



VALUE EDUCATION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AMONG STAFF AND STUDENT PERSONNEL AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL, CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE.

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Abstract

This study assessed the influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among staff and students in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone, Nigeria, during the 2024/2025 academic session, aiming to evaluate value education levels, peaceful coexistence extent, and their relationship. Literature underlines value education's significance in encouraging ethical conduct and societal peace, however its influence on staff-student relations in multicultural contexts like Calabar remains underexplored. Employing a descriptive and correlational quantitative methodology, the research recruited 3,986 staff and 32,000 students across 87 public and 129 private schools, utilising stratified random selection to identify 382 participants (192 kids, 190 staff). Data were gathered by two 20-item Likert-scale questionnaires ("Attitude Scale towards Values" and "Peaceful Coexistence Scale"), vetted for reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$) and validity via expert review and component analysis. Mean, standard deviation, and basic linear regression were employed for data analysis. Key results include high value education levels (mean scores 65–71), high peaceful coexistence (mean scores 63–75), and a substantial positive connection ($R^2 = 0.678$, $p < .001$), with value education explaining 67.8% of coexistence variation. Public school pupils and instructors rated somewhat better in value education, whereas private school non-teaching workers reported the greatest coexistence. Concluding that value education greatly increases school harmony, the research suggests organised value education modules, peace groups, and policy integration by the Ministry of Education to build cohesive school settings.

Key words: Value Education, Peaceful Coexistence, Social Cohesion, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Value education and peaceful coexistence are critical components of secondary school education. Value education encompasses intentionally transmitting and cultivating core societal values such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and integrity. It also serves as a cornerstone for both personal development and the broader aim of societal cohesion (UNESCO, 2017; Oeschger et al., 2022). It generates an atmosphere that encourages sustainable growth and social peace. Schools play a vital role in value education by incorporating value-related goals into their curriculum, via everyday interactions between staff and students, and developing prosocial behaviours and emotional development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Oberle, et al 2023). Value education empowers students and instructors with moral, ethical, and civic concepts required to manage complicated social processes with integrity and empathy (UNESCO, 2015). It promotes respect, tolerance, and accountability, which are vital for developing harmonious societies. In the setting of secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone, where multiple cultural and ethnic groups interact, value education may serve as a basis for cultivating mutual understanding and decreasing disputes among students and staff.



Analogously, peaceful coexistence is defined as the ability of individuals and groups to live harmoniously despite differences. It is vital for creating safe and inclusive learning environments (Ubogu, 2016). Schools that prioritise peaceful coexistence mitigate issues such as bullying, discrimination, and intergroup tensions, which can disrupt academic progress and mental well-being. Research indicates that fostering peaceful interactions in schools enhances academic performance, emotional resilience, and social cohesion (Hakimi & Muhammad, 2017). This aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 16, which emphasises peace, justice, and strong institutions as prerequisites for sustainable societies (United Nations, 2015).

In the Calabar Education Zone, where secondary schools serve as microcosms of Nigeria's heterogeneous society, integrating value education and peaceful coexistence into the curriculum and school culture is vital. These values not only train students for responsible citizenship but also contribute to long-term societal stability by eliminating bias and boosting collaborative problem-solving (Ibrahim & Musa, 2018). Embedding these values may provide schools opportunity to build an atmosphere that encourages both individual growth and community harmony and creates the framework for sustainable development.

The importance of value education and peaceful cooperation extends beyond the immediate classroom context. Both are intimately linked to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably those relating to better education, reduced disparities, and sustainable communities (UNESCO, 2017; Obiajulu-Anyia, 2023). Instilling values that promote environmental stewardship, responsible citizenship, and social justice is needed to allow students to make educated decisions and behave responsibly for the well-being of present and future generations (UNESCO, 2017). Moreover, value education promotes students' understanding of environmental and social issues, hence encouraging attitudes and behaviours important for sustainable development (Obiajulu-Anyia, 2023).

Problem Statement

The Calabar Education Zone, characterised by its multicultural and multi-ethnic student and staff population, faces significant challenges due to the lack of effective value education and peaceful coexistence initiatives in secondary schools. Despite the critical role of value education in fostering ethical behaviour, empathy, and civic responsibility, many schools in the zone lack structured programmes to instil these principles, leading to gaps in students' moral and social development (Uko, et al., 2015). This deficiency manifests in increased incidents of bullying, disrespect toward authority, and strained peer relationships, which undermine the school climate and hinder academic progress (Ekpoh, 2015). Among staff, the absence of professional development focused on value-based teaching exacerbates these issues, as teachers often lack the skills to model or impart ethical values effectively, further perpetuating a cycle of disharmony (Uchendu, et al., 2016).

Compounding this issue is the lack of peaceful coexistence among students and staff, which is critical in a region marked by cultural and ethnic diversity. Schools in the Calabar Education Zone frequently report intergroup tensions, including ethnic rivalries and conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings, which disrupt learning environments and contribute to feelings of exclusion (Abana, 2022). These conflicts are often worsened by a lack of peace-building measures, such as conflict resolution programmes or cultural sensitivity training, leaving both students and staff unprepared to negotiate diversity constructively (Adebayo, 2017). The resulting hostile school climate not only affects students' emotional well-being and academic performance but also undermines the potential for social cohesion, a key component of sustainable development in the region (UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development. (2013). Without targeted interventions to address these gaps in value education and peaceful coexistence, secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone risk perpetuating cycles of conflict, prejudice, and social fragmentation, hindering both individual growth and collective harmony.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to assess the influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among school personnel in Calabar education zone. The study specifically sought to:

1. To assess the current levels of value education among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone during the 2024/2025 academic session.
2. To evaluate the extent of peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone during the 2024/2025 academic session.
3. To examine the relationship between value education and peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone during the 2024/2025 academic session.

Research Questions

1. What are the current levels of value education among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone?
2. To what extent do staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone experience peaceful coexistence?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between value education and peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone.

Literature Review

Value education plays a critical role in shaping secondary school students' moral and social fabric, particularly in regions like the Calabar Education Zone. It is widely recognised that value education fosters essential virtues such as respect, responsibility, empathy, and integrity, which are foundational for peaceful coexistence within school communities (UNESCO, 2015). In the Nigerian context, value education is viewed as a vehicle for national development and social cohesion, aiming to counteract the erosion of traditional moral values caused by modernisation and globalisation (Adediran & Sobola, 2021). The integration of value education into the school curriculum helps students internalise societal norms and ethical behaviour, which in turn reduces incidents of conflict and promotes harmony among staff and students (Mamudu, et al., 2021).

Value education, which involves teaching ethical principles and moral values to foster responsible behaviour and empathy, is recognised globally for its potential to shape positive attitudes and reduce conflict. For instance, research highlights that inclusive education promoting critical thinking and tolerance can enhance peaceful coexistence by encouraging mutual respect (Collins & Martinez, 2023). In Nigeria, value education is seen as a tool to address moral decay and deviant behaviours such as cultism, which are prevalent in secondary schools. A study in the Calabar Education Zone found that school environmental factors, including value-based education, significantly influence students' morality, suggesting its potential to foster positive behavioural outcomes (Okpechi, Arop & Bassey, 2020). However, there is limited research examining how value education specifically promotes peaceful coexistence among both staff and students in this region, as most studies focus solely on student behaviour.

Peaceful coexistence, characterized by mutual respect and conflict resolution within the school community, is essential for a conducive learning environment. Research in the Calabar Education Zone identifies social challenges such as cultism and violence as significant barriers to peaceful interactions, with campus violence spreading from tertiary to secondary schools (Ogba & Igu, 2019). Elsewhere, studies show that integrating peace education into school curricula, particularly through subjects like Christian Religious Education, fosters values of cohesion and reduces violence (Mwani, 2014). Value education could serve a similar function as peace education; yet its implementation and effectiveness

remain underexplored. Additionally, co-curricular activities have been shown to promote teamwork and mitigate violence risks by building social skills, as evidenced in a Kenyan study (Opere, 2020). The findings by Opere (2020) suggest that extracurricular programs in Calabar could enhance peaceful coexistence, but local evidence is scarce, particularly regarding staff-student dynamics.

School climate, encompassing safety, relationships, and connectedness, is a critical factor influencing academic and social outcomes. A positive school climate supports student well-being and reduces aggression, as demonstrated in an Australian study that found peer support and teacher connectedness to be protective during the transition to secondary school (Lester & Cross, 2015). In the Calabar Education Zone, the tone of school discipline affects students' morality, with value-based approaches fostering cooperation over punitive measures (Okpechi, Arop & Bassey, 2020). Administrative practices, such as effective leadership and communication, shape school climate by enhancing teacher performance and creating a supportive environment (Owan & Agunwa, 2019). However, there is a lack of empirical studies in Calabar examining how value education and peaceful coexistence collectively influence school social relations, especially involving both staff and students.

Social development, which includes acquiring interpersonal and conflict resolution skills, is another key outcome of value education and peaceful coexistence. Research indicates that value education reduces behaviours like bullying by enhancing social skills, with peer group influence in Calabar predicting academic and social outcomes (Bassey, 2020). Globally, education for sustainable development promotes social development by encouraging civic engagement and addressing societal issues like inequality (UNESCO, 2020). In the Calabar context, value education could inspire similar community-oriented development, but challenges such as cultism hinder progress. The lack of studies exploring how value education and peaceful coexistence address these local issues underscores the need for this research.

This study addresses several gaps in the literature. First, most research in the Calabar Education Zone focuses on students, neglecting staff contributions to peaceful coexistence and school climate. Second, while peace education is studied elsewhere, its integration into Calabar's curriculum through value education is underexamined. Third, there is a lack of context-specific evidence linking value education, peaceful coexistence, school climate, and social development in this region. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to inform educational policies in Cross River State, and offer solutions to local challenges. The findings will contribute to a theoretical framework linking these constructs and enhance educational outcomes in the Calabar Education Zone.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study was supported by two theoretical frameworks, viz: Social Contract Theory and Transformative Learning Theory. These frameworks provide a robust foundation for understanding the dynamics of ethical behaviour, social harmony, and personal transformation in diverse educational settings. Social Contract Theory, as articulated by Rousseau (1762) and contemporarily applied by scholars like Rawls (1971), posits that individuals agree to surrender certain freedoms and adhere to shared rules to ensure mutual benefit and societal harmony. In the context of secondary schools, this theory is relevant to understanding how value education can foster a sense of mutual obligation among students and staff to uphold principles such as respect, tolerance, and fairness (Ubogu, 2016). Schools in the Calabar Education Zone, characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity, often face challenges related to intergroup conflicts and mistrust (Cornelius-Ukpepi *et al.*, 2019). Social Contract Theory suggests that by explicitly teaching values like empathy and cooperation, schools can establish a "contract" wherein individuals commit to behaviours that promote peaceful coexistence. This framework supports this study design by providing a lens to examine how value education programmes can create shared norms that reduce conflicts and enhance school climate. For instance, peace clubs or conflict resolution workshops can be seen as mechanisms to reinforce this social contract, encouraging students and staff to prioritise collective well-being over individual differences (Omiyefa, 2024).

Transformative Learning Theory, developed by Mezirow (1991) and further refined in educational contexts (Taylor, 2017), emphasises the process through which individuals critically reflect

on their beliefs and experiences, leading to a shift in perspective and behaviour. This theory is particularly relevant to the study's focus on how value education can transform attitudes and foster peaceful coexistence in diverse school settings. Transformative learning occurs when students and staff engage in reflective dialogue, challenge prejudiced assumptions, and adopt inclusive worldviews, which are critical in multicultural environments like the Calabar Education Zone (Makoelle, 2018). For example, value education programmes that incorporate discussions on cultural diversity or ethical dilemmas can prompt transformative experiences, enabling participants to develop empathy and conflict resolution skills (Kalagbor & Nnokam, 2015). This framework supports this study design by guiding the development of interventions, such as teacher training or student workshops, that encourage critical reflection and perspective transformation. It also provides a basis for evaluating how these interventions influence attitudes toward coexistence and ethical behaviour.

Both frameworks complement each other in this study's design. Social Contract Theory provides a structural perspective, focusing on the establishment of shared norms to ensure harmony, while Transformative Learning Theory emphasises the individual and collective processes of attitude change necessary for those norms to take root. Together, they offer a comprehensive approach to understanding how value education and peaceful coexistence initiatives can address the challenges of conflict, prejudice, and disharmony in Calabar's secondary schools. By grounding the study in these theories, this research explored both the systemic and personal dimensions of creating inclusive, value-driven school environments that contribute to social cohesion and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017).

Research Design and Methodology

This study used a descriptive and correlational quantitative research approach to look at the state of value education and peaceful coexistence among teachers and students in secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone. The descriptive component provided a detailed snapshot of current levels of value education (attitudes, knowledge, and practice of values) and peaceful coexistence (mutual respect, tolerance, and conflict incidence), allowing for a thorough understanding of these phenomena in the study context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The correlational aspect investigated the correlations between factors, such as how value education affects peaceful coexistence. This dual approach is appropriate for capturing both the prevalence of these dimensions and their interrelationships, which aligns with the study's goal of informing targeted actions to improve social school climates.

The target demographic for this study encompasses all staff and student personnel in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. This includes teachers, administrative workers, and students across public and private secondary schools in the zone, which spans various local government regions. The population is diversified, embracing many ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, making it a perfect framework for researching value education and peaceful cohabitation. As of recent educational statistics, the zone has over 87 public secondary schools, over 129 private secondary schools with an estimated 3,986 staff (teachers and non-teaching workers) and over 32,000 students (Cross River State Ministry of Education, 2023). This broad and diverse population ensures that findings may be generalised across similar multicultural educational contexts, while also emphasising context-specific difficulties and opportunities.

To ensure representativeness, the researcher used stratified random sampling to select participants from the population. The population was stratified into two main groups: staff (teachers and administrative personnel) and students. Within each stratum, further sub-stratification accounted for school type (public vs. private) and geographical location (urban vs. rural) to capture the diversity of the Calabar Education Zone. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for infinite populations, ensuring adequate statistical power (80%) and a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 5%. Given the population size, a sample size of approximately 382 participants was calculated as sufficient, adjusted for stratification to include 192 students and 190 staff. Random selection within each stratum was conducted using school rosters and student registers, ensuring an unbiased population representation.

Cochran's (1977) sample formula

$$n = \frac{z^2 p q (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- n = required sample size
- Z = Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence)
- p = estimated proportion of an attribute present in the population (0.5)
- e = desired margin of error (expressed as a decimal, e.g., 0.05 for ±5%)

Data was collected using structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items designed to measure the key variables: value education and peaceful coexistence. Two separate questionnaires were developed: one for students and one for staff, tailored to their respective roles in the school environment. The questionnaire for value education assessed attitudes toward values (e.g., respect, integrity), knowledge of ethical principles, and the practice of these values in daily interactions. The questionnaire was tagged "Attitude Scale towards Values". The peaceful coexistence questionnaire measures indicators such as mutual respect, tolerance for diversity, and the frequency of conflict incidents. The instrument was tagged "Peaceful Coexistence Scale". Each questionnaire consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to ensure consistency and ease of analysis. The instruments include demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, school type) to allow for subgroup analyses. To ensure cultural relevance, items were contextualised to reflect the multicultural dynamics of the Calabar Education Zone, incorporating local examples of values and coexistence challenges.

Prior to full-scale data collection, a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The pilot study involved a subsample of 50 participants (25 students and 25 staff) from two secondary schools not included in the main study, selected to reflect the diversity of the Calabar Education Zone. Reliability will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable internal consistency for each subscale (value education and peaceful coexistence) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Validity will be assessed through content validity, ensured by expert review from educational researchers familiar with the Nigerian context, and construct validity, verified by exploratory factor analysis to confirm that items load appropriately onto their intended constructs. Feedback from the pilot participants will be used to refine item wording, improve clarity, and address any cultural or contextual ambiguities. The pilot test results informed necessary adjustments to the instruments, ensuring they are robust and suitable for the main study.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, necessary permissions were obtained from the school authorities. Thereafter, the questionnaire was administered to selected participants in schools. The administration, collection, collation, and processing of the questionnaire strictly follow necessary ethical considerations among which include; informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation. Mean, standard deviation and chi-square were used to describe value education levels and peaceful coexistence status. Inferential statistics of simple linear regression analysis was used to predict peaceful coexistence based on value education scores.

Presentation of Results

Research question one

What are the current levels of value education among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone?

Figure 1 answered the first research question using the mean and standard deviation responses of the respondents. The current level of value education among staff and students in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone was assessed through "Attitude Scale towards Values" questionnaire. Across all groups — students, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff — the mean scores range from approximately 65 to 71 on the cumulative scale derived from a 5-point Likert framework. Given that the maximum achievable score on such a cumulative Likert-type assessment is 100 (i.e., if all responses were "Strongly Agree" on every item), mean scores in the mid-to-high 60s and low 70s



suggest a positive and substantial presence of value education. This indicates that, on average, both staff and students in the Calabar Education Zone possess a strong orientation towards respect, integrity, ethical knowledge, and the practice of these values in their daily school interactions.

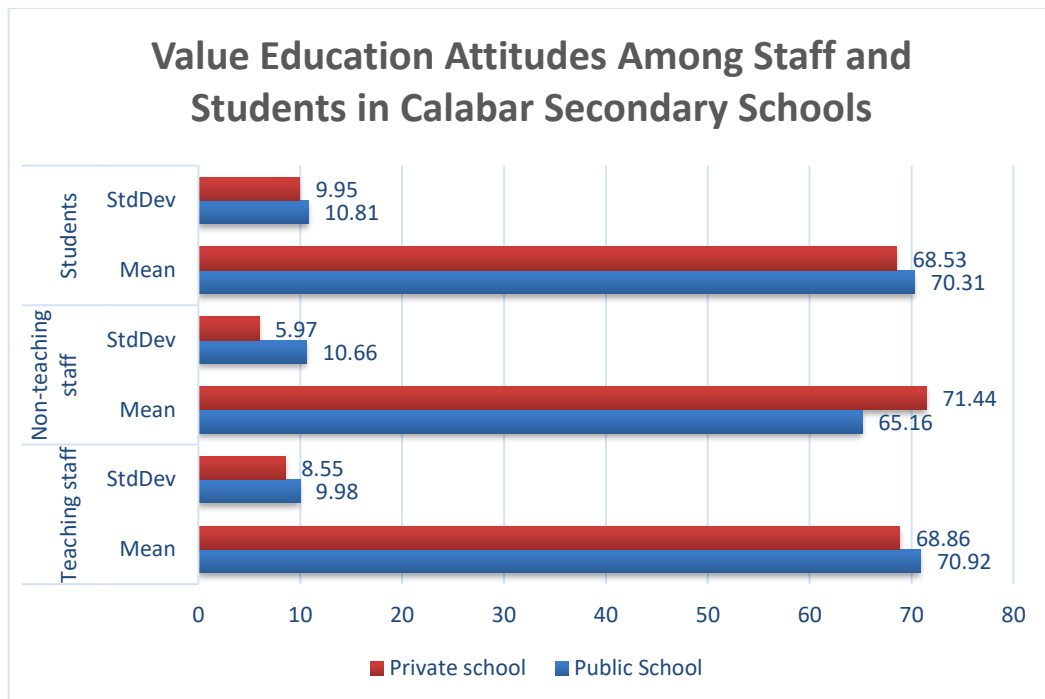
When comparing between groups, some notable patterns emerge. Among students, those from public schools reported a higher mean value education score (70.31) compared to their counterparts in private schools (68.53). This suggests that students in public schools may exhibit slightly stronger attitudes and behaviours aligned with value education principles than those in private schools. However, the difference, while present, is modest, indicating generally strong value education attitudes in both sectors. The standard deviations (10.81 for public students and 9.95 for private students) reflect moderate variability, suggesting that although the overall trend is positive, individual student experiences and attitudes towards values may differ notably within each group.

In the case of non-teaching staff, the trend favours private schools. Non-teaching staff in private schools reported a significantly higher mean score (71.44) compared to their public-school counterparts (65.16). Furthermore, the standard deviation for private non-teaching staff (5.97) is considerably lower than that for public non-teaching staff (10.66), indicating not only higher average value education attitudes but also greater consistency among private school non-teaching personnel. This could imply that private schools have stronger institutional mechanisms or cultures that promote uniform ethical attitudes among their non-teaching workforce.

Among teaching staff, public school teachers again slightly outperformed their private school counterparts, with mean scores of 70.92 and 68.86, respectively. The standard deviations were similar (9.98 for public and 8.55 for private), showing a fairly consistent spread of attitudes in both groups. This suggests that while both public and private school teachers generally exhibit positive attitudes towards values, those in public schools may engage somewhat more deeply or consistently with value education principles.

The findings reveal that the level of value education across staff and students is relatively high in both public and private secondary schools, though certain groups show slight advantages. Public school students and teachers generally report higher value education attitudes, while private school non-teaching staff show stronger and more consistent ethical orientations. These results underscore a commendable presence of value education in the Calabar Education Zone, though they also highlight areas—particularly among non-teaching staff in public schools—where targeted interventions could further enhance the consistency and strength of value education practices.

Figure 1: Mean Attitudinal Responses Toward Value Education Among Staff and Students in Public and Private Secondary Schools: Evidence from the Calabar Education Zone, 2024/2025



Research question two

To what extent do staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone experience peaceful coexistence?

The second research question was answered using the mean and standard deviation of the respondents scores as presented in Figure 2. The level of peaceful coexistence among staff and students in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone was assessed through a 20 items questionnaire tagged “Peaceful Coexistence Scale”. The questionnaire was a 5-point Likert scale. Given that the maximum achievable score on such a cumulative Likert-type assessment is 100 (i.e., if all responses were “Strongly Agree” on every item), mean scores in the mid-to-high 60s and low 70s reveals that the level of peaceful coexistence among staff and students in secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone is generally high. This is evidenced by the overall mean scores across all groups, which consistently fall within the upper range of the peaceful coexistence scale. Both public and private school participants reported mean scores above 63, with several groups scoring above 70, indicating a strong presence of mutual respect, tolerance for diversity, and a low frequency of conflict incidents as measured by the Peaceful Coexistence Questionnaire.

Teaching staff in public schools reported a mean score of 71.81, slightly higher than their counterparts in private schools who scored 68.94. This suggests that teaching staff in public schools experience a marginally greater sense of peaceful coexistence compared to those in private schools. However, the difference is not substantial, indicating that peaceful coexistence is relatively stable across both types of institutions for this group. The standard deviations for teaching staff (11.40 for public and 10.73 for private) show a moderate spread in responses, suggesting some variability in individual experiences but overall consistency within each group.

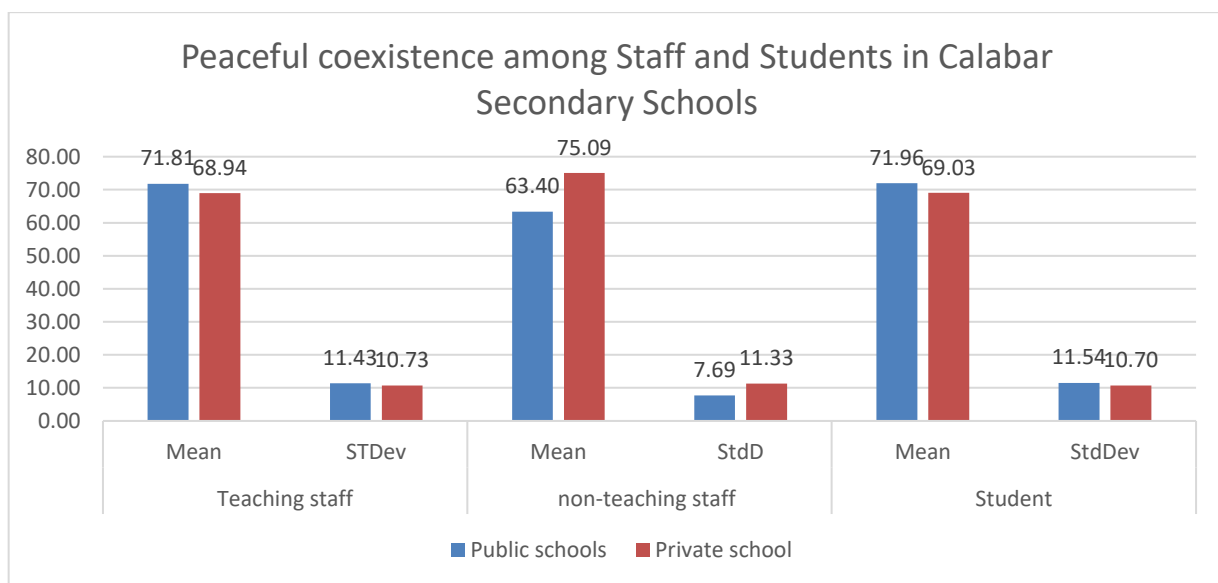
Among non-teaching staff, a more pronounced difference is observed. Private schools reported a notably higher mean score of 75.09 compared to 63.40 in public schools. This suggests that non-teaching staff in private schools perceive a significantly greater level of peaceful coexistence than their counterparts in public schools. The slightly higher standard deviation for private schools (11.33) compared to public schools (7.69) indicates that while non-teaching staff in private schools generally perceive a higher degree of peaceful coexistence, their individual experiences are more varied.

For students, the mean scores were again relatively close, with public school students reporting 71.96 and private school students reporting 69.03. This small difference indicates that students in both

public and private schools experience a comparable level of peaceful coexistence, with a slightly higher perception among public school students. The standard deviations for students (11.54 for public and 10.70 for private) suggest moderate variability, consistent with the patterns observed among staff.

The findings indicate that peaceful coexistence exists at a high level across secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone, with only slight differences between public and private schools. Teaching staff and students in public schools reported marginally higher peaceful coexistence, while non-teaching staff in private schools perceived the highest levels of peaceful coexistence among all groups. The moderate standard deviations across all groups highlight that, while the overall levels are high, individual perceptions can vary, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of interpersonal relations within educational settings.

Figure 2: Mean peaceful coexistence Responses Among Staff and Students in Public and Private Secondary Schools: Evidence from the Calabar Education Zone, 2024/2025



Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone. To test whether to accept or refute this null hypothesis, data from both value education and peaceful corelation scores were correlated using simple linear corelation statistical analysis at .05 level of significance. The result of the data analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple linear regression analysis showing the influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among staff and student personnel in Calabar education zone.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	r	r ²
1	Regression	25129.57	1	25129.57	799.20	.00 ^b	.823 ^a	.678
	Residual	11948.46	380	31.44				
	Total	37078.03	381					

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Partial	part
(Constant)	18.50	1.83		10.08	.00		
Peaceful coexistence	.72	.02	.82	28.27	.00	.82	.82

The present study investigated whether value education significantly influences peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone. The statistical analysis robustly substantiates the claim that value education is a pivotal factor in promoting peaceful coexistence within secondary school settings. The magnitude of the explained variance ($R^2 = 0.678$) is notably high for educational and social sciences, indicating that value education is not a trivial or marginal contributor but a major determinant of harmonious interrelationships among educational stakeholders. Specifically, the model yielded an F-statistic of 799.20 with an associated p-value of $< .001$, indicating that the regression model was statistically significant and better than using the mean alone to predict peaceful coexistence. The R-squared value ($R^2 = 0.678$) suggests that approximately 67.8% of the variance in peaceful coexistence can be explained by value education alone, highlighting a strong predictive relationship.

The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.82$) further confirms a robust positive association, implying that as value education improves, levels of peaceful coexistence also increase significantly. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.72$, $SE = 0.02$) indicates that for every unit increase in value education, peaceful coexistence is expected to rise by 0.72 units. Moreover, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.823$) points to a strong and direct linear relationship between the two constructs. The extremely high t-value ($t = 28.27$, $p < .001$) for the regression coefficient confirms that the contribution of value education to peaceful coexistence is not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful. Thus, the findings lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis that posited no significant influence of value education on peaceful coexistence. Instead, the evidence strongly supports the alternative hypothesis: value education exerts a significant and positive influence on peaceful coexistence among staff and students. The high standardized coefficient suggests that value education is a dominant predictor relative to potential other factors not included in the model. Furthermore, the extremely low p-values across both the F-test and t-test eliminate concerns about statistical artifacts or chance findings.

Discussion on findings

The findings of this study reveal a substantial positive attitude towards value education across both public and private secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone, Nigeria. However, nuanced differences emerge when comparing the attitudes of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff across these school types. Public school students and teachers exhibited slightly higher attitudes towards value education compared to their private school counterparts, while private school non-teaching staff reported stronger attitudes than those in public schools. These results contribute to the growing body of literature on value-based education in Nigeria (e.g., Ekeh, 2019; Onyinyechi & Onuoha, 2021; Udoh & Ekanem, 2023) and offer insights into the differential implementation and perception of value education across school types and staff roles.

The slightly higher attitudes towards value education among public school students and teachers may be attributed to the structured curricula and policies often emphasised in Nigerian public education systems. Public schools, being government-funded, are typically bound by national educational frameworks that prioritise moral, social, and cultural values as part of the holistic development of students (Nwafor, 2024). This aligns with Ezeani and Elekwa's (2015) observation that effective implementation of value-based education in Nigeria is often tied to institutional mandates. In contrast, private schools, while also valuing moral education, may adopt more flexible or diverse approaches that reflect their specific philosophies or stakeholder expectations (Omiyefa & Salawu, 2024). This could explain the marginally lower attitudes observed among private school students and teachers.

Conversely, the stronger attitudes towards value education among private school non-teaching staff may stem from their closer involvement in the school's operational and cultural environment. Non-teaching staff in private schools often play integral roles in maintaining the school's ethos, which may include a strong emphasis on character development and value inculcation (Akpan & Odey, 2024). Additionally, private schools may attract staff who are more aligned with their institutional values due to selective hiring practices (Arop, Owan, & Agunwa, 2019). In public schools, non-teaching staff may



have less direct engagement with value education initiatives, potentially explaining their comparatively lower attitudes.

These findings resonate with existing research highlighting the importance of value education in Nigerian schools (Ekeh, 2019; Onyinyechi & Onuoha, 2021). However, the differential attitudes across school types and staff roles challenge the assumption of uniformity in value education implementation. The results suggest that while public schools may excel in fostering value education through formal structures, private schools may benefit from leveraging the commitment of their non-teaching staff to enhance value-based initiatives. This cross-pollination of strengths could inform policy and practice, encouraging public schools to engage non-teaching staff more actively in value education efforts, while private schools might consider reinforcing their curricular focus on values.

The findings indicate a high level of peaceful coexistence among staff and students in Nigerian secondary schools, with non-teaching staff in private schools reporting the highest levels of interpersonal harmony. This observation aligns with the broader discourse on peace education and its role in fostering positive social interactions, as evidenced by several scholarly works. For instance, Olowo and Fakolujo (2021) highlight that secondary school teachers in Ondo State recognize the critical need for peace education to cultivate harmonious relationships within school environments. The elevated levels of peaceful coexistence in private schools, particularly among non-teaching staff, may be attributed to the structured administrative frameworks and smaller staff-to-student ratios often found in these institutions, which facilitate closer interpersonal interactions and conflict resolution.

The emphasis on peace education as a tool for conflict management, as discussed by Maduka and Daupamowei (2019) and Asanebi and Okafor (2019), underscores its potential to create conducive environments for peaceful coexistence. These studies argue that integrating peace education into school curricula equips individuals with the skills to manage disputes non-violently, a factor that may explain the observed harmony among private school staff. Non-teaching staff, who often engage in supportive roles, may benefit from less hierarchical and more collaborative work settings in private schools, fostering stronger interpersonal bonds compared to their counterparts in public schools.

Furthermore, Ezeoba (2021) advocates for the integration of peace education into Nigerian secondary schools to enhance national security, suggesting that peaceful school environments contribute to broader societal stability. The high levels of peaceful coexistence reported in this study, particularly in private schools, support this assertion, indicating that schools with robust interpersonal relations may serve as microcosms of peaceful societies. Similarly, Abdul-Wahab (2018) and Abdulahi (2006) emphasize peace education as a unifying factor that promotes stability and unity, which may explain why private schools, with potentially greater resources to implement such programs, exhibit superior outcomes in fostering peaceful coexistence.

However, the disparity between private and public schools raises questions about resource allocation and systemic support for peace education in public institutions. Ani (2024) argues for a national transformation through peace education, suggesting that public schools may require targeted interventions to achieve similar levels of interpersonal harmony. The findings also resonate with Harris and Morrison's (2021) global perspective on peace education, which emphasizes its role in fostering responsibility and mutual respect—qualities likely contributing to the reported coexistence among non-teaching staff.

The higher levels of peaceful coexistence among non-teaching staff in private schools may also reflect their limited involvement in pedagogical stressors, allowing them to focus on relational dynamics. This observation warrants further exploration into the specific factors, such as workplace culture or training in conflict resolution, that enhance peaceful interactions in these settings. Future research should investigate whether these findings are replicable across diverse Nigerian contexts and explore the role of peace education in bridging gaps between public and private school environments.

The findings of this study reveal a significant and robust influence of value education on peaceful coexistence, with value education accounting for 67.8% of the variance in peaceful coexistence ($R^2 = 0.678$) and a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < .001$). These results align with and extend prior research, particularly studies conducted in the Nigerian educational context, which

emphasise the transformative potential of value education in fostering social harmony and character development among adolescents (Arowolo & Salawu, 2021; Ogunyemi & Adeyemo, 2020).

The substantial explanatory power of value education ($R^2 = 0.678$) underscores its role as a critical determinant of peaceful coexistence. This finding corroborates Arowolo and Salawu's (2021) structural equation modelling study, which demonstrated that value education significantly predicts positive social behaviours in Nigerian secondary schools. The strong positive association ($\beta = 0.82$) further suggests that deliberate integration of value-based curricula can cultivate attitudes and behaviours conducive to conflict resolution, empathy, and mutual respect among students. This is consistent with Ogunyemi and Adeyemo (2020), who highlighted the mediating role of value education in reducing interpersonal conflicts among Nigerian adolescents by promoting prosocial values such as tolerance and cooperation.

The philosophical underpinnings of value education, as discussed by Arowolo (2017), provide a theoretical basis for these findings. Arowolo's work emphasizes that values such as integrity, respect, and civic responsibility, when embedded in educational systems, serve as mechanisms for social cohesion. The current study's results empirically validate this perspective, suggesting that value education acts as a catalyst for reorienting students' moral frameworks, which is particularly crucial in diverse and pluralistic societies like Nigeria, where ethnic and religious tensions can undermine peaceful coexistence (Umeogu, 2012).

However, the implementation of value education in Nigeria faces challenges that may temper the generalizability of these findings. Ezeani and Elekwa (2015) noted barriers such as inadequate teacher training, lack of standardized curricula, and resource constraints, which could limit the effectiveness of value education programs. Despite these challenges, the strong statistical significance of the current findings ($p < .001$) suggests that even partial or contextually adapted implementations of value education can yield meaningful outcomes. This aligns with Abdulraheem's (2017) observation that teachers' perceptions of value education as a tool for character development significantly influence its classroom application, particularly in junior secondary schools.

The findings also have implications for educational policy and practice. As Okafor (2012) argued, value reorientation through education is essential for national development, particularly in fostering a sense of shared identity and collective responsibility. The high variance explained by value education in this study supports the need for policy interventions that prioritize value-based education as a core component of the Nigerian secondary school curriculum. Additionally, the effectiveness of value education may be enhanced by addressing teacher performance and training, as suggested by Bassey and Archibong (2011), who linked teachers' job performance to overall school effectiveness.

While the results are compelling, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The study's focus on secondary schools may not fully capture the dynamics of value education in other educational or community settings. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures of peaceful coexistence could introduce social desirability bias, a concern also noted by Ogunyemi and Adeyemo (2020). Future research should explore longitudinal designs to assess the sustained impact of value education and incorporate multi-method approaches to triangulate findings.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of value education on peaceful coexistence among staff and students in public and private secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone during the 2024/2025 academic session. The findings reveal a robust presence of value education, with mean scores indicating strong attitudes towards respect, integrity, and ethical behaviour across both school types. Public school students and teachers reported slightly higher value education scores (70.31 and 70.92, respectively) compared to their private school counterparts (68.53 and 68.86), while private school non-teaching staff exhibited the highest and most consistent scores (71.44). Similarly, peaceful coexistence was high across all groups, with public school students and teachers scoring marginally higher (71.96 and 71.81) than private school counterparts (69.03 and 68.94), and private school non-teaching staff reporting the highest mean (75.09). A significant positive relationship was established

between value education and peaceful coexistence ($R^2 = 0.678$, $\beta = 0.82$, $p < .001$), with value education explaining 67.8% of the variance in peaceful coexistence, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These results underscore the pivotal role of value education in fostering harmonious school environments, particularly in a multicultural context like the Calabar Education Zone, and highlight its potential to enhance social cohesion and support sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were set:

1. **Strengthening Value Education Programs:** To address the high but variable levels of value education, schools should integrate structured value education modules into the curriculum, emphasising respect, empathy, and integrity through interactive workshops and role-playing activities. The Cross River State Ministry of Education should oversee the development and implementation of these modules, ensuring alignment with national educational frameworks. School administrators should facilitate teacher training to enhance their capacity to deliver value-based education effectively, particularly in public schools where non-teaching staff reported lower scores.
2. **Promoting Peaceful Coexistence Initiatives:** Given the high levels of peaceful coexistence with slight variations between school types, schools should establish peace clubs and conflict resolution programmes to sustain and enhance mutual respect and tolerance. The state secondary education boards, in collaboration with local NGOs, should implement these initiatives, focusing on cultural sensitivity training to address ethnic and cultural diversity. Private schools should share best practices with public schools, particularly for non-teaching staff, to bridge the gap in perceived coexistence levels.
3. **Leveraging Value Education for Enhanced Coexistence:** The strong relationship between value education and peaceful coexistence necessitates policy interventions to embed value education as a core driver of school harmony. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education should mandate the inclusion of value education in teacher training curricula and school accreditation standards. School principals should monitor and evaluate the impact of value education on coexistence through regular surveys, ensuring continuous improvement in school climate and social relations.

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