

# Security Education in Basic Schools: Implications for Community Development in Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Dr. Orlu, Lorretta Nkechi**

Department of Adult Education and Community Development, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

E-mail: [Lorretta.orlu@jaue.edu.ng](mailto:Lorretta.orlu@jaue.edu.ng)

**Didi, Fortune Emmanuel**

Department of Adult Education and Community Development, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

E-mail: [fortune.didi@jaue.edu.ng](mailto:fortune.didi@jaue.edu.ng)

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## Abstract:

Through organized curriculum and efficient teaching techniques, basic schools are vital venues for fostering security consciousness and awareness in young learners. It gives learners the values, information, and abilities needed to identify abnormal behavior, react correctly, and support harmonious communal cohabitation. This study borders on security education in basic schools and its implications for community development in Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. The study's population is made up of 1,350 national value curriculum teachers from 268 Basic Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State (RSUBEB, 2025). The multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in selecting 354 teachers in urban and state's basic schools in Rivers State. A self-developed questionnaire tagged "Security Education in Basic Schools: Implications for Community Development in Rivers State (SEBSICD)" was used for data collection. The instrument consists of 16 items on a 4-point scoring scale of: Very High Extent (VHE = 3.26-4.00) – 4, High Extent (HE= 2.51-3.25) – 3, Low Extent (LE= 1.76-2.50) – 2, Very Low Extent (VLE = 1.00-1.75) – 1. The validity of the instrument was determined by three research experts. The instrument was trial tested utilizing the test-retest approach in order to ascertain the instrument's reliability. The trial test result was analyzed using Cronbach alpha and a reliability

coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. With the help of two research experts, the questionnaire was distributed and administered. Inferential statistics (mean score) was used to analyze the research questions. Finding reveals among others that the respondents unanimously agreed to a high extent that security education curriculum influences pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility. Thus, the study concluded that security education remains a critical yet underutilised strategic instrument for strengthening national and communal security in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State. Hence the study recommended that there should be professional training and retraining of teachers, good budgetary allocation and good remuneration for teachers of security education in basic schools.

**Keywords:** Security, Education, Security Education, Basic Schools, Community Development.

## Introduction

The current state of international and national security is constantly and significantly changing. The security and safety of regions are at risk due to an increasing number of intricate and varied threats. Security specialists refer to the previous ten years' technological advancements as a Revolution in Military Affairs. It is now everyone's duty to recognize any risks or weaknesses in this respect. In modern civilization, security goes beyond the conventional idea of territorial defense to include social stability, human safety, and the safeguarding of people's lives, property, and institutions.

Today, national security is a complicated, multifaceted concept that encompasses human safety, social stability, and economic resilience in addition to traditional defense [1]. Insurgency, banditry, abduction, and socioeconomic disruption continue to pose serious challenges to Nigeria's national security. As a result, security is increasingly seen as a state responsibility as well as a shared social duty including cooperation between governmental organizations, educational institutions, and civil society. Thousands of individuals are being slain or kidnapped in violent episodes across our nation, and many areas are seeing an increase in ransom payments and community relocation. The fundamental causes of insecurity, such as unemployment, bad governance, and inadequate civic education, have not been adequately addressed by an over-reliance on kinetic remedies [2].

Because of this, research shows that a purely kinetic military approach cannot address the underlying causes of insecurity; instead, incorporating preventive strategies like education, awareness, and community engagement will foster civic engagement, critical thinking, and conflict-resolution abilities. These are essential for ending the cycle of fragility and violence in our African communities. Therefore, security education is a non-kinetic strategy that encourages individuals, particularly young students, to uphold civic principles, be vigilant, and support peace [3]. This might be the reason why the UN General Assembly went on to urge Member States to take the required actions to guarantee that the values of nonviolence and peace are taught in their society at all levels of, especially in educational institutions.

Nigeria has seen a rise in security issues in recent years, emanating from Boko Haram insurgency, armed banditry, different types of youth violence, terrorism, abduction, cultism, and intercommunal disputes, all of which have had a substantial impact on societal stability and development. Ethnic, political, or resource-based tensions among stakeholders are frequently the driving forces behind these [4]. Nigeria's internal disputes have led to insecurity in several parts of the country. Although security education is part of Nigeria's basic education curriculum, its objectives are still unattainable and its execution is uneven. Because of this, Uwaezuoke [5] noted that security education in public secondary schools is still primarily theoretical and has minimal incorporation into real-world civic education.

In order to create and maintain a stable and safe environment for its residents, the country must properly construct an acceptable security culture and simultaneously provide effective security

education in line with the current dangers. Children must be taught the skills of communication, problem-solving, negotiation, and critical thinking in order to prevent the use of violence to resolve conflicts. The National Value Curriculum (NVC) was introduced for this reason. Civic education, social studies, and security education are among the different subjects that are included in its component.

The goal of NVC education is to develop students' sociocultural development, national awareness, and critical thinking skills so they can make decisions regarding their own lives and the safety of their communities. Although social studies and civic education are given a lot of attention, security education is rarely discussed. The goal of these disciplines is to instill in young people a feeling of national pride and the protection of people's lives and property in Nigeria. The efficacy of security education as a tactic for fostering sustainable community development in Rivers State is called into doubt by these gaps. The potential contribution of security education to lowering insecurity and improving community well-being may not be achieved if it is not well executed or fails to impact learners' behavior.

### **Definition of Concepts**

**Security:** The term "security" is used in a variety of settings and ways. According to Meerts [6], it might mean being free from a variety of risks and hazards (such as war, unemployment, disease, or accidents). In this sense, security encompasses not just physical defense but also the maintenance of institutions, values, and ways of life. It also involves a community's ability to maintain its independent identity and functional integrity in the face of hostile social change. Security may also be characterized as a "state" or a "process." In order to lower hazards and ensure safety, it is a process that includes proactive policies, education, monitoring, and community involvement techniques.

It is a state in which there are no threats. In the context of education, security may refer to creating a safe and supportive environment that protects teachers and students from psychological, emotional, and physical harm in order to promote effective teaching and learning. Food, health, personal safety, environmental protection, freedom from hunger and terror, and the ability to live with dignity are all examples of security in a human context.

**Education:** Education has been defined, used, and interpreted in a variety of ways over the years. It has continuously acted as the primary basis for the development of civilization in all respects. These days, the concepts, beliefs, goals, and, lastly but not the least, methods used all reflect the distinctive qualities of each civilization. We see that a community's level of development and educational achievement are directly associated. Therefore, regardless of the sector of application, we can infer that implemented education anchors a defining role in the growth, improvement, and accomplishment of performance. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, a well-known former politician and president of South Africa, once remarked, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" [7].

It is easy to observe how several national and international agencies and institutions collaborate to create and maintain a stable and safe environment in today's society via education. It is typically easier to avoid the negative effects of insecurity on national, regional, and global economies through education than it is to restrict or eradicate them [8].

**Security Education:** After talking about the idea of security, what exactly is security education? The organized process of giving students the awareness, information, and behavioral skills they need to recognize, stop, and successfully handle security risks in their community is known as security education. It includes both official and informal education that fosters civic duty, alertness, and harmonious cohabitation. According to Omoroje et al. [9], the goal of security education is to fashion a custom of security awareness that empowers people to make contributions

to the security and stability of their communities. Similarly, Adebayo and Salami [10] believe that this type of schooling gives people the skills, mindset, and alertness needed to anticipate hazards rather than just respond to them.

Practically speaking, initiatives that educate the public about early warning indicators, citizen-watch programs, and safe-school practices have been demonstrated to lower targeted attacks by up to 15% in pilot districts [11]. The country may create active, engaged citizens instead of passive beneficiaries of protection by instilling security awareness from an early age. Security education enhances resilience against threats and supports military and law enforcement operations by arming civilians with essential information about safety and governance. This promotes long-term peace and sociopolitical stability.

**National Security:** The protection of a country's inhabitants, vital infrastructure, territorial integrity, and sovereignty against both internal and external threats may be summed up as national security. It addresses military defense, environmental safety, political stability, economic resilience, and the preservation of social values. To Baldwin [12], national security encompasses protecting a country's fundamental interests from any threat that can jeopardize its life or wellbeing, rather than just preventing conflict. The concept of national security in contemporary cultures has changed from being just military to include social stability and human security. By fostering people's understanding, civic engagement, and resilience, security education directly supports national security.

It gives people the values and information needed to identify, stop, and lessen security threats through organized education and public education [13]. Security education helps the government maintain peace and guarantee national stability by encouraging alertness, peaceful cohabitation, and responsible citizenship. In this sense, education strengthens overall national security by acting as a preventative tool in conjunction with established security organizations.

**Community Development:** A community is a geographically bounded social organization made up of people who, regardless of their state of development, strive for peaceful global advancement [14]. This is because human needs are boundless and things may always be improved upon. Initiatives for community development are the result of this never-ending quest to improve people's lives in any given community, which is impossible in a community where anxieties still exist. Nigerian families have a strong commitment to the idea of community development. For this reason, every municipality has a Community Development Committee (CDC) that handles matters pertaining to development. It is generally acknowledged that the idea of community development encompasses everything a community does to guarantee its ongoing existence and expansion. The structure and approach of community development may vary slightly between communities or countries. Sometimes they show a tendency toward a certain national development plan, and other times they show assumptions about the community in question or how to achieve the necessary adjustment and long-term peace. It entails working together to enhance the community's members' social, political, economic, cultural, infrastructural, and peaceful well-being. Initiatives like cleaning waterways, constructing roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, encouraging local government and youth empowerment, and upholding safety and harmonious cohabitation within a particular community are all included [15]. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, referenced in Orlu [16], community development is a practice that combines the hard work of individuals and governmental organizations to enhance the societal, cultural, and economic situation of communities and incorporate these communities into the nations' life to enable them fully donate to the improvement of their country.

### **Statement of the Problem**

For the past few decades, wars, conflicts, and violent crimes have dominated news headlines worldwide. Some of these vulnerabilities are very severe in Rivers State, endangering people's

safety, institutions' ability to operate, and communities' general well-being. The prevalence of these problems implies that current security management strategies might not be adequate to address the underlying reasons. Consequently, there has been a global focus on property and human safety. According to UNESCO [17], the last century has witnessed the bloodiest conflicts in history as well as a dramatic increase in interpersonal violence, including violence against children in schools.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of international organizations like the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), as well as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to resolve conflicts, a number of countries are experiencing various forms of insecurity that make living in such countries extremely risky. Large quantities of money meant for development have not only been used to restore peace to several nations, but they have also been utilized to protect landscapes suitable for human habitation and activity. Because of this, education is now universally acknowledged as a vital instrument for forming attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that support responsible citizenship and peaceful coexistence.

As a result, it is anticipated that the implementation of security education in elementary schools will provide students the awareness, information, and abilities needed to respond to security threats and make communities safer. It is concerning that security education programs have not been able to produce the security awareness and knowledge needed to combat the surge of insecurity in Rivers State and Nigeria. In order to reverse the trend and prevent negligence, it is imperative that a comprehensive security education curriculum be implemented with the aim of providing the younger generation, referred to as "the adults of tomorrow," with the knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in all areas of security management. This made this study necessary in order to evaluate security instruction in elementary schools and its effects on Rivers State community development.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to assess security education in basic schools and its implications for community development in Rivers State. In particular, the objectives include to:

1. Examine the extent to which security education instructional objectives are being implemented in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State.
2. Evaluate how security education curriculum influence pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State.
3. Identify the problems of implementing security education curriculum in promoting community development in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What extent are security education instructional objectives being implemented in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State?
2. What extent does security education curriculum influence pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State?
3. What are the problems of implementing security education curriculum in promoting community development in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State?

### **Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey research approach. 1,350 national value curriculum instructors from 268 Basic Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State comprise the study's population [18]. 354 instructors from Rivers State's urban and rural public basic secondary schools were chosen using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data was gathered using a self-made questionnaire titled "Security Education in Basic Schools: Implications for Community

Development in Rivers State (SEBSICD)." The test has sixteen questions with a four-point rating system: (a) Very High Extent (VHE = 3.26-4.00) – 4, High Extent (HE = 2.51-3.25) – 3, Low Extent (LE = 1.76-2.50) – 2, Very Low Extent (VLE = 1.00-1.75) – 1. Three research specialists evaluated the instrument's validity. The dependability of the instrument was determined by trial testing using the test-retest method. Cronbach alpha was used to examine the trial test results, and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was found. A direct, personal hand-delivery method including in-person encounters with the instructors was used to distribute and administer the questionnaire with the assistance of two research professionals. The research issues were examined using inferential statistics (mean score).

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent are security education instructional objectives being implemented in urban and rural states' basic schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1.** Mean Scores and Grand Means on the extent to which security education instructional objectives are being implemented in urban and rural states' basic schools in Rivers State.

N=354

S/N	Items	Respondents	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	Total	X	Decision
1.	The objectives are clearly stated in the school curriculum	Urban	98	69	31	21	219	3.11	HE
		Rural	59	53	16	7	135	3.21	HE
2.	Learners are taught practical skills for personal safety and emergency response.	Urban	36	29	73	81	219	2.09	LE
		Rural	23	25	40	47	135	2.17	LE
3.	Regularly taught as part of classroom instruction.	Urban	46	43	61	69	219	2.30	LE
		Rural	17	25	41	52	135	2.05	LE
4.	Activities to reinforce security awareness such as drills and seminars are enforced in schools	Urban	43	43	56	51	219	2.40	LE
		Rural	31	23	42	67	135	2.11	LE
5.	Instructional materials for teaching security education are available and utilized.	Urban	39	41	66	47	219	2.37	LE
		Rural	16	33	51	63	135	2.01	LE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>Urban</b>					<b>219</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>LE</b>
		<b>Rural</b>					<b>135</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>LE</b>

\*Key: VHE = 3.26-4.00, HE= 2.51-3.25, LE =1.76-2.50, VLE = 1.00-1.75.

Result shown in table 1 above, demonstrates that both urban and rural teachers agreed to a high extent with item 1 with a mean score of 3.11 and 3.21 respectively. They also agreed to a low extent with items 2-5 with the mean scores of 2.09:2.17, 2.30:2.05, 2.40:2.11 and 2.37: 2.01.

**Research Question 2:** What extent does security education curriculum influence pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2.** Mean Scores and Grand Means on the extent to which security education curriculum influences pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State.

N=354

S/N	Items	Respondents	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	Total	X	Decision
6.	Awareness of personal safety practices are improved.	Urban	100	69	28	23	219	3.13	HE
		Rural	62	50	14	9	135	3.22	HE
7.	Pupils develop respect for rules and regulations.	Urban	98	72	31	18	219	3.14	HE
		Rural	55	45	25	10	135	3.07	HE
8.	The willingness to report suspicious and deviant behaviors and activities are promoted	Urban	74	69	45	31	219	2.85	HE
		Rural	55	33	25	22	135	2.90	HE
9.	Peaceful interaction and conflict resolution among pupils are encouraged	Urban	64	58	44	43	219	2.56	HE
		Rural	52	35	23	25	135	2.84	HE
10.	The sense of civic responsibility toward protecting ones community is imbibed.	Urban	95	71	34	19	219	3.11	HE
		Rural	63	37	22	13	135	3.11	HE
11.	Brings about collaboration and cooperation in maintaining safety	Urban	86	63	45	25	219	2.96	HE
		Rural	54	56	13	12	135	3.13	HE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>Urban</b>					<b>219</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>HE</b>
		<b>Rural</b>					<b>135</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>HE</b>

\*key: VHE = 3.26-4.00, HE= 2.51-3.25, LE =1.76-2.50, VLE = 1.00-1.75.

The findings displayed in Table 2 above shows a grand means of 2.96 and 3.05 respectively, this demonstrate that both rural and urban teachers unanimously agreed to a high extent that security education curriculum influences pupils' attitudes and behaviours toward safety and community responsibility.

**Research 3:** What are the problems of implementing security education curriculum in promoting community development in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State?

**Table 3.** Mean Scores, and Grand Means on the problems of implementing security education curriculum in promoting community development in urban and rural state's basic schools in Rivers State.

N = 354

S/N	Items	Respondents	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Decision
12.	Inadequate instructional materials	Urban	87	69	38	25	219	3.09	<b>HE</b>
		Rural	62	48	14	11	135	3.19	<b>HE</b>
13.	Low funding for security related school activities	Urban	93	67	34	25	219	3.04	<b>HE</b>
		Rural	53	35	26	21	135	2.89	<b>HE</b>
14.	Poor teacher training	Urban	83	70	40	26	219	2.96	<b>HE</b>
		Rural	61	50	15	9	135	3.21	<b>HE</b>
15.	Lack of teacher motivation	Urban	100	78	30	11	219	3.22	<b>HE</b>
		Rural	78	35	15	7	135	3.36	<b>VHE</b>
16.	Insufficient support from school stakeholders in implementing security education programmes.	Urban	97	66	31	25	219	3.07	<b>HE</b>
		Rural	51	32	30	22	135	2.83	<b>HE</b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>Urban</b>						<b>3.08</b>	<b>HE</b>
		<b>Rural</b>						<b>3.20</b>	<b>HE</b>

\*key: VHE = 3.26-4.00, HE= 2.51-3.25, LE =1.76-2.50, VLE = 1.00-1.75.

The responses in table 3 above shows the grand means of the urban and rural teachers as 3.08 and 3.20, respectively, this reveals that both respondents agreed to a high extent on the problems of implementing security education curriculum in promoting community development in state's basic schools in Rivers State.

## Discussion

Table 1 shows that the results have a grand mean scores of 2.45 and 2.31 respectively, this reveals that the respondents agreed to a low extent that security education instructional objectives is being implemented in Rivers State despite the fact that its objectives are clearly stated in the school curriculum as shown in table 1 item 1. This indicates that there are insufficient high-quality teaching materials available to implement security education instructional objectives. This outcome is in line with Aminu's (2019) conclusions that Nigeria lacks the resources required to execute security education programs.

The results in Table 2 show grand means of 2.96 and 3.05, indicating that both rural and urban teachers agreed to a high degree that security education curricula enhance students' awareness of personal safety practices, assist students in developing respect for rules and regulations, encourage students to report suspicious and deviant behaviors and activities, foster peaceful interaction and conflict resolution among students, instill a sense of civic responsibility toward protecting one's community, and foster collaboration and cooperation in upholding safety and community responsibility. This result is in line with that of Omoroje et al. (2020), who studied "achieving national security in Nigeria through education" and discovered that security education fosters a culture of

security consciousness that empowers people to support community safety and stability.

Additionally, the results in table 3 shows that both respondents strongly agreed on the following issues with implementing security education curricula in Rivers State's basic schools to promote community development: inadequate instructional materials, low funding for security-related school activities, poor teacher preparation, low teacher motivation, and insufficient support from school stakeholders in implementing security education programs. This outcome is also consistent with the findings of Aina et al. (2021), who discovered that the implementation of creative programs like digital safety awareness, counterterrorism education, and emergency preparation training in schools is still severely hampered by insufficient funding allocation.

In a similar vein, the results align with the findings of Adaobiagu, O. et al. (2022), which demonstrated that instructors exhibit a slightly elevated level of security concern during instruction. This implies that they are somewhat aware of the interdisciplinary nature of security education and the security implications of most of the curriculum's courses. The study's findings also support those of Salaudeen (2021), who claimed that audits showed that 40% of funds intended for professional training were mismanaged or diverted, and that over 64% of surveyed schools did not set aside any budget line for security-education modules despite official policy frameworks. As a result, the programs' intended reach and quality are weakened, and the structural foundation of meaningful security education is undermined by inadequate resources and poor governance.

## **Conclusion**

From the findings above, it can be concluded that security education is still a vital but underutilized strategic tool for enhancing communal and national security in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State. In modern culture, security encompasses personal safety, social stability, and the general well-being of the community in addition to physical protection. The Boko Haram insurgency, armed banditry, various forms of violence, terrorism, kidnapping, and cultism, as well as the struggle for resource control, intercommunal and intracommunal crises, youth unrest, political crises, and disputes between farmers and Fulani herdsman, have all contributed to the rising rate of insecurity in Nigeria's various states, underscoring the critical need for long-term proactive and preventive measures. Through organized curriculum and efficient teaching techniques, basic schools are vital venues for fostering security awareness and consciousness in young students. It gives students the values, information, and abilities needed to identify abnormal behavior or threats, react correctly, and promote harmonious coexistence. Building secure, stable, progressive, and lasting community development efforts need knowledgeable, accountable, and security-conscious people. Nigeria has to shift security education from a minor academic issue to a national development priority in order to achieve long-term peace and stability. Adequate education about security awareness, conflict prevention, and civic duty empowers citizens to protect their communities and contributes to the long-term stability and resilience of the country as a whole, which paves the way for safer communities.

## **Recommendations**

The studies' results led to the following recommendations:

1. Teachers should get continual professional training and retraining through regular, paid seminars, workshops, conferences, further research, field trips, etc. in order to successfully execute the objectives of the security education curriculum.
2. A healthy budget should be set out for security education so that basic schools may buy the equipment and teaching materials they need.
3. Well paid teachers will enhance the execution of the security education curriculum in Rivers State.

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