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EDUCATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: MANAGING THE CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the relationship between education and national security and how the challenges can be managed. It made the point that in tackling the issues of national security, quality education, which liberates the mind from ignorance, prejudices, poverty, etc., is a critical tool that is needed in achieving success. Through education, counter terrorism can be reduced, thereby promoting social harmony and tolerance. The promotion of peace through educational initiatives by non-governmental organization can also reduce marginalization. The issue of suicide bombing can be reduced with the knowledge of education, while the inclusive issues of unemployment, corruption can also be reduced in the education and security sectors. For peaceful coexistence in the diverse and complex country like Nigeria, there is need for a balance and safe educational system that will enhance learning in the school environment. Corruption in our educational and security system should be reduced to the barest minimum, so that professional, competent and qualified personnel can effectively manage any challenge that may arise in the educational and security sectors.

Keywords: Education, National Security, Nigeria, Managing, Challenges, Opportunities, Strategies Sustainable Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Education, whether informal or formal, is a fundamental right of any human being. This is because education is the basic driver of the socioeconomic development in society. In Nigeria, education is also very important for empowerment of individual growth and economic growth, and the promotion of national security, peace and stability. But the informal and formal aspects of education cannot function in an environment of disharmony, unrest, war and insecure climate;

meaning that learners and learning can only be functional where there is peace and in a secured environment (Aminu & Abubakar, 2022; Alabi, 2020; Adeyemi & Olowookere, 2022).

Education highlights challenges and opportunities while offering viable support for the educational system in order to ensure its sustainability and achieve meaningful development and contribution to national security. In other words, this means that the knowledge in education may solve, reduce or bring answer to the problem confronting national security as an option in managing these opportunities, the challenges, the strategies for better solution in achieving sustainable development for education and national security in Nigeria as a country (Adebayo & Salami, 2021; Bello, 2021; Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2021). Hence, education plays a rapid role that determines how national security can effectively be managed, within their stated goals and objectives.

Without proper management and utilisation of educational knowledge in areas such as technology, training, and retraining, which is dependent on security and education may face crisis (Adebayo & Salami, 2021). Because there may be no education without security, and there may be no security without education. This means that education and security are inextricably linked, and have a strong positive impact on all sectors of national life. The view of Joshua et al. (2016) makes this point clear as follows:

Education makes people to be tolerant of other people's religion, belief, culture, limitations and promote social harmony and security. It is ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. A good number of conflicts often arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. In fact, education... produces tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different ethnic, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds and other forms of identities. A country that bequeaths the right type of education to its citizens makes it difficult for such citizens to turn against their father land... it is meaningless to talk of security in the absence of the right type of education (p. 3663)

Thus, this paper looks at the relationship between quality education and national security, which involves protecting a country from internal and external attacks through the use of kinetic and non-kinetic measures, and how their challenges can be managed. The emphasis on quality education is to draw attention to the fact that poor quality education cannot drive peace in society.

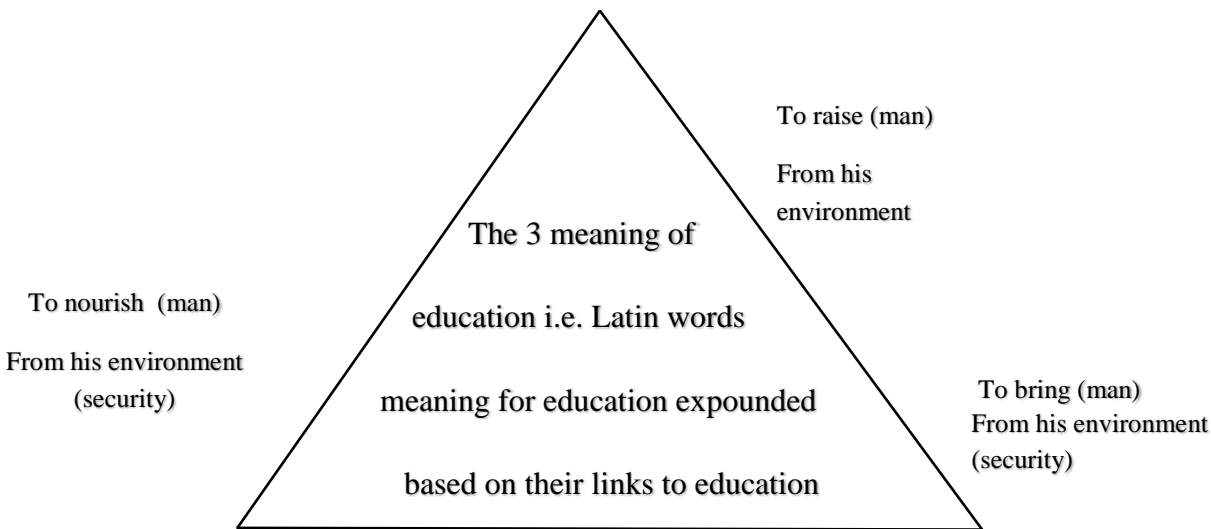
The paper argued that because education develops the mind and makes the individual to take actions that creates peace for himself and society, it should be deliberately utilised to promote peaceful actions as Nigeria's searches for solutions to the current security challenges facing it. Conversely, because education cannot be adequately developed in times of violence and insecurity, there is need to promote peace as a condition to grow education and promote peace towards mankind in all societies.

Education Issues Linked to Security

Education has been defined by many scholars in the field of education, with diverse opinions. Yet, education creates and promote social harmony and perhaps, one suitable definition of education to my mind that appears to be linking national security and shows the relationship to education, is the work by Osokoya (2014), who posited that education is wider and broader than the school itself: and that according to Osokoya, an individual can be educated, not necessarily

going to a formalized school system while he notes that education from Latin definition is split into three Latin words: meaning to raise, to nourish, and to bring, which is better explained in the study using a triangular diagram below.

Figure 1: Triangular Representation of Meaning of Education



In other words, looking at the triangular diagram, education has three basic functions to mankind, hence, to raise, to nourish, and to bring, in order to be functional in a secured environment. Education raises awareness by providing instruction and useful skills that promotes functionality and responsibility in citizen regardless of their living conditions (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2023; Ogunyemi, 2020; Olumide & Alabi, 2022). Hence, this explain and suggests that education and national security coexist with the environment that these individuals as human beings work and live, ensuring that where they live is safe. It also explains how these individuals with their challenges can manage their diverse ability and capability within the educational context and the security context. The link of education issues to security also explains the complexity around their challenges, opportunity and how better strategies can enhance development.

Although, sustainable goals and objective is possible for education and national security in Nigeria, thus, Osokoya posited that no human can be raised, nourished, and brought up in an atmosphere where there is war, conflict, terror, kidnapping, militancy etc. no matter how highly educated or uneducated that society is.

MANAGING NATIONAL SECURITY FOR EDUCATION: GAINS AND CHALLENGES

In managing national security, it is the ability for armed forces of any nation to be able to protect its citizens all the time; everywhere, from both internal and external aggression in it country. It is the ability to apply acquired knowledge through training to preserve and protect the nation from conflict. National security is an institution that has to do with defence of the citizen of that country from oppression that comes from outside and inside attack from enemies within and against its nation as a country (Oluwole, 2021; Olumide & Alabi, 2022; Oladipupo & Yusuf,

2021). However, national security is multidimensional, and understanding this justifies its link with education. According Koffi Anan cited in Joshua et al. (2016, p. 3661-3662):

.... “security” means far more than absence of conflict... lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons... we cannot be secure amidst starvation... we cannot build peace without alleviating poverty...we cannot build freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-cantered concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

However, in bringing civic engagement and laying the foundation against insecurity, the more educated its citizens are, the more they will be able to cope and address the root causes of war and conflict, thereby reducing the issues of high level of radicalism, high level of radical ideologies, terrorism, kidnapping etc. in order to achieve effective peace building in the country for better educational gain through security. In Nigeria, for instance, there are several issues or problems linked to education connecting insecurity that may be reduced if these challenges are deliberately and consciously tackled i.e., issues like ‘poverty reduction, human capital, development, increase in economic productivity, inequality, kidnapping, high level of illiteracy, corruption, terrorism, bandit etc. these are some of the issues that can be traceable to the absence of education and insecurity in any country..

Again, security and education must work hand-in-hand to bring about a safe society from one generation to another i.e. to say national security and global security is crucial in order to achieve peace in the world at large (Okonkwo & Olayemi, 2022; Ogunyemi, 2020). For the effective management of the challenges facing insecurity in education. It should be noted, every challenge that threaten the sustainable goals for education globally also threatens security.

EDUCATION AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

There are numerous challenges facing the educational sector that can equally limit the efforts of the Armed Forces from contributing and supporting national security of Nigeria as a country. For instance, in the diagram below, there are diverse issues ranging as:

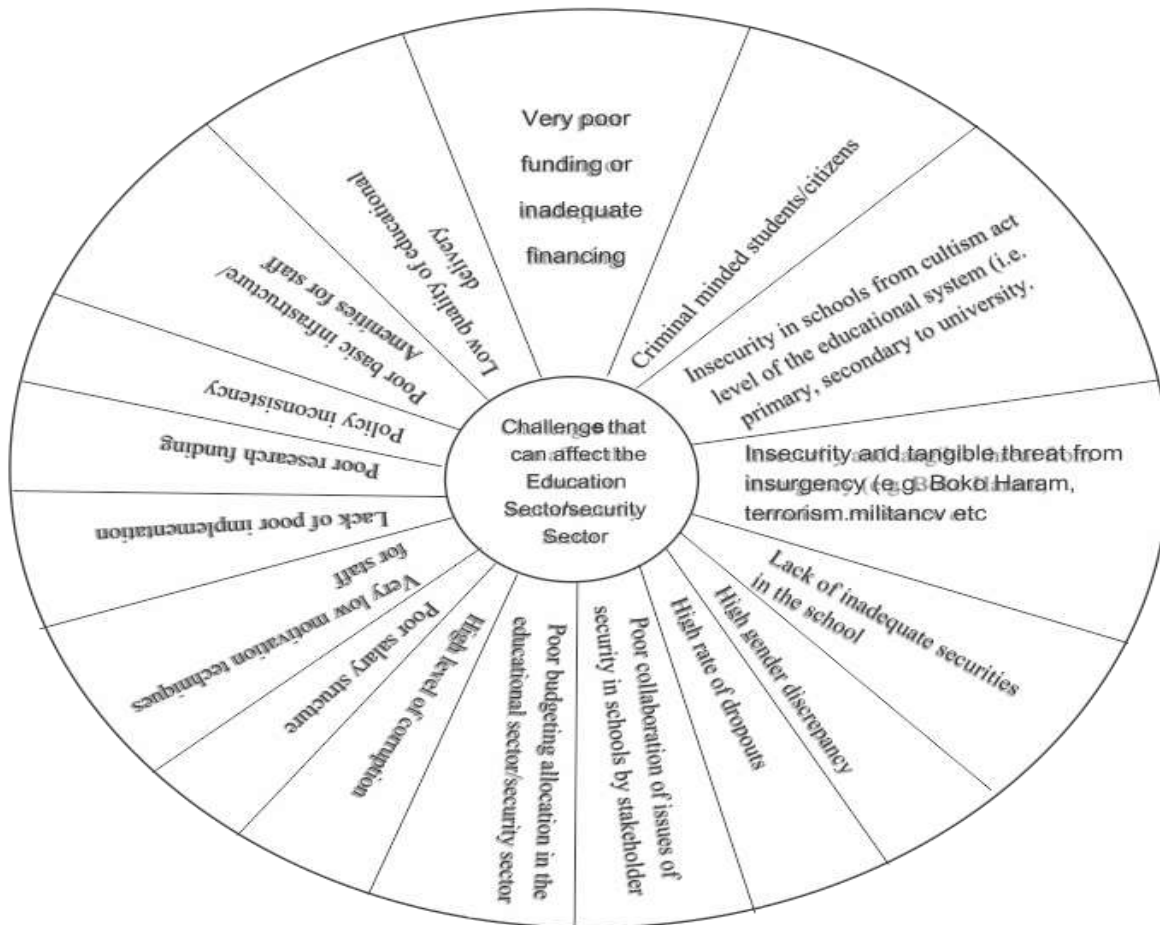


Figure 2: Challenges facing Education in Nigeria

Looking at the issues confronting our educational sector and the security sector, in the diagram above, it is important to observe that the challenges of leadership is at the front burner or at the head of all the issues mentioned, and that the style of quality of leadership can affect both educational issues and security issues: this is because leadership is the driver to all the challenges we face in these two essential sectors that provide essential services such as knowledge and safety to all mankind in the world. Leadership quality explains and reveals how there may be significant progress or not, if the right person is not elected or appointed into positions of trust to head leadership in all sectors of our human endeavours (Ogunyemi, 2020). This means that the quality of leadership can bring positive changes to challenge or negative changes to the challenge confronting educational problems and security problems.

Poor Staff Welfare: The welfare of staff in any organization is very critical to the success of an institution or organization. This include issues of good and befitting accommodation, issues of free medical health for families of staff working in the organization should give some psychological stability to work in the organization to bring out his/her best to the satisfaction of goals and objective outcomes laid down for optimum service delivery to both the workers and the organization. In other words, for any staff to be well cared for, their welfare and mental wellbeing should be well impacted on so to achieve effective cooperation on their job: whereas

government can intervene on these issues through good government policies and responses. These issues can also solve through building of houses for its workforce in the educational sector and the security sector.

Issues of Inadequate Facilities: Inadequate facilities are another common challenge facing the educational personnel and security personnel in their operation of discharging their duties. Inadequate facilities explain reasons why in the both sectors, we have high level of old and broken down dilapidated building as offices. Expired furniture not fit for (learning and learners). Take for instance, there are inadequate infrastructural facilities such as expired laboratory equipment used for practical by students; inadequate classroom with about 200-250 students per class in some schools etc. while in the security sector for instance, we have catapult guns and cutlasses tied with rubber as gun; yet, when you go to some military formation, there inadequate firearms as weapons to fight with some of the weapon used by the security personnel already expired compared to what is used globally for security personnel on duties and operations (United Nations Development Programme, 2020; United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

The use of inadequate facilities makes the personnel less combatant, ready for operation and can be very demoralizing, poses the challenge of inadequate facilities when also compared to the weapon use by the boko haram, bandits, militants, kidnappers etc. that are not legal or permitted personnel.

Corruption: Corruption is another issues facing education that also brings insecurity. The issue of corruption seems to be the centre stage in determining all other factors. Again, because of the damage corruption has caused in our educational system and our security sector.

Hence, in the work titled the role of law in tackling corruption in education by Derri and Egemonu (2017) posited that corruption in education allows people to be successful without merit, which sooner or later transmits into swelling ranks of unqualified, incapable and incompetent professional as leaders in their various field of study, including the field of education and the field of security. So when this happens, the qualified professionals are denied the opportunity to perform effectively because of the corrupt practices in the system. For instance, the selection of the best qualified military head got denied fulfilment to get to the top most position of his job, due to corrupt selection process, while the best performing candidate is denied the opportunity from becoming the University Vice Chancellor due to corruption among the committee members in the selection process and their vested political interest of stakeholders that seems to neglect the issues of merit for the interest of corruption and manipulation. Corruption issues also explain reasons why students are denied scholarship opportunity due to corrupt panel members at the final selection stage without following merit.

The issues confronting education that also affects insecurity in Nigeria are the same across all human endeavours. The end result is always the issues of corruption due to the “manipulation of competent personnel out” of the process by a few corrupt individuals for their personal gain and interest over and above group’s common interest and against the organization’s clearly written goals, vision and interest being compromised because of corruption, which later transmit or result into swelling ranks of unqualified, incapable and incompetent professionals as leaders of these organizations in their various field of study and endeavours, while the professionals with capacity and competence are denied the opportunity to serve. Meaning that the panel members were wrongly constituted, so their decision from the corrupt panel that was headed by these few

corrupt individuals on the committee will definitely come out with wrong decision about the interview processes, appointment process, scholarship etc., which is already manipulative from the beginning of the process to the outcome process.

Due to corrupt practices, this to me is likely to be the reason why Nigeria seems to place attribute like: corruption first, personal greed first, and selfishness above common interest and able national interest in all the sectors of our organization, institutions and all facet of human endeavour.

MANAGING EDUCATION AND INSECURITY IN COMBATING COUNTERISM

Under this management education will bring national identity, increase value orientation and re-education in inequalities, promote inclusion of all strata of population in reducing conflict and extremism in ideology. While the issues of national insecurity should drive and promote good budget for our defence, support investment in the capability and abilities of personnel with their family structure in housing issues. The management of education in combating insecurity structure in Nigeria will also help in the reduction of social unrest to avoid internal and external conflict resolution.

MANAGING EDUCATION/PREVENTING INSECURITY FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Using management strategies for sustainable development, there should be workforce development (these include military personnel workforce). Education brings intelligence for security operation and will rather help in analyzing their challenges to better and review their operations. Thus, the management of education prevents insecurity should equally bring about diplomatic collaboration, good policies formulations, while the implementation process should be very timely and strategies without any form of delay from any government in power. The involvement of skilled talent capacity should also be a requirement, while issues of training and retraining of its personnel should not be compromised in order to achieve optimum goal and effectiveness.

The need for adaptation of new strategies to technological advancement for national interests should be of importance in the interest of peace and national security. Knowing that without national security, there can be human capital development in any nation. Whereas, managing education can be used to prevent insecurity for the aim of achieving quality human capital development, there is also need in managing diplomatic ties, soft power, these strategies include projection of culture, values, vision etc. In other words, it includes projecting educational opportunities to the world that will involve local partnership that will in turn bring in international partnership. Another diplomatic partnership should be in the area of reducing aggression on its citizens to avoid lack of trust, thereby ensuring the avoidance of instability in all aspects of a country at large.

MERITS OF MANAGING EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

There are numerous benefits of education managing and achieving the issue of National Security. These merit ranges from radicalization of education to reduce extremely. The ability to withstand threat due to proper knowledge in educational training, to combatant ready. The awareness of

citizens' enlightenment education on stable economy, the use of quality and effective strategies, awareness of staff, the use of technological options for new innovation, the use of educational committed workforce option, solving problem option, the use of critical thinking spontaneous response at any time.

However, the citizen awareness means that issues facing National Security are diverse in nation such as, holding leaders voted into authority accountable, ensuring that citizens know the policy decision made by government on National issue and on national security. Since decision as these, can also connect international relation on issues of on threats that may be internal or external on security challenges.

Another merit of managing education for national security is in the area of competent workforce that serves as a foundation in using educational knowledge in liberating national insecurity (Aminu & Abubakar, 2022; Adeyemi & Olowookere, 2022). This is because, national security depends largely on educated skilled workforce e.g. experts in the area like cybersecurity, military strategy option etc. diplomacy should be trained, in a special knowledge in such programme that will be educative and beneficial to the workforce and the personnel. Which in turn, transmit this knowledge into effective well trained professional that is ready to face and manage problem facing national security through the knowledge acquired in education for national security?

This means that, knowledge in education will help the knowledge in technology and innovation and for the benefit of national security in managing issues, in areas like intelligence gathering, research and innovation etc. hence, it is crucial that looking at the merit of education for national security, it should be tackled in a multidimensional method, ranging from a holistic approach. Implementation of reforms in the educational sector, and the security sector, then improvement on quality and access should be crucial, while focus on relevant education needed and ensuring that our various educational system, security systems are secured at all levels.

CONCLUSION

In tackling the issues of national security, education is a critical tool that is needed in achieving success and sustainability in the security sector. Through education, counter terrorism would be reduced, promotion, and also social harmony and tolerance. The enlightenment of peace through education initiatives by non-governmental organization, also reduce the issue of marginalization, issue of suicide bombing will be reduced with knowledge of education, while inclusive issues of unemployment, corruption will be reduced in the educational sector and in the security, and the issue of priority will be given to security in our educational institution.

For peaceful coexistence in the diverse and complex country like Nigeria, there is need for a balance and save educational system that will enhance the issue of learners and learning in school environment. Corruption in our educational security system should be reduced to the barest minimum, so that professional and competent and qualified personnel can effectively manage any challenge that may arise in the educational sector and security sector.

Professional competence should be taken above personal interest and group interest. The issue of funding should be considered and execution stage without manipulation of funds for security and education. Training and retraining of personnel working in the educational and security industry should be a regular routine to enable personnel cope with the ever changing technological world. Adequate motivation in terms of welfare package and salary increase

should be considered seriously because of the enormous task education does to impact knowledge.

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