

ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PEACE EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: EVIDENCE FROM AL-HIKMAH UNIVERSITY

BY

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Abstract

Globally, peace education has been recognized as a crucial tool for fostering tolerance, conflict resolution, and social cohesion in diverse societies. Many universities worldwide have integrated peace education into their curricula to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for promoting peace and security. In Nigeria, where ethno-religious tensions and socio-political instability persist, the implementation of peace education in universities is essential for nurturing a culture of non-violence and dialogue among future leaders. Despite the significance of peace education, there is limited empirical research on its implementation and effectiveness within Nigerian universities. This study seeks to assess the implementation of peace education at Al-Hikmah University, focusing on the perspectives of students in the Peace and Security Studies program. The research employs a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to explore students' experiences and perceptions regarding curriculum design and content, teaching methods and strategies, practical applications and field experience, and institutional support. Findings from the study reveal both strengths and challenges in the implementation of peace education at Al-Hikmah University. While students appreciate the comprehensiveness of the curriculum and the engagement of lecturers, challenges such as limited practical exposure, insufficient institutional backing, and the need for more interactive learning approaches were identified. The study underscores the importance of enhancing practical applications, strengthening institutional support, and adopting more student-centered teaching strategies to improve the effectiveness of peace education. The insights from this research contribute to the broader discourse on peace education in Nigerian universities, offering recommendations for policymakers, educators, and university administrators on how to improve the delivery of peace education programs. By addressing existing gaps, universities can play a more transformative role in shaping a new generation of peacebuilders equipped to address Nigeria's security challenges.

Keywords: Assessing, Peace Education, Nigerian Universities, Al-Hikmah University. Qualitative Approach.

Introduction

Peace education has gained prominence globally as an essential tool for fostering a culture of non-violence, tolerance, and coexistence. Across the world, countries and international organizations have recognized the role of peace education in conflict prevention and sustainable development. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has consistently promoted peace education as a means to address global challenges, emphasizing that education should not only focus on academic excellence but also on instilling values of peace, justice, and human rights. Many developed nations, such as Sweden, Canada, and Japan, have integrated peace education into their curricula to promote social harmony and prevent conflicts before they arise (Ismail, 2024). In conflict-prone regions, peace education is even more crucial as it serves as a preventive mechanism against violent extremism, civil unrest, and social fragmentation. Countries that have experienced prolonged conflicts, such as Rwanda, Colombia, and Sri Lanka, have adopted structured peace education programs to rebuild societal trust and foster reconciliation (Breed et al, 2024). In Africa, initiatives such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 highlight the importance of peace education in achieving the continent's long-term vision for unity and development. By

equipping individuals with conflict resolution skills, critical thinking, and empathy, peace education becomes an instrument for societal transformation (Kisira & Jack, 2024).

Nigeria, as a nation with a history of ethno-religious conflicts, insurgency, and political unrest, has also acknowledged the importance of peace education. The country has witnessed numerous conflicts, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt, and separatist agitations in the South-East. These conflicts have underscored the need for proactive measures to instill a culture of peace among its citizens (Ojo, 2024). The Nigerian government, through its educational policies, has attempted to incorporate peace education into school curricula, particularly at the tertiary level, where students are expected to be future leaders and policymakers. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of peace education in Nigerian universities remains a subject of debate. While some universities have introduced peace-related courses, the extent to which they have been implemented effectively varies. In addition, Al-Hikmah University, as an institution that offers Peace and Security Studies, provides a valuable case study for assessing the implementation of peace education. Understanding how students of Peace and Security Studies perceive and engage with peace education is crucial in evaluating its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2024).

Al-Hikmah University, a faith-based institution, places emphasis on both academic excellence and moral values. Its Peace and Security Studies program aims to equip students with both theoretical and practical knowledge in conflict resolution, security management, and peacebuilding. However, the success of this program depends on several factors, including curriculum design, teaching methods, student engagement, and institutional support. This research, through qualitative interviews with students of Peace and Security Studies, seeks to explore their understanding of peace education, their level of engagement with the curriculum, and their perceptions of its impact on their personal and professional development. In addition, the study aims to identify challenges students face in engaging with peace education. These challenges may include limitations in course content, teaching methods, institutional support, or the practical application of peace education principles. By identifying these barriers, the research will offer recommendations for improving peace education at Al-Hikmah University and similar institutions. Insights from this study will contribute to the broader discourse on how peace education can be enhanced to better serve students and society at large. Al-Hikmah University serves as a case study to evaluate how peace education is perceived, experienced, and applied by students. This work would contribute to the growing body of knowledge on peace education and its role in fostering a more peaceful society.

Literature Review

Peace education has gained global recognition as an essential tool for promoting conflict resolution, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. According to Kertyzia (2021), peace education encompasses teaching strategies that encourage critical thinking, empathy, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Kertyzia emphasized that peace education is a process that promotes knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to prevent conflict, foster understanding, and build peaceful societies. Kester (2023) emphasizes that peace education fosters critical thinking and dialogue, and conflict resolution, enabling individuals to develop values that support social justice and nonviolence. The concept has evolved from traditional pacifist approaches to include themes such as human rights, democracy, and global citizenship. Tuffuor (2023) argues that Peace is a dynamic and multidimensional concept that goes beyond the mere absence of war or violence; it encompasses a state of harmony, justice, and well-being within individuals, societies, and nations. It involves the presence of positive conditions such as social equity, political stability, economic opportunities, and respect for human rights, all of which contribute to sustainable coexistence.

Gultom & Haq (2024) explore how peace education fosters conflict resolution skills among students, enabling them to resolve disputes peacefully rather than resorting to violence. They argue that through structured curricula, learners develop essential negotiation and mediation abilities, which are fundamental in preventing and managing conflicts at various levels of society. The work emphasizes the role of peace education in cultivating emotional intelligence, empathy, and critical thinking, which are vital for sustainable peace. Sekibo & Iroye (2024) highlights the

importance of peace education in fostering social cohesion, particularly in post-conflict societies. It argues that educational initiatives designed to promote tolerance, respect for diversity, and dialogue can bridge ethnic, religious, and cultural divides. Fountain emphasizes that peace education is crucial in preventing cycles of violence by teaching children and young people the value of coexistence and mutual understanding. According to Senapati and Paroi (2024), peace education serves as a comprehensive means to develop global citizens who are committed to justice and non-violence. They further argue that a holistic approach to peace education instills values of human rights, democracy, and sustainable development. The book also discusses how integrating peace education into school curricula can empower students to become proactive in advocating for peace at local and international levels.

Kleindienst (2024) assert that peace education is a fundamental pillar in promoting human rights awareness, as it teaches students about social justice, equality, and the protection of vulnerable groups. The study provides examples of peace education programs that have successfully reduced human rights violations in conflict-prone areas. Chia & Abdulsamad (2025) concluded that peace education is essential in multicultural societies, where ethnic and religious tensions often lead to conflict. In addition, it fosters cross-cultural understanding, reduces prejudice, and encourages dialogue between diverse communities. The study highlights the need for peace education in multi-ethnic societies as a means of building long-term social harmony. Agboola (2025) affirm that peace education in Nigerian universities is largely theoretical due to inadequate funding, lack of trained personnel, and weak institutional commitment. They emphasize that despite the relevance of the curriculum, its implementation is ineffective. They argue that for peace education to be impactful, universities must integrate practical components such as peacebuilding workshops and conflict resolution simulations to bridge the gap between theory and practice. A study by Dauda (2025) on peace education in Nigerian tertiary institutions emphasizes the role of student engagement in achieving its objectives. The study finds that students who participate in extracurricular activities related to peace initiatives, such as mediation clubs and community peace projects, demonstrate a higher understanding of conflict resolution principles compared to those who only attend formal lectures. However, many universities in Nigeria lack institutional support for such activities, making it difficult to fully integrate peace education into students' learning experiences. This study reinforces the argument that peace education must go beyond classroom instruction to be effective.

This paper is grounded in a fundamental theoretical framework that shape its central themes. Transformative Learning Theory, developed by Jack Mezirow, which emphasizes how individuals critically reflect on their experiences to reshape their perspectives and behaviors. The theory posits that meaningful learning occurs when individuals question their existing beliefs, assumptions, and worldviews, leading to personal growth and social transformation (Boström, Ojala & Öhman, 2024). Within the scope of this study, peace education at Al-Hikmah University aims to transform students' understanding of conflict, peacebuilding, and security by exposing them to new perspectives on non-violent conflict resolution and coexistence. Through interactive learning, discussions, and critical reflection, students of Peace and Security Studies are expected to internalize peace-oriented values, which can influence their actions both within and outside the university setting.

Research Questions

The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is peace education currently implemented in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University?
2. What are the challenges faced by students in understanding and applying peace education concepts in real-life situations?
3. How do students perceive the effectiveness of peace education in promoting conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence within and beyond the university environment?

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore students' perspectives on the implementation of peace education at Al-Hikmah University. A phenomenological research design is adopted to examine students' lived experiences, focusing on how they engage with peace education and interpret its impact on their academic and personal lives. This approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of individual and collective experiences, offering rich insights that cannot be captured through numerical analysis. The study specifically targets students enrolled in the Peace and Security Studies program, as they have direct exposure to peace education courses and activities. Semi-structured interviews serve as the primary data collection method, ensuring that participants can express their thoughts freely while maintaining a structured discussion on key aspects of the study. A purposive sampling technique is used to select students with firsthand experience in peace education, and the sample size is determined based on data saturation, meaning interviews continue until no new significant themes emerge. The data collected is analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring patterns in students' responses. This method ensures that both positive aspects and challenges in peace education implementation are systematically examined. To uphold ethical considerations, participants are fully informed about the study's purpose, and their consent is obtained before conducting interviews. Their responses remain confidential and anonymous to encourage honest and open discussions. The findings from this study will provide practical recommendations to improve peace education at Al-Hikmah University, including curriculum enhancement, better teaching methods, and stronger institutional support. Additionally, the research will contribute to broader academic discussions on the role of peace education in fostering conflict resolution skills and social cohesion in Nigerian universities.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, phenomenological approach to explore students' lived experiences and perceptions of peace education at Al-Hikmah University. Through semi-structured interviews with Peace and Security Studies students, the research gathers in-depth insights into their engagement with peace education and its effectiveness in promoting conflict resolution and social cohesion. Thematic analysis is used to identify key patterns in the data, with findings aimed at informing educators, policymakers, and administrators on improving student-centered peace education in Nigerian universities.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The study targets all students enrolled in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University, as they have direct experience with peace education. To gain meaningful insights into their perceptions, challenges, and suggestions, three sampling techniques are employed: stratified sampling (to ensure representation across academic levels; Master's, MPhil, and PhD), purposive sampling (to select 15 students actively engaged with peace education), and convenience sampling (to include those available and willing to participate). This combined approach ensures a comprehensive and representative understanding of students' experiences with peace education at the university.

Table 1: Selection of using Stratified, Purposive and Convenience Techniques

S/N	Center for Peace and Security Studies	No of Selected Students
1	PhD Students	7
2	MPhil Students	5
3	Masters Students	3
	TOTAL	15

Interview Protocol

The Interview Protocol on Peace Education Implementation (IPPEI) was developed to collect relevant and comprehensive data for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow participants to share their experiences, challenges, and suggestions regarding peace education at Al-Hikmah University. The interview guide comprised two sections: Section A gathered demographic data, while Section B focused on students' engagement with peace education, its effectiveness, and areas for improvement. To ensure credibility and reliability, the study employed validation techniques including member checking, triangulation across academic levels, peer debriefing, and a pilot study with five students. Interviews were transcribed to maintain accuracy. These measures ensured the protocol effectively captured students' lived experiences, contributing to the wider discourse on peace education in Nigerian universities.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study on peace education implementation in Nigerian universities was collected through semi-structured interviews with students in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University. Tools such as a digital audio recorder, jotter, pen, and interview guide were used to ensure comprehensive data collection. The recorder captured detailed responses, while notes were taken on key points and non-verbal cues. The interview guide provided structure and flexibility for follow-up questions. Informed consent was obtained after explaining the study's purpose, objectives, and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. Interviews lasted 25 to 30 minutes, allowing participants to share their experiences and suggestions. The use of multiple tools and adherence to ethical standards enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings.

Method of Data Analysis

Following interviews with students of the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University, the recordings were transcribed using a headset, laptop, and jotter to ensure accuracy and capture non-verbal cues. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, starting with familiarization, followed by coding and grouping of responses into relevant themes. These themes reflected students' experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improving peace education. This systematic approach preserved the depth of students' insights and provided meaningful findings on the effectiveness of peace education at Al-Hikmah University, contributing to broader discussions on the role of higher education in promoting a culture of peace.

Result

Interview Transcription and Codification

After interviewing students of the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University, the conversations were transcribed to accurately document their insights on peace education implementation. The data were then coded and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, challenges, and recommendations. Each response was systematically organized under emerging themes and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. This structured approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and highlighted key areas for improving peace education, contributing to the broader discourse in Nigerian universities.

Table 2: Code Assigned to Participants

S/N	Center for Peace and Security Studies	Code Assigned to Participants
1	PhD Students	PS1 PS2 PS3 PS4 PS5 PS6 PS7
2	MPhil Students	MP1 MP2 MP3 MP4 MP5
3	Masters Students	MS1 MS2 MS3

Table 3: Synopsis of Thematic Analysis of the Study

Theme One: Implementation of Peace Education Sub-theme: 1. Curriculum Design and Content 2. Teaching Methods and Strategies 3. Practical Applications 4. Institutional Support
Theme Two: Students' Challenges in Applying Peace Education Concepts in Real-Life Situations Sub-theme: 1. Limited Practical Exposure 2. Institutional Constraints 3. Security Concerns 4. Resistance from Society
Theme Three: Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Peace Education in Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Coexistence Sub-theme: 1. Conflict Resolution Skills 2. Impact on Campus Peace 3. Real-World Applicability

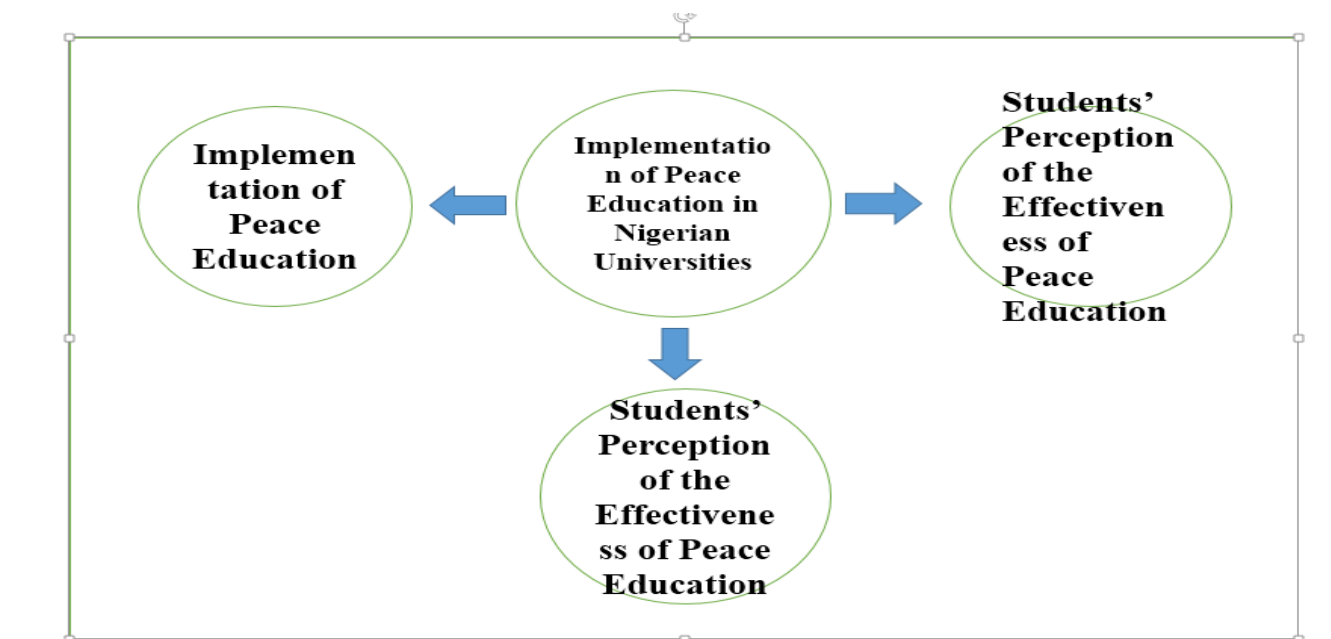


Figure 1: General Model of the Impact of Peace Education Implementation in Nigerian Universities

Response to Research Questions

Research Question 1: How is peace education currently implemented in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University?

The views of participants regarding the implementation of peace studies at Al-Hikmah University are given below: PS7 & MS3 emphasized that:

"Peace education in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University is primarily implemented through a well-structured curriculum that integrates both theoretical and practical aspects. The curriculum design includes core courses on conflict resolution, human rights, and international law, as well as specialized electives that focus on peacebuilding strategies. This ensures students gain a holistic understanding of peace and security issues. Additionally, the content is regularly updated to reflect current global trends, ensuring relevance and applicability."

MP4 & PS1 also stated that:

"Peace education at Al-Hikmah University is uniquely implemented through the integration of religious values, aligning with the university's mission. The curriculum emphasizes religious perspectives on peace, justice, and conflict resolution while incorporating global approaches. Teaching methods include discussions on religious teachings related to peace, encouraging students to explore how these principles can be applied to contemporary peacebuilding efforts. This blend of faith-based and secular perspectives enriches the learning experience and equips students with the knowledge and skills to address peace and security issues in diverse contexts."

MS1 emphasizes that:

"One of the key strengths of the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University is its focus on practical applications. Students participate in field experiences, such as community fieldwork, internships with NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations involved in peacebuilding. Additionally, the program organizes workshops, seminars, and guest lectures featuring experts in the field. These opportunities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios and develop hands-on skills in peace education."

According to PS3:

"Al-Hikmah University provides strong institutional support for the effective implementation of peace education within the Peace and Security Studies program. This support includes access to a well-equipped library with extensive resources on peace and conflict studies, as well as strategic partnerships with Nigerian security agencies to facilitate practical learning and research. Additionally, the university promotes faculty development through specialized training programs, workshops, and conferences, ensuring that lecturers remain updated with the latest advancements in peace education methodologies and best practices."

The figure below depicts the implementation of peace education at Al-Hikmah University.

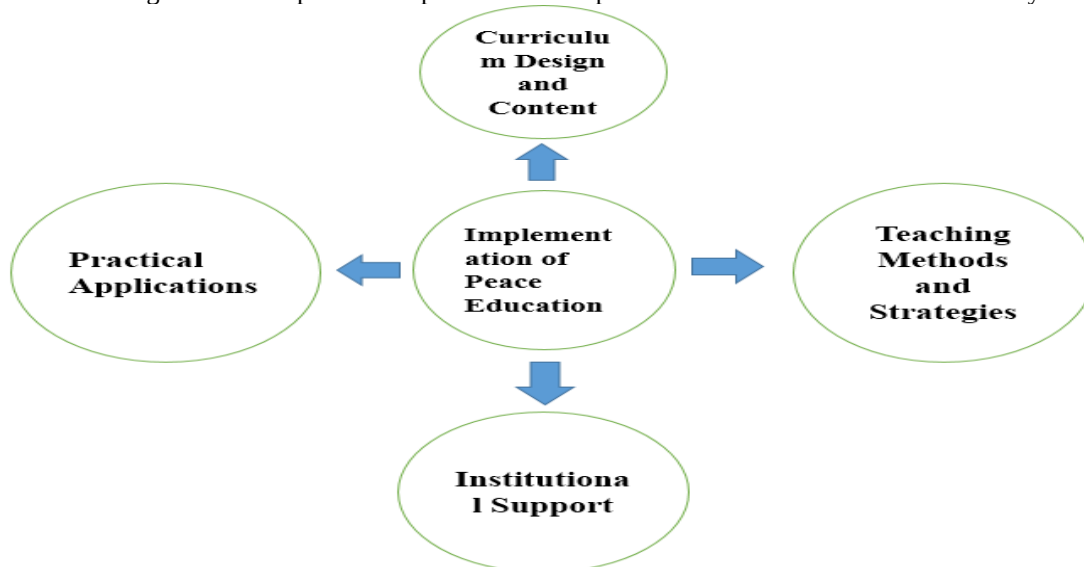


Figure 2: Perception on implementation of peace education at Al-Hikmah University

Research Question 2: What are the challenges faced by students in understanding and applying peace education concepts in real-life situations?

From the interviews conducted, students' challenges in applying peace education emerged as a key theme. The following excerpts from participants highlight their perspectives:

MS1 & PS2 opined that:

"One of the major challenges students face in understanding and applying peace education concepts is socio-cultural barriers. In many communities, deeply ingrained cultural norms and traditions may conflict with modern peacebuilding principles. For instance, issues like gender inequality, ethnic biases, or religious intolerance can make it difficult for students to advocate for peace in ways that align with their education. This disconnect between theory and local realities often creates confusion and resistance, limiting the effectiveness of peace education in real-life situations."

Also, MP1 & PS6 remarked that:

"Another significant challenge student's face in understanding and applying peace education concepts is language and communication barriers. In multicultural and multilingual societies, students often struggle to effectively communicate peacebuilding ideas to diverse audiences. For instance, translating complex peace education theories into local languages or adapting them to suit different cultural contexts can be difficult. Additionally, misunderstandings or misinterpretations of key concepts may arise, leading to ineffective implementation. This communication gap can limit students' ability to foster dialogue and collaboration in real-life peacebuilding efforts."

MP3 & MP1 is of the opinion that:

“Students often struggle with applying peace education concepts because of a lack of practical exposure. While the theoretical knowledge gained in classrooms is valuable, many students find it challenging to translate these ideas into actionable solutions without hands-on experience. Limited access to internships, field projects, or real-world case studies means they miss out on opportunities to practice conflict resolution, mediation, and other peacebuilding skills in authentic settings. This gap between theory and practice can hinder their ability to address complex peace and security issues effectively.”

MP5 stated that:

“Community influence plays a significant role in shaping students' ability to apply peace education concepts. In some cases, students may face resistance or skepticism from their communities when trying to implement peacebuilding initiatives. For example, if a community prioritizes traditional conflict resolution methods over modern approaches, students may find it difficult to gain support for their ideas. This tension between academic knowledge and community expectations can discourage students from actively engaging in peacebuilding efforts.”

The figure below shows the perceived challenges students face in applying peace education

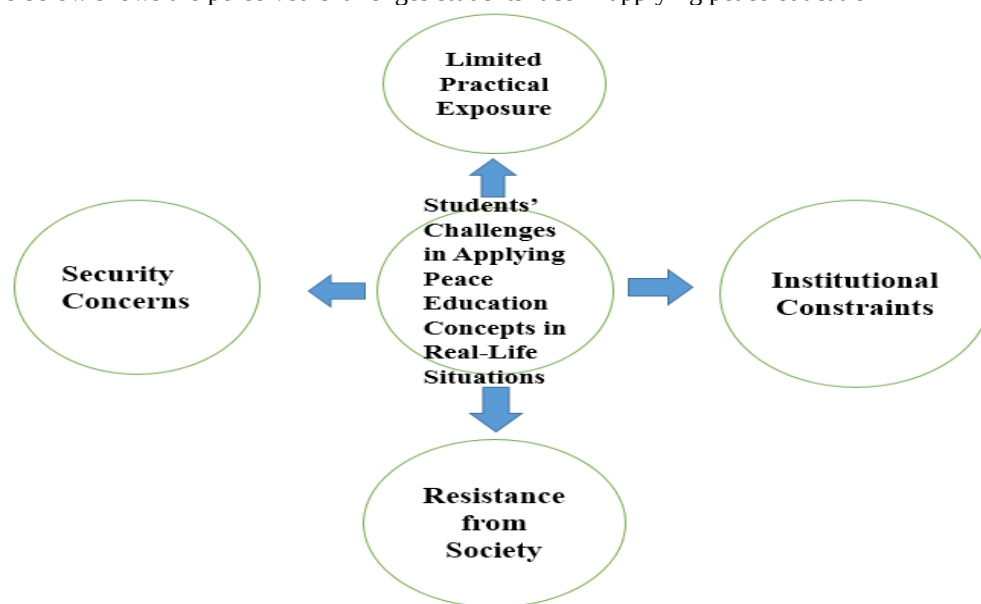


Figure 3: Perceptions of the Challenges Faced by Students in Applying Peace Education

Research Question 3: How do students perceive the effectiveness of peace education in promoting conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence within and beyond the university environment?

Drawing from participant interviews, students' perceptions of the effectiveness of peace education in conflict resolution are presented below.

PS4 believes that:

"Many students perceive peace education as highly effective in equipping them with essential conflict resolution skills. Through courses and workshops, they learn techniques like active listening, mediation, and negotiation, which help them address disputes constructively. For example, some students have shared how they've used these skills to resolve conflicts among peers or within student organizations. However, a few feel that more practical simulations or role-playing exercises could further enhance their ability to apply these skills in high-pressure situations."

Also, MS2 pointed out that:

"Students value the conflict resolution skills they gain through peace education but often express a desire for more hands-on training. While they learn valuable techniques like mediation, negotiation, and de-escalation in class, some feel that these skills remain abstract until they face real-life conflicts. For instance, a course mate shared how they struggled to mediate a dispute between friends despite understanding the theory. They suggest incorporating more real-world scenarios, such as mock mediations or community-based projects, to help students confidently apply these skills in diverse settings."

MP2 stated that:

"Students generally appreciate the role of peace education in fostering a harmonious university environment. They note that the principles of tolerance, empathy, and dialogue taught in the program have helped reduce instances of bullying, discrimination, and interpersonal conflicts on campus. For instance, student-led peace clubs and initiatives often organize events that promote unity and understanding among diverse groups. However, some students feel that the impact could be broader if more students outside the Peace and Security Studies program were actively involved in these activities."

According to PS5:

"While students recognize the potential of peace education to promote peaceful coexistence beyond the university, they often face challenges in translating these concepts into community settings. Some have successfully organized outreach programs, such as peace seminars in local schools or community dialogues on ethnic and religious tolerance. However, others feel that cultural resistance or lack of resources limits their ability to make a significant impact. They suggest that stronger partnerships between the university and local organizations could help bridge this gap."

MP5 argued that:

"While students perceive peace education as effective in teaching conflict resolution and promoting peaceful coexistence, they highlight challenges in sustaining these efforts. Within the university, they note that maintaining a peaceful environment requires continuous engagement and awareness campaigns. Beyond the university, students often struggle with limited support or recognition from community leaders, which can discourage long-term peacebuilding initiatives. Despite these challenges, many remain optimistic about the potential of peace education to create lasting change, especially if they receive more mentorship and resources to amplify their impact."

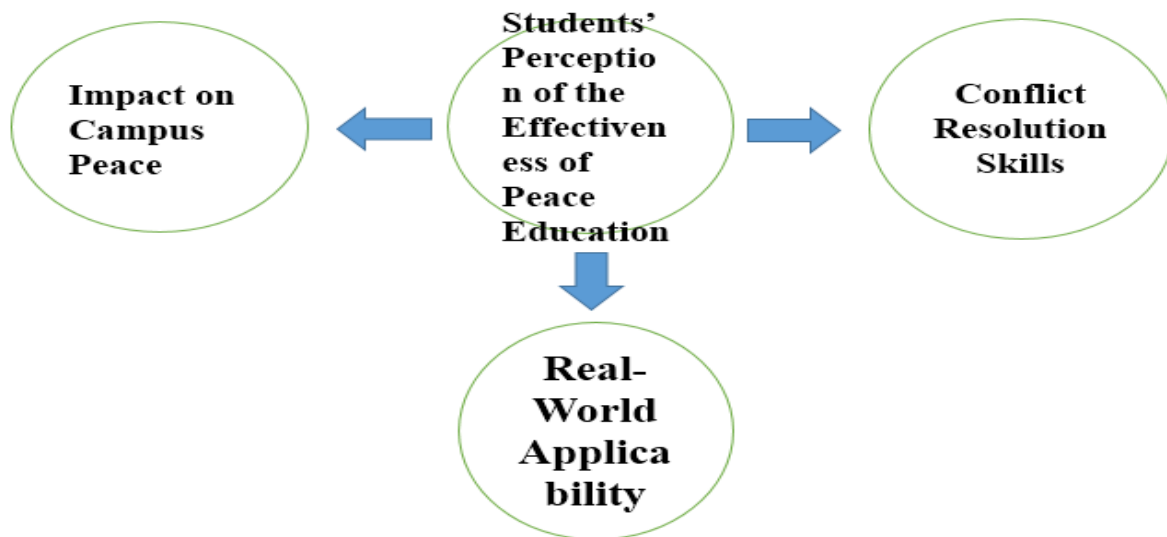


Figure 4: Students' Perception on Effectiveness of Peace Education

Discussion

In view of the first research question, which focused on how peace education is currently implemented in the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University, evidence from student interviews reveals that the program is grounded in a well-structured curriculum that combines both theoretical knowledge and practical exposure. Courses such as conflict resolution, human rights, and international law are supported by electives in peacebuilding strategies. In addition, the integration of religious values with secular peace approaches enhances moral and ethical learning. Findings further indicate that interactive teaching methods, including simulations, case studies, and group discussions, are commonly used to promote student engagement and critical thinking. Furthermore, institutional support, such as access to library resources and fieldwork opportunities, contributes to the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for real-world peacebuilding.

In response to the second research question, which examined the challenges students face in understanding and applying peace education concepts in real-life situations, results from interviews indicate that limited practical exposure remains a major barrier. Although classroom instruction is comprehensive, many students struggle to apply their knowledge due to lack of internships, hands-on projects, and community engagement activities. Moreover, evidence suggests that socio-cultural resistance, including traditional conflict resolution norms and gender biases in some communities, poses difficulties for students attempting to implement modern peace practices. Communication challenges and the absence of institutional support for off-campus initiatives were also highlighted as significant constraints.

In view of the third research question, which explored students' perceptions of the effectiveness of peace education in promoting conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence, responses reveal that students generally view the program as impactful, especially within the university setting. They reported increased competence in conflict resolution skills such as mediation, negotiation, and active listening. Some students cited experiences where these skills helped reduce tensions in peer interactions and student groups. However, the findings also show that the program's reach

beyond the university is limited due to insufficient partnerships with local communities and lack of mentorship opportunities. Students believe that expanding peace education to include more practical simulations and community-based projects would significantly enhance their ability to create real-world impact. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing practical applications, strengthening institutional and community support, and adopting more student-centered strategies to improve the implementation of peace education. While the curriculum is solid and well-received, bridging the gap between theory and practice remains essential for nurturing effective peacebuilders in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of peace education within the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University, offering valuable insights from the lived experiences of students. In a country like Nigeria, where persistent ethno-religious conflicts and insecurity pose significant threats to national unity, peace education is not just relevant, it is essential. The findings confirm that Al-Hikmah University has made commendable efforts in delivering a structured and morally grounded peace education curriculum that blends theoretical knowledge with religious values and interactive teaching methods. However, despite these strengths, several challenges remain. Students continue to face obstacles such as limited practical exposure, insufficient community engagement, and socio-cultural resistance that hinder the full application of peace education principles outside the university. These challenges reflect a gap between classroom instruction and real-world practice, emphasizing the need for experiential learning opportunities, mentorship, and stronger institutional support. The perspectives shared by students also affirm that peace education has made a positive impact on promoting conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence within the university environment. Nevertheless, its broader societal influence can only be realized through sustained efforts to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical peacebuilding. The study concludes that while peace education at Al-Hikmah University is on a promising path, its effectiveness depends on continuous innovation, collaboration with communities, and investment in hands-on learning experiences. If adequately supported, peace education can serve as a transformative tool for equipping young Nigerians with the values, skills, and mindset needed to lead peaceful change in their communities and the nation at large.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following suggestions are offered to improve the implementation and effectiveness of peace education within the Peace and Security Studies program at Al-Hikmah University and other comparable institutions:

1. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, the curriculum should incorporate more hands-on training, such as simulations, mock mediations, and community-based projects. These practical components will enable students to apply peace education concepts in real-world scenarios, enhancing their conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills.
2. Universities should establish stronger partnerships with local and international organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to provide students with internships, fieldwork, and practical exposure. This will allow students to gain firsthand experience in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, preparing them to address complex peace and security challenges effectively.
3. To overcome socio-cultural barriers and community resistance, universities should involve local leaders, elders, and stakeholders in peacebuilding initiatives. Organizing community dialogues, workshops, and outreach programs can help build trust and support for peace education efforts, making it easier for students to implement their learning in diverse contexts.

4. Universities should invest in faculty development programs, ensuring that lecturers are equipped with the latest peace education methodologies and best practices. Additionally, students should have access to resources such as well-equipped libraries, research funding, and mentorship programs to support their academic and practical peacebuilding endeavors.

5. To foster a culture of peace across the university, peace education initiatives should be expanded to include students from all disciplines. This can be achieved through interdisciplinary courses, workshops, and student-led peace clubs that promote tolerance, empathy, and dialogue among diverse groups. A university-wide approach to peace education will create a more inclusive and harmonious campus environment.

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