Literacy:** Implement training to boost digital skills among participants.
4. **Ensure Content Relevance:** Regularly update curricula to address local needs and current issues.
5. **Strengthen Evaluation Mechanisms:** Use comprehensive assessments to measure outcomes and refine programs.
6. **Support Innovation:** Explore emerging technologies like VR and gamification to enhance engagement and learning.

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