

Value Education and Insecurity Among Secondary School Students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria

Anim, Dorathy Agbo, Essien Ekenyong Essien & *David Francis Ekpoto

Department of Social Science Education
Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education
University of Calabar

animdorathy@gmail.com, essienekpenyong73@gmail.com, ekpotodavid@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9139-3414>

*Corresponding author: ekpotodavid@gmail.com
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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of value education on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried accordingly. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 310 Secondary School two (SS2) students were randomly selected from a population of 3,102 Secondary School two (SS2) students in all the 23 public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The selection was done through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used to collect the required data was a questionnaire titled 'Value Education and Insecurity Questionnaire (VEIQ). The instrument was validated by 3 experts in Research and Statistics. Cronbach coefficient Alpha reliability method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument reliability. Reliability estimates of the instrument ranged from 0.81 to 0.82. Consequently, the instrument was found to be adequately reliable for use in the study. Multiple Regression analysis was the statistical tool used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that, Values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention significantly influence insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. Sequel to these findings, it was recommended, among others that, Government should implement a comprehensive self-esteem education program within the school curriculum. Government should integrate empathy education programmes into the school curriculum.

Keywords: Value Education, Insecurity, self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills, bullying prevention

Introduction

In recent years, the importance of a safe and secure environment has gained significant attention in the field of education. A school's primary responsibility is to provide a conducive atmosphere for learning, and the establishment of a secure environment plays a pivotal role in achieving this goal. Ensuring the physical safety of students is paramount for effective learning. A study conducted by Smith (2021) highlighted that students who feel safe in their environment are more likely to engage in academic activities without fear of harm. Implementing security measures, such as surveillance systems, controlled access points, and emergency response protocols, contributes to a sense of security among students and staff.

A safe and secure environment positively impacts the psychological well-being of students. According to a recent review by Johnson and Brown (2022), students who experience

a sense of safety at school exhibit lower stress levels and better mental health, leading to improved focus and academic performance. Creating an environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination is essential for promoting emotional well-being. Research by Garcia and Rodriguez (2023) emphasizes that a secure school environment fosters a positive learning atmosphere. When students feel protected and supported, they are more likely to participate actively in class discussions, collaborate with peers, and take intellectual risks. This positive atmosphere contributes to a more vibrant and effective learning community.

Students in secondary schools often struggle with insecurity, which can have a serious negative effect on both their general well-being and academic achievement. The word insecurity has myriads of connotations, crosscutting and multi-dimensional concept which has been subject to debates (Obi, 2015). It signifies danger, hazard, uncertainty lack of protection, and lack of safety (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019). To Obarisiagbon and Akintoye (2019) insecurity generally refers to the absence of resistance to or protection from harm, peaceful co-existence and development at large. Obi (2015) defined insecurity as a chronic threat to human life, territories, states, religious beliefs, properties and institutions among others. Ojukwu (2017) described insecurity as a situation where human and national security of a state is compromised by internal or external forces or interests exacerbated by the former, weak or poor economic condition military, and or human resources development. Though, there are different dimensions of insecurity, this study is limited to three dimensions of insecurity - physical, personal and community insecurities.

Physical insecurity among secondary school students is a growing concern with far-reaching implications for their well-being and academic performance. This phenomenon encompasses various aspects, including harassment, violence, inadequate safety measures, and the overall lack of a secure environment within educational institutions. Harassment remains a pervasive issue in secondary schools, taking various forms such as verbal, physical, or cyberbullying. According to a study by Olweus (2013), persistent harassment can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and a heightened sense of physical insecurity among students. Incidents of violence within school premises contribute significantly to physical insecurity. Personal insecurity among secondary school students is a pervasive issue that can significantly impact their overall well-being and academic performance. As adolescents navigate the complex journey of self-discovery and social integration, they may experience various forms of personal insecurity, including social anxiety, and fear of judgment. Personal insecurity is defined as the lack of protection of an individual from physical violence, harm and chronic threat (Orhero, 2020). Community insecurity among secondary school students has become an increasingly pressing concern in recent years. This phenomenon encompasses various challenges, such as violence, substance abuse, and the overall sense of instability within the community. Community insecurity is a threat, violence and lack of safety claiming hundreds of lives in a particular society over some time (Eneji & Agri, 2020).

Self-esteem is one of the components of values education that may have influence on insecurity among secondary school students. Feng, Su, Wang and Liu, (2018) defined self-esteem as an individual's feelings regarding their personal worth, competence, and suitability. Studies have shown that self-esteem is one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction, and it negatively correlates with psychological distress (especially in the forms of anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems, and high values in terms of the general severity index of symptom disorders) (Servidio, Gentile & Boca, 2018, Onuoha & Ekpoto, 2021). This implies that self-esteem is important to an individual's psychological development. Unfortunately, many students seem to possess low self-esteem which has manifested in their social anxiety, academic underachievement, and poor mental health outcomes. The low self-esteem seems to have affected their well-being and general learning in school.

Statement of the problem

The researchers observed the breakdown of security system in schools within the study area. The researchers also observed that a number of incidents have verified that Nigerians are under siege and that no one or any location is secure. It is no longer safe for teachers and children to be in schools. Staff and students leave the staff quarters and student hostels in fear of being ambushed by unidentified gunmen or bandits. Low academic achievement is on the rise in many secondary schools these days, and it appears to be related to insecurity; social instability, cult-related issues, and kidnappings make teachers and students afraid to attend to school. Teachers and students are kidnapped from schools on a daily basis. Recently, the Punch newspaper of November 16, 2023 reported that insecurity threatens Calabar Carnival as kidnapping cases rise. It was further reported that Calabar has faced almost daily abductions targeting professionals like doctors, lawyers, professors and government officials. This implies that Calabar Metropolis is not safe for citizens including students of secondary schools. The Nigerian government, security agencies, and local communities have been working to address these challenges and improve the security situation in schools. Efforts have included increased security measures, collaboration with local communities, and initiatives to address the root causes of insecurity, research by foreign and home-based authors show that students are still learning in fear due to insecurity in secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. It is against this background that the present investigation on the influence of values education on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria is being researched into.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of values education on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigates the influence of:

1. Values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

Research question

The following research question was raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State?

Statement of hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide this study.

1. There is no significant influence of values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

Literature review

The origin of the concept is traced to its Latin root 'se', which means 'without' and 'curus' means 'anxiety'. Therefore, security means freedom from anxiety, fear, threats, attacks, frustration, and so on. It is however argued that security is the complete absence of threats to peace; absence of hunger, poverty, and squalor, national integration, stability, and the provision of fundamental needs of people as well as the protection of lives and property (Shedrack, 2019, Ogunode, Ahaotu, & Obi-Ezenekwe, 2021, Adams, Ekpoto, Uduak & Edinyang, 2024, Ukwaiyi, Ekpoto & Ikpo, 2023). The absence of security is insecurity. The word insecurity has

myriads of connotations, crosscutting and multi-dimensional concept which has been subject to debates (Obi, 2015). It signifies danger, hazard, uncertainty lack of protection, and lack of safety (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019). To Obarisiagbon and Akintoye (2019) insecurity generally refers to the absence of resistance to or protection from harm, peaceful co-existence and development at large. Obi (2015) defined insecurity as a chronic threat to human life, territories, states, religious beliefs, properties and institutions among others.

Hassan (2014) views insecurity as negative feelings involving fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and injustice among others. Insecurity is a degenerated stage of conflict, threats, and attacks on human security, and intense violence is characterised by fight, warfare, injury, and death (Best, 2016). Insecurity is a threat that negatively affects teaching and learning activities in such schools (Ogunode, 2015) posits that insecurity is the state of being subject to danger, anxiety, injury, fear, worry, and the feeling of being unsafe.

One of the components of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students is self-esteem. Teaching students to respect themselves and value their self-worth can help reduce feelings of insecurity. Promoting self-esteem and self-respect can help students resist peer pressure and bullying, as they are more likely to protect their own dignity and the dignity of others. Self-esteem plays a crucial role in the psychological well-being and development of individuals, especially during the formative years of secondary school. During this period, adolescents experience various physical, emotional, and social changes, which can significantly impact their self-perception and overall sense of worth. Insecurity, often linked with low self-esteem, can manifest in numerous ways, including social anxiety, academic underachievement, and poor mental health outcomes.

Feng, Su, Wang and Liu, (2018) defined self-esteem as an individual's feelings regarding their personal worth, competence, and suitability. Studies have shown that self-esteem is one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction, and it negatively correlates with psychological distress (especially in the forms of anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems, and high values in terms of the general severity index of symptom disorders) (Servidio, Gentile & Boca, 2018).

Another component of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students is empathy. Promoting empathy and compassion in students helps them understand the feelings and perspectives of others, reducing bullying and violence. It also encourages students to understand and share the feelings of their peers can lead to better relationships and reduce mistreatment. Gonz' alez, Alvarez, and Fern' andez (2015) stated that one of the most important intra-individual variables in terms of emotional skills is empathy, understood as the ability to put oneself in someone else's position, and to understand their perspective and feelings. In adolescence, empathy is an important construct for understanding and cooperation among peers, owing to the multiple bidirectional interactions that take place in educational centres. Empathy consists of these three basic components: (a) the perception of the situation of the other; (b) the interiorisation of the situation of the other; and, (c) the assumption of the situation of the other as one's own; in a process that ultimately aims to know and understand the situation and experience of the other (Mico, ' Cava, & Buelga, 2019).

Conflict resolution is a critical component of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students. Values education provides tools and skills for resolving conflicts peacefully, reducing incidents of violence and unrest in schools. Teaching conflict resolution skills can help students handle disputes in a non-violent, constructive manner, reducing insecurity arising from conflicts. Implementing proactive strategies to prevent conflicts, such as peer mediation programmes, can reduce insecurity and violence in schools.

Bullying prevention is another component of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students. Implementing anti-bullying programmes and educating students about the consequences of bullying can reduce insecurity for both victims and bullies.

Research Method

The research design that was used for this study is survey design. This design is directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of investigation. The study area is Calabar Metropolis, the capital of Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar Metropolis is located between latitude 4°30' and 5°05' north of the equator and longitude of 8°15' and 8°25' east of meridian. The population of the study comprised all Secondary School two (SS2) students in all the 23 public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State numbering 3,102 students. The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The stratification was based on the two Local Education Authorities in the Education Zone. In each of the two Local Education Authorities the simple random technique was used to select the sample for the study. 10% of the schools in each local government area was used for the study. The sample consists of 310 secondary school two students which comprised of 10% of the estimated population from the two Local Government Areas in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire tagged “Value Education and Insecurity Questionnaire (VEIQ). The instrument consists of three sections. Section A elicits information on respondents’ personal data such as name of school, age and sex. Section B consist of the 20 items, which measure value education in the following dimension; self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution and bullying prevention. Section C consists of 15 items measuring insecurity among secondary school students. The components of insecurity measured include physical, personal and community insecurities. The questionnaire is a 4–point modified Likert scale type, ranging from Very Often (VO, 4points), Often (O, 3 points), Sometimes (ST, 2 points) and Never (N, 1 point). Face validity was established for the instrument of this study. The face validity was established by using the supervisor and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar who vetted the items developed and some items in the questionnaire were modified. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient method. Some copies of the instrument were administered to 50 SS2 students who were not part of the main study. The reliability co-efficient ranges from .75 to .83 which was high. The researchers visited the entire sampled schools one after another to ensure fairness and students’ compliance with the objective of the study.

Result

In this section, the null hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test it at .05 level of significance is presented.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant influence of values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

The independent variables in this hypothesis are self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention. The dependent variable is insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Multiple regression analysis of the influence of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State (N=268)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.998(a)	.997	.997	15078	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	1878.782	4	469.696	20660.661	.000(a)
Residual	5.979	263	.023		
Total	1884.761	267			
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value
Constant	1.813	.161		11.260	.000
Self-esteem	.016	.009	.022	1.780	.076
Empathy	.850	.016	.998	53.587	.000
Conflict resolution skills	-.015	.011	-.020	-1.339	.182
Bullying prevention	-.001	.017	-.001	-.052	.958

* Significant at .05 level.

Table 1 showed that a combination of workload in terms of (self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention) yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .974 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .949. The result also showed that Analysis of Variance for the multiple regression data produced an f- ratio of 22417.106, which was significant at .05 level. Thus, when these variables are taken together, they significantly predicted insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. This implied that self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention when taken together are significant predictors of insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. A multiple R^2 of .998 implied that the independent variables self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention jointly explain 99.8 percent of the variance in insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

To find out the relative contributions of the individual factors, a test of regression weight was carried out. The result shows that the standardized regression weights (Beta) ranged from .018 to 1.043 and t – ratio from -1.636 to 62.642. The Beta weight of three (self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention) were significant at .05 level, while the other two variables (self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention) were not significant at .05 level. This result implied that when the variables were taken individually, only three namely; self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention significantly predicts insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. The result further showed that self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention ($t=62.642$) made the greatest contribution to insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, followed by self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention ($t = 9.716$), while self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention ($t= -1.636$) made the

least contribution to insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State

Discussion of findings

This section deals with the discussion of findings from the trends of the five research questions tested. The discussion is presented according to the research questions.

The result of the hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of values education in terms of self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution skills and bullying prevention on insecurity among secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. The finding is in the study of Feng, Su, Wang and Liu, (2018) who see self-esteem as an individual's feelings regarding their personal worth, competence, and suitability. Studies have shown that self-esteem is one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction, and it negatively correlates with psychological distress (especially in the forms of anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems, and high values in terms of the general severity index of symptom disorders). Promoting empathy and compassion in students helps them understand the feelings and perspectives of others, reducing bullying and violence. It also encourages students to understand and share the feelings of their peers can lead to better relationships and reduce mistreatment. Gonz'alez, Alvarez, and Fern'andez (2015) also stated that one of the most important intra-individual variables in terms of emotional skills is empathy, understood as the ability to put oneself in someone else's position, and to understand their perspective and feelings. In adolescence, empathy is an important construct for understanding and cooperation among peers, owing to the multiple bidirectional interactions that take place in educational centres. Empathy consists of these three basic components: (a) the perception of the situation of the other; (b) the interiorisation of the situation of the other; and, (c) the assumption of the situation of the other as one's own; in a process that ultimately aims to know and understand the situation and experience of the other.

Conflict resolution is a critical component of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students. Values education provides tools and skills for resolving conflicts peacefully, reducing incidents of violence and unrest in schools. Teaching conflict resolution skills can help students handle disputes in a non-violent, constructive manner, reducing insecurity arising from conflicts. Implementing proactive strategies to prevent conflicts, such as peer mediation programmes, can reduce insecurity and violence in schools. Bullying prevention is another component of value education that influence insecurity among secondary school students. Implementing anti-bullying programmes and educating students about the consequences of bullying can reduce insecurity for both victims and bullies.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was concluded that self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution and bullying prevention significantly influenced insecurity among secondary school students. On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should implement a comprehensive self-esteem education program within the school curriculum. This program should be designed to foster a positive self-image and equip students with the necessary tools to navigate and overcome feelings of insecurity. The program could include workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions that focus on self-awareness, self-acceptance, and building resilience.
2. Government should integrate empathy education programmes into the school curriculum. These programmes should be designed to foster a greater understanding of emotions, promote active listening, and encourage perspective-taking. Workshops and interactive sessions can be organized to teach students how to empathize with their peers, recognizing

and validating their feelings. By incorporating empathy education into the school curriculum, students will develop the skills needed to navigate and understand their own insecurities while also supporting their classmates in times of need. This approach can create a more compassionate school environment that values emotional well-being and helps mitigate the impact of insecurity among secondary school students.

3. Schools should implement structured conflict resolution programmes. These programmes should be integrated into the school curriculum and cover essential aspects of communication, empathy, and mediation. Students should be educated on recognizing and managing conflicts, understanding the root causes of insecurity, and developing effective communication skills. Additionally, schools can collaborate with external organizations or professionals specializing in conflict resolution to conduct workshops and training sessions. By fostering a culture of open dialogue and providing students with the tools to resolve conflicts peacefully, schools can contribute significantly to reducing insecurity among secondary school students.
4. Governments should implement comprehensive anti-bullying programmes within the school environment. These programmes should encompass not only punitive measures for those engaged in bullying behaviors but also focus on prevention and education. Schools should consider adopting evidence-based anti-bullying curricula that educate students on the consequences of bullying, promote empathy, and teach conflict resolution skills.
5. Governments and schools should re-enforce adequate security measures in secondary schools also, peace and security education should be inculcated into secondary school curriculum.

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