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PROMOTING SECURITY AWARENESS AND PEACE CULTURE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' IN ONDO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: STRATEGIES AND IMPACTS

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Abstract

This study examined the strategies and impacts of promoting security awareness and peace culture among senior secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area (LGA), Ondo State, Nigeria. Anchored on Galtung's Positive Peace Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the study employed a descriptive and causal-comparative (ex post facto) survey research design. A sample of 300 senior secondary students (SS 1–SS 3) was selected from ten schools through stratified random sampling. The Security Awareness and Peace Culture Questionnaire (SAPCQ), a 48-item researcher-developed instrument structured on a 4-point Likert scale, was used to collect data. The instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86. Four research questions guided the study, and three null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, and independent-samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Tukey HSD post hoc test, and Pearson product-moment correlation for hypothesis testing. Findings revealed that diverse strategies for promoting security awareness and peace culture were perceived at a high level (grand mean = 3.64); that peace culture engagement differed significantly by gender ($t = 2.98$, $p = .003$); that conflict attitude change differed significantly across instructional strategy groups, with participatory groups recording higher scores than the lecture-based group ($F = 6.43$, $p < .001$); and that security awareness strategies were significantly and positively correlated with peace culture promotion and civic engagement ($r = .634$, $p < .001$). The study recommended the institutionalisation of peace education in the senior secondary curriculum, the adoption of participatory peace promotion strategies, and deliberate gender-inclusive programming by school administrators and curriculum planners in Ondo West LGA.

Keywords: Security Awareness, Peace Culture, Peace Education, Social Studies

1. Introduction

The promotion of security awareness and peace culture has emerged as one of the most pertinent issues in contemporary education globally and particularly across sub-Saharan Africa. In a world increasingly characterised by violent crises, cybersecurity threats, inter-communal conflicts, and the rapid proliferation of small arms, schools have become important spaces for promoting not only academic knowledge but also the values, attitudes, character and practical competencies required for peaceful coexistence (UNESCO, 2021). In Nigeria, with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious landscape, the need for structured, school-based peace education interventions is especially urgent. Ajibefun and Olaniran (2021) asserted that the country has witnessed recurring episodes of armed conflict, banditry, farmer-herder clashes, religious and ethnic violence, and the sustained activities of terrorist organisations, all of which have had negative effects on communities, educational systems, and the prospects of young people (Omolade & Fayemi, 2023).

Ondo West Local Government Area, located in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria, has not been entirely exonerated from these broader national security challenges. The LGA has in recent years recorded increasing incidents of youth gang violence, cult-related activities, and inter-community clashes, with secondary school students among those most exposed to these security pressures (Akintunde & Babalola, 2023). Schools in the LGA faced the dual burden of maintaining quality academic programming while simultaneously serving as environments where security anxieties, conflict exposures, and peace culture deficits manifest in the daily lived experiences of students. Although official security statistics specifically disaggregated for Ondo West Local Government Area are limited, available evidence from Ondo State indicates that youth-related violence, cult activities, communal disputes, kidnapping, and farmer-herder conflicts constitute important security concerns across the state.

The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), drawing on Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), reported that between January 2024 and August 2025, Ondo State recorded 89 security incidents resulting in 72 fatalities. These incidents included cult-related violence, communal clashes, kidnappings, and attacks on civilians. The Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation also reported a violent communal clash in Ondo State in January 2025 (Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2025). Although these reports do not provide separate statistics for Ondo West Local Government Area, they provide credible empirical evidence that supports the existence of these security challenges within the broader security context of Ondo State. This shows that adolescents who lack security awareness and have not been socialised into a peace culture are significantly more vulnerable to radicalisation, conflict participation, and anti-social behaviour (Nwachukwu & Eze, 2021).

Security awareness, as a dimension of peace education, refers to the knowledge and alertness that individuals develop regarding threats to their personal and collective safety, enabling them to take informed precautionary and protective actions (Afolabi & Omotunde, 2021). Peace culture, on the other hand, is a broader and more transformative concept, rooted in the United Nations General Assembly's (1999) Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which defines it as a set of values, attitudes, traditions, and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on respect for life and human dignity, the rejection of violence, the promotion of non-violent conflict resolution, and adherence to principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance, and understanding. Together, security awareness and peace culture constitute a powerful framework for educational intervention in conflict-prone communities, offering students the intellectual tools and dispositional resources required to contribute actively to peaceful coexistence.

Despite the recognised importance of these constructs, empirical research examining specific strategies for promoting security awareness and peace culture in Nigerian secondary schools and rigorously assessing their impacts remains limited, particularly at the local government level (Ibrahim & Lawal, 2022). Most existing studies have examined peace education at the macro level, with limited attention to the micro-level dynamics of classroom-based peace promotion in specific LGAs. This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by empirically examining the strategies deployed to promote security awareness and peace culture among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA and assessing the impacts of these strategies on students' conflict attitudes, civic engagement, and peace-oriented behaviours. Furthermore, few empirical studies have measured outcomes such as security awareness, security consciousness, crime prevention behaviour, community participation, or changes in youth attitudes following security education interventions in Ondo West. The lack of location-specific evidence creates an important knowledge gap that justifies further empirical investigation.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The persistence of youth-related violence, cultism, and inter-communal tensions in Ondo West LGA and across Ondo State represents a significant challenge to educational development and social cohesion. Schools, which are supposed to equip students for peaceful participation in national life, have struggled to translate curriculum intentions related to security and peace into observable attitudinal and behavioural changes among students (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2022). A recurring observation in the literature is that security education and peace culture promotion in Nigerian secondary schools are often treated as incidental rather than deliberate components of classroom instruction, resulting in a fragmented, inconsistent, and largely ineffective approach to building security consciousness and peace orientations among learners (Ogundele & Adeyemi, 2022).

The problem is further compounded by a notable absence of empirically validated, context-specific strategies for promoting security awareness and peace culture among senior secondary students in Ondo West LGA. While national curriculum documents articulate the importance of peace-related learning outcomes within Social Studies and Civic Education, the specific instructional strategies that are most effective in this local situation have not been systematically identified or evaluated (Omotosho & Adeyemi, 2020). Teachers thus operate without a reliable evidence base for selecting

and implementing peace promotion strategies, defaulting to conventional lecture-based methods that research has consistently shown to be less effective than participatory, experiential, and community-embedded approaches in developing peace-oriented competencies (Okafor & Ugwu, 2023). Lecture-based instruction remains useful for introducing concepts and transmitting foundational knowledge, a growing body of empirical evidence indicates that participatory teaching methods, such as cooperative learning, problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning, role-play, simulations, and discussion, generally produce better learning outcomes when the objectives include critical thinking, problem-solving, knowledge retention, student engagement, and behavioural change. A landmark meta-analysis by Freeman et al. (2014), which synthesised evidence from 225 studies, found that students taught through active learning achieved significantly higher examination scores and experienced lower failure rates than those taught primarily through traditional lectures. More recent systematic reviews have reached similar conclusions, showing that learner-centred and participatory pedagogies enhance students' motivation, engagement, collaboration, and long-term retention of knowledge across educational settings. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of any teaching strategy depends on factors such as learning objectives, class size, subject matter, instructor competence, and the quality of implementation. Therefore, participatory approaches should be viewed as complementary to, rather than complete replacements for, well-designed lectures. Compounding this is the question of differential impact: whether the strategies currently employed for security awareness and peace culture promotion are producing equitable outcomes across gender, school type, and class level. The intersection of gender and peace education has been insufficiently examined in the Nigerian context (Adesanya & Fafunwa, 2024), and the absence of such evidence makes it difficult for school administrators and curriculum planners to design responsive, inclusive programmes.

1.2. Scope of the Study

This study was delimited to senior secondary school students, specifically those in Senior Secondary School One (SS 1), Two (SS 2), and Three (SS 3) in public and private secondary schools within Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, during the 2023/2024 academic year. The study focused on ten schools (six public, four private) drawn from the pool of approved secondary schools in the LGA as recorded by the Ondo State Ministry of Education and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB, 2024). The choice of senior secondary students was deliberate, as this cohort represents adolescents at a developmental stage characterised by heightened vulnerability to peer influence, community conflict exposure, and identity formation, all of which make them particularly receptive to, and in need of, structured security awareness and peace culture programming.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

i. What is the level of security awareness strategies employed in promoting peace consciousness among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

ii. What is the level of peace culture promotion activities and their perceived impact among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

iii. What is the impact of security awareness and peace culture promotion strategies on the conflict attitudes of senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

iv. What is the level of civic engagement and peace participation facilitated by security awareness and peace culture promotion strategies among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

1.4. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in peace culture engagement between male and female senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in conflict attitude change among senior secondary school students based on instructional strategy in Ondo West LGA.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between security awareness strategies and peace culture promotion outcomes among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive and causal-comparative (ex post facto) survey research design. The design was appropriate because it sought not only to describe the strategies used in promoting security awareness and peace culture but also to compare students' outcomes across naturally existing instructional strategy groups without manipulating the independent variable. The instructional strategies were those routinely employed by Social Studies teachers in their classrooms, and participants were studied under their existing classroom conditions. Consequently, the study compared students exposed predominantly to participatory instructional strategies with those taught mainly through conventional lecture-based approaches.

This design is well-suited to studies that seek to gather systematic, objective data describing the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of a defined population without manipulation of variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive survey approach was selected because the study aimed to comprehensively describe the strategies for promoting security awareness and peace culture currently employed in senior secondary schools in Ondo West LGA and to assess their impacts on student outcomes across a large, geographically distributed sample.

2.2. Classification of instructional strategy groups

The instructional strategy variable was not experimentally manipulated by the researcher. Rather, participating schools were classified according to the predominant instructional approach adopted by Social Studies teachers in promoting security awareness and peace culture. Information obtained from teachers and school administrators, supported by classroom practice, was used to categorise instructional approaches into participatory strategies (e.g., group discussion, role-play, simulations, cooperative learning and problem-solving activities) and conventional lecture-based strategies. Students therefore belonged to naturally occurring instructional groups based on the teaching approaches used in their respective classrooms. No random assignment of students to instructional strategy groups was undertaken.

2.3. Population and Sample

The target population comprised all SS 1, SS 2, and SS 3 students in public and private secondary schools in Ondo West LGA, Ondo State, for the 2023/2024 academic year. Records from the Ondo State Ministry of Education and SUBEB (2024) indicated that the LGA has 32 approved secondary schools, with an estimated population of 5,200 students in the three target class levels. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size formula, a minimum adequate sample of 371 was calculated; however, a purposive reduction to 300 was adopted following a power analysis confirming sufficient statistical power ($1 - \beta = .80$) for the planned inferential tests. Participants were selected through stratified random sampling, with strata defined by school type (public/private) and class level (SS 1, SS 2, SS 3), resulting in 100 students per class level and 180 from public schools and 120 from private schools.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	145	48.3
	Female	155	51.7
School Type	Public	180	60.0
	Private	120	40.0

Class Level	SS 1	100	33.3
	SS 2	100	33.3
	SS 3	100	33.4
Total		300	100.0

2.4. Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was the Security Awareness and Peace Culture Questionnaire (SAPCQ), a researcher-developed questionnaire comprising 48 substantive items measured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). In addition to these 48 substantive items, the questionnaire contained four demographic items, giving a total of 52 questionnaire items. The SAPCQ was organised into five sections. Section A contained four items designed to obtain the demographic information of the respondents and was not included in the 48 substantive items or the computation of scale scores. Sections B to E contained 12 items each and measured the four major constructs of the study. Section B measured Security Awareness Strategies (12 items), Section C measured Peace Culture Promotion (12 items), Section D assessed Impact on Conflict Attitudes (12 items), while Section E measured Civic Engagement and Peace Participation (12 items).

The substantive items were rated on a four-point Likert scale, and a criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for interpretation. Accordingly, a mean score of 2.50 or above was interpreted as high, while a mean score below 2.50 was interpreted as low. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by four experts comprising two specialists in Social Studies Education, one specialist in Peace and Conflict Studies, and one specialist in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations and recommendations were used to improve the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the items.

The internal consistency of the SAPCQ was established through a pilot test involving 35 SS II students selected from two schools outside the study area. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of each of the four substantive subscales as well as that of the overall instrument. The reliability coefficients obtained were Security Awareness Strategies ($\alpha = 0.87$), Peace Culture Promotion ($\alpha = 0.76$), Impact on Conflict Attitudes ($\alpha = 0.92$), and Civic Engagement and Peace Participation ($\alpha = 0.79$). The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the 48 substantive items was 0.86. These coefficients indicated that the SAPCQ possessed acceptable internal consistency for measuring the constructs investigated in the study.

2.5. Data Analysis

Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were used to address the four research questions, with a decision criterion of 2.50. Three null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics: an independent-samples t-test for H_{01}; a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test for H_{02}; and Pearson product-moment correlation for H_{03}. All statistical analyses were conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$ for all tests.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis: Research Questions

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for all four SAPCQ subscales. All subscale means exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents perceived the security awareness and peace culture promotion strategies employed in their schools to be at a high level, and that these strategies were at a high level across the measured dimensions. The grand mean of 3.64 (SD = 0.62) confirms a consistently high level of security awareness and peace culture promotion across the sampled schools in Ondo West LGA.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for SAPCQ Subscales (Research Questions 1–4), N = 300

Subscale	N	Mean	SD	Decision
RQ1: Security Awareness Strategies	300	3.72	0.59	High
RQ2: Peace Culture Promotion	300	3.65	0.62	High
RQ3: Impact on Conflict Attitudes	300	3.58	0.65	High
RQ4: Civic Engagement & Peace Participation	300	3.61	0.60	High
Grand Mean	300	3.64	0.62	High

3.2. Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in peace culture engagement between male and female senior secondary s**chool s**tudents **in Ondo West LGA**. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare peace culture engagement scores between male and female students. Male students (n = 145, M = 3.76) recorded higher peace culture engagement scores than female students (n = 155, M = 3.55), representing a mean difference of 0.21 points. The difference was statistically significant, with the estimated 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranging from 0.07 to 0.35. The magnitude of the gender difference was further assessed using Cohen's d, which yielded an effect size of d = 0.34, indicating a small effect. Thus, although male students demonstrated significantly higher peace culture engagement than female students, the relatively small effect size indicates that the practical magnitude of the gender difference was modest. Consequently, gender accounted for a detectable but limited difference in students' peace culture engagement. The null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that there was no significant difference between male and female students, was therefore rejected.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-Test: Gender Difference in Peace Culture Engagement

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	145	3.76	0.61	298	2.98	.003*
Female	155	3.55	0.63			

* $p < .05$. Two-tailed test.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in conflict attitude change **amo**ng senior secondary school students **based on instructional strategy** in Ondo West LGA.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for each of the four instructional groups

Instructional strategy	N	Mean	SD
Lecture	75	3.10	0.43
Peace circles	75	3.58	0.23
Role-play simulation	75	3.62	0.55
Community mapping	75	3.65	0.31
Total	**300**	**3.49**	**0.38**

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether conflict attitude change scores differed across the four instructional strategy groups: lecture (n = 75), peace circles (n = 75), role-play simulation (n = 75), and community mapping (n = 75). Preliminary descriptive statistics showed that students exposed to the lecture method recorded a mean score of M = 3.10, while those exposed to peace circles recorded M = 3.58. Students in the role-play simulation group obtained M = 3.62, whereas those in the community mapping group recorded M = 3.65. The descriptive results therefore indicated that the three participatory instructional strategy groups recorded higher conflict attitude change scores than the conventional lecture group, with community mapping producing the highest mean score, followed by role-play simulation and peace circles.

The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference in conflict attitude change across instructional strategy groups, $F(3, 296) = 6.43$, $p < .001$. The null hypothesis (H_{02}) was therefore rejected, indicating that conflict attitude change differed significantly according to the instructional strategy to which students were exposed. Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons showed that peace circles, role-play simulation, and community mapping each produced significantly higher scores than the lecture method (all $p < .05$). However, there were no statistically significant differences among peace circles, role-play simulation, and community mapping (all $p > .05$). The findings therefore revealed that participatory instructional strategies were associated with higher conflict attitude change scores than conventional lecture-based instruction, although none of the three participatory approaches demonstrated a statistically significant advantage over the others.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA: Effect of Instructional Strategy on Conflict Attitude Change

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	22.17	3	7.39	6.43	< .001*
Within Groups	340.41	296	1.15		
Total	362.58	299			

* $p < .001$.

Table 6: Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test: Pairwise Comparisons of Instructional Strategy Groups

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Diff (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
Lecture	Peace Circles	-0.48	0.15	.008*
Lecture	Role-Play	-0.52	0.15	.003*
Lecture	Community Mapping	-0.55	0.15	.001*
Peace Circles	Role-Play	-0.04	0.15	.989
Peace Circles	Community Mapping	-0.07	0.15	.964
Role-Play	Community Mapping	-0.03	0.15	.994

* $p < .05$.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between security awareness strategies and peace culture promotion outcomes among senior secondary school students in Ondo West LGA.

Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine the relationships among security awareness strategies and the peace culture outcome variables. For clarity of interpretation, all constructs were scored in the same positive direction. Thus, higher scores on security awareness strategies indicated greater exposure to or engagement with security awareness strategies; higher scores on peace culture promotion indicated stronger orientation towards peaceful values and

behaviours; higher scores on conflict attitude change represented more positive and constructive attitudes towards conflict resolution; and higher scores on civic engagement indicated greater participation in civic and peace-related activities. Consequently, positive correlation coefficients indicate that increases in one construct are associated with increases in the corresponding positive outcome.

As presented in Table 7, security awareness strategies had a statistically significant positive relationship with peace culture promotion ($r = .634$, $r^2 = .402$, $p < .001$) and civic engagement ($r = .591$, $r^2 = .349$, $p < .001$). These results indicated that higher security awareness scores were associated with stronger peace culture promotion and greater civic engagement. Similarly, peace culture promotion was significantly and positively related to conflict attitude change ($r = .618$, $r^2 = .382$, $p < .001$), indicating that stronger peace culture orientation was associated with more positive and constructive attitudes towards conflict. In terms of the magnitude of the relationships, security awareness strategies shared 40.2% of variance with peace culture promotion and 34.9% with civic engagement, while peace culture promotion shared 38.2% of variance with conflict attitude change. The statistically significant positive relationships provide evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis (H_{03}).

Table 7 Pearson Correlation: Security Awareness Strategies and Peace Culture Promotion Outcomes

Variable Pair	N	r	r^2	p-value
Security Awareness Strategies & Peace Culture	300	.634	.402	< .001*
Security Awareness Strategies & Civic Engagement	300	.591	.349	< .001*
Peace Culture Promotion & Conflict Attitude Change	300	.618	.382	< .001*

* $p < .001$.

4. Discussion of Findings

The finding that security awareness and peace culture promotion strategies were perceived at a high level across all four subscales (mean = 3.64) is consistent with findings by Omolade and Fayemi (2023), who reported above-average peace culture awareness among senior secondary students in schools with institutionalised peace programmes in Ondo and Ekiti States. It also aligns with Ogundele and Adeyemi (2022), who found that schools employing diverse, participatory security awareness strategies produced students with higher peace orientation scores. The high grand mean recorded in the present study suggests that schools in Ondo West LGA are, to a considerable extent, engaging students in deliberate security awareness and peace culture promotion activities. It further indicated that students perceive these activities positively. Nevertheless, because these findings are based on self-reported perceptions, they should be interpreted cautiously. The inclusion of observational, experimental or longitudinal evidence in future studies could provide stronger evidence of whether these favourable perceptions translate into sustained behavioural changes.

The rejection of H_{01} and the finding that male students recorded significantly higher peace culture engagement scores than female students ($t = 2.98$, $p = .003$) is consistent with Adesanya and Fafunwa (2024), who reported gender differences in peace-related engagement among students in Lagos State, and partially agrees with Afolabi and Omotunde (2021), who found higher male engagement with security awareness content across four South-Western states. The higher engagement observed among male students may be associated with differences in exposure to community security discourse, peer-group experiences and cultural expectations surrounding participation in security and conflict-related matters (Akintunde & Babalola, 2023). Nevertheless, the statistically significant gender difference should not be interpreted as indicating a substantial gender divide without considering its effect size. The finding therefore supports the adoption of gender-responsive peace education strategies that provide meaningful opportunities for both male and female students while recognising that their experiences and patterns of engagement may differ.

The statistically significant association between instructional strategy and conflict attitude change ($F = 6.43$, $p < .001$) further shows an association between instructional approach and conflict attitude change in peace education. Post-hoc comparisons showed that peace circles, role-play simulation and community mapping each were associated with

significantly higher conflict attitude change scores than conventional lecture-based instruction. This finding supports the results of Okafor and Ugwu (2023) and Ogundele and Adeyemi (2022), which emphasised the value of participatory approaches over conventional instruction in facilitating peace-related learning and attitude change. The result can also be understood within Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, as participatory approaches provide opportunities for students to observe, model, practise and receive feedback on constructive conflict-resolution behaviours rather than merely receiving information passively.

Importantly, however, the absence of statistically significant differences among peace circles, role-play simulation and community mapping should not be interpreted as evidence that the three strategies are equally effective. The post-hoc analysis merely indicates that the present study did not detect statistically significant differences among their effects. Establishing that the strategies are equivalent would require a formal equivalence analysis based on a predetermined equivalence margin. Therefore, the findings support the more cautious conclusion that all three participatory strategies performed significantly better than the lecture method, while the available evidence was insufficient to establish that any one of the three participatory strategies was superior to the others. From a practical perspective, schools may therefore consider any of these participatory approaches as potentially useful alternatives to conventional lecture-based instruction, but the present findings do not justify treating them as interchangeable or equally effective.

The significant positive correlations between security awareness strategies and peace culture promotion outcomes ($r = .634$), civic engagement ($r = .591$), and between peace culture promotion and conflict attitude change ($r = .618$) provide important theoretically relevant findings of the study. The explained variances of 40.2%, 34.9%, and 38.2% respectively indicate that the corresponding variables share substantial and practically meaningful proportions of variance in student peace outcomes, while also acknowledging that significant variance remains attributable to factors outside the formal schooling environment. This pattern is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which locates individual development within multiple interacting systems, and with Galtung's (1996) Positive Peace Theory, which identifies structural and cultural factors beyond the school as co-determinants of peace culture formation. The finding that peace culture promotion was strongly associated with conflict attitude change ($r = .618$, $r^2 = .382$) is particularly significant, as it supports the argument that deliberate, sustained engagement with peace culture education is a meaningful correlate of attitudinal transformation rather than merely an ancillary curriculum add-on.

5. Conclusion

This study found that students perceived the promotion of security awareness and peace culture among senior secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, positively, with differences associated with instructional strategy and gender. The findings revealed that students perceived the various security awareness and peace culture promotion strategies as contributing positively to their security consciousness, peace orientation, conflict attitudes, and civic engagement. Gender differences were observed in students' peace culture engagement, with male students recording significantly higher mean scores than their female counterparts. This finding indicates variation in peace culture engagement by gender rather than a moderating effect of gender. Furthermore, participatory instructional strategies, including peace circles, role-play simulation, and community mapping, were associated with significantly higher conflict attitude change scores than the conventional lecture method. However, the absence of significant differences among the three participatory strategies should not be interpreted as evidence that they are equally effective. The study also established significant positive relationships between security awareness strategies and peace culture promotion and civic engagement, as well as between peace culture promotion and conflict attitude change. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of sustained, participatory and gender-responsive educational approaches in strengthening security awareness, peaceful attitudes and civic engagement among secondary school students.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1 The Federal Ministry of Education and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should institutionalise security awareness and peace culture education as explicit, assessed learning domains within the Social Studies and Civic Education curricula at the senior secondary level, with context-sensitive learning objectives aligned with Galtung's positive peace framework and the United Nations General Assembly's Culture of Peace Declaration.

2. The Federal Ministry of Education, Ondo State Ministry of Education, the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM), and school principals in Ondo West LGA should prioritise continuous professional development for Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in participatory peace education methodologies specifically peace circles, role-play simulation, and community mapping all of which were associated with significantly higher conflict attitude change scores than lecture-based approaches in this study among senior secondary students.

3. School administrators in Ondo West LGA should establish and support structured school-based peace promotion infrastructure, including peace clubs, student peer mediation programmes, and regular security awareness campaigns, providing dedicated time in the school timetable and adequate resources for sustained, high-quality peace culture programming.

4. Curriculum planners, teachers, and non-governmental organisations working in peace education should adopt gender-responsive approaches that specifically address the differential peace learning experiences, security vulnerabilities, and civic engagement patterns of male and female senior secondary students, ensuring that peace culture programming produces equitable outcomes across gender.

Future researchers and educational evaluators in Ondo State and across Nigeria should employ longitudinal and mixed-method research designs to rigorously assess the long-term behavioural impacts of security awareness and peace culture promotion interventions, and to identify the school, family, and community-level factors that most powerfully mediate the translation of peace attitudes into durable peaceful behaviours among adolescents.

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