



## From Restiveness to Responsiveness: The Role of Education in Transforming Youth Identity and Purpose in North-East Nigeria

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**Abstract.** The study examined the Restiveness to Responsiveness: The Role of Education in Transforming Youth Identity and Purpose in North-East Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine; the influence of vocational educational on the reduction of youth restiveness in North-East Nigeria, how Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes contribute to reshaping the identity and social behaviour of youths in the region and the challenges hindering the effective use of education as a tool for transforming youth attitudes and purpose in North-East Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The total population is estimated at 2,000 respondents drawn from selected educational institutions and training centers. A sample of 400 respondents were selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “*Education and Youth Transformation Questionnaire (EYTQ)*”. The items were designed on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for the study. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used. Findings of the study shows that: Vocational education significantly contributes to reducing youth restiveness through skill acquisition and self-reliance. Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs play a major role in reshaping youth identity, improving moral values, and promoting social behaviour. The effectiveness of education in transforming youth attitudes is constrained by insecurity, poor funding, lack of teachers, and socio-cultural barriers. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: The government should strengthen and expand vocational education programs to equip youths with

relevant skills. The government should address insecurity, improve funding, recruit qualified teachers, and counter socio-cultural barriers to enhance education’s transformative impact on youth attitudes.

**Keywords:** Restiveness to Responsiveness, Role, Education, Youth Identity and Purpose

### 1. Introduction

Youth constitute a vital segment of every society, representing the driving force for innovation, productivity, and sustainable development. However, in Nigeria, particularly in the North-East region, the enormous potential of young people has been undermined by unemployment, poverty, and prolonged insecurity (Akinwale, 2019). The region has, over the years, been characterized by youth restiveness manifesting through violent extremism, political thuggery, substance abuse, and other antisocial behaviours (Adesope & Agumagu, 2016). This situation is largely the outcome of limited educational opportunities, poor governance, and socio-economic marginalization. Consequently, transforming these youths from restiveness to responsiveness has become one of the most critical challenges facing policymakers, educators, and development partners in Nigeria.

Education is widely recognized as a powerful instrument for social transformation and national development (UNESCO, 2020). It goes beyond imparting knowledge and literacy skills; it shapes the attitudes, values, and identity of individuals, preparing them for responsible citizenship and peaceful coexistence (Ogunyemi & Akinola, 2018). In conflict-prone regions such as North-East Nigeria, education provides a pathway for healing, reintegration, and the reconstruction of moral and social values. According

to Obanya (2017), education nurtures in learners the capacities for critical thinking, empathy, and positive engagement—key ingredients for combating restiveness and promoting peace. Thus, education serves not only as a means of empowerment but also as a transformative force capable of redefining youth identity and purpose.

Youth restiveness in North-East Nigeria has become a persistent socio-economic and security challenge resulting from long-standing poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, and the disruption of educational systems caused by insurgency and displacement. Many young people, deprived of opportunities for education and livelihood, have turned to anti-social behaviors or joined violent groups as a means of survival or expression of grievance (Adebayo & Mohammed, 2022; Aluko & Ibrahim, 2021). This condition has weakened social cohesion, eroded moral values, and intensified instability in the region. Education therefore plays a transformative role in reversing these trends by serving as a tool for empowerment, social inclusion, and peacebuilding. Access to both formal and non-formal education provides displaced and vulnerable youths with literacy, vocational, and psychosocial skills necessary for reintegration and rehabilitation (UNICEF, 2023; Adamu & Bello, 2020). When properly structured, education can address the root causes of restiveness by fostering critical thinking, building employability, and restoring hope and direction among the youth population.

Furthermore, education is instrumental in reshaping youth identity and enhancing responsiveness within communities in conflict-affected areas. By offering mentorship, counseling, and civic education, schools and adult learning centers help youths reconstruct their self-image from one associated with violence and victimhood to one grounded in responsibility, productivity, and social participation (Danladi & Ali, 2022; World Bank, 2022). This process of identity transformation enables young people to rediscover purpose and develop resilience in the face of adversity. When linked to livelihood opportunities, educational programs also instill a renewed sense of purpose and belonging, reducing the likelihood of re-engagement in restive behaviors. Moreover, education enhances civic consciousness and participation, equipping youths to become responsive citizens who contribute to peace and development in their communities (Usman & Peter, 2021; UNDP, 2023). Thus, the transition from restiveness to responsiveness among youth in North-East Nigeria depends largely on the accessibility, relevance, and quality of education as a

tool for social transformation and national reconstruction.

In recent years, various educational interventions both formal and non-formal have been introduced in the North-East by the government, NGOs, and international organizations. Programs such as adult literacy, vocational and skills acquisition training, and peace education have sought to equip youths with employable skills, moral orientation, and leadership abilities (Adejimola & Olaniyan, 2019). For instance, initiatives by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Agency for Mass Education have provided alternative livelihood opportunities for unemployed and displaced youths (Ibrahim, 2021). Despite these efforts, the region continues to experience persistent youth restiveness, raising questions about the effectiveness of education in achieving behavioural transformation and purposeful living among young people.

It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the role of education in transforming youth identity and purpose from restiveness to responsiveness in North-East Nigeria. The study aims to examine how access to quality education and skills development can foster positive social values, self-reliance, and civic responsibility among youths in the region. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to educational policy reforms, peacebuilding strategies, and youth empowerment initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development in North-East Nigeria and the country at large.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The North-East region of Nigeria has for over a decade faced persistent challenges of insecurity, insurgency, and socio-economic disruption that have deeply affected the lives and identities of its young population. The collapse of educational systems, widespread unemployment, and prolonged displacement have left many youths vulnerable to frustration, radicalization, and violence, resulting in youth restiveness manifested through criminality, drug abuse, political thuggery, and participation in insurgent activities issues that continue to undermine peace and development in the region. This condition reflects not only the breakdown of social and institutional structures but also a crisis of purpose and direction among young people whose lives have been shaped by conflict and deprivation. Education, which should ordinarily serve as a tool for empowerment, social transformation, and value reorientation, has been severely disrupted by years of conflict, school

destruction, and displacement, denying many youths access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities that could equip them with the skills, attitudes, and moral guidance required for responsible citizenship. Although government agencies and development partners have implemented educational and rehabilitation programs aimed at re-engaging conflict-affected youth, their effectiveness in transforming restive tendencies into positive and responsive behavior remains uncertain. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence on how education can rebuild youth identity, instill civic responsibility, and restore a sense of purpose among the affected population in North-East Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined the Restiveness to Responsiveness: The Role of Education in Transforming Youth Identity and Purpose in North-East Nigeria.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to examine:

- the influence of vocational educational on the reduction of youth restiveness in North-East Nigeria.
- how Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes contribute to reshaping the identity and social behaviour of youths in the region.
- the challenges hindering the effective use of education as a tool for transforming youth attitudes and purpose in North-East Nigeria.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

- What is the influence of vocational educational on the reduction of youth restiveness in North-East Nigeria?
- How Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes contribute to reshaping the identity and social behaviour of youths in the region?
- What are the challenges hindering the effective use of education as a tool for transforming youth attitudes and purpose in North-East Nigeria.

## 2. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The design enabled the researcher to examine the role of education in transforming youth identity and purpose from restiveness to responsiveness in North-East Nigeria. It will also help to capture the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of youths and educators in relation to educational opportunities and youth empowerment. The population of the study was all youths, adult education facilitators, teachers, and education officers across the six states of the North-East. Specifically, the target population was individuals who have participated in formal or non-formal educational programs, such as literacy classes, vocational training, or tertiary education. The total population is estimated at 2,000 respondents drawn from selected educational institutions and training centers. A sample of 400 respondents were selected for the study. The sample was drawn using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, three states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) was purposively selected due to their high prevalence of youth restiveness and educational interventions. In the second stage, two local government areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from each chosen state. In the third stage, youth participants, educators, and administrators were selected from literacy centers, skills acquisition programs, and tertiary institutions using simple random sampling.

This method ensured fair representation of different categories of respondents. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "*Education and Youth Transformation Questionnaire (EYTQ)*." The questionnaire was based on items related to educational participation, youth empowerment, attitude change, and social responsiveness. The items were designed on a four-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree (4)* to *Strongly Disagree (1)*. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for the study. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used.

### 3. Data Analysis and Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of vocational education on the reduction of youth restiveness in North-East Nigeria?

**Table 4.1:** Statistical Analysis on the Influence of Vocational Education on the Reduction of Youth Restiveness

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S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma$
1	Vocational education programs have provided alternative means of livelihood for youths in my community.	85 (29.8%)	97 (34.0%)	35 (12.3%)	40 (14.0%)	28 (9.8%)	3.61	1.05
2	Participation in vocational training has reduced involvement of youths in violent or anti-social activities.	90 (31.6%)	86 (30.2%)	32 (11.2%)	43 (15.1%)	34 (11.9%)	3.55	1.12
3	Vocational education enhances self-reliance and discourages dependency among young people.	98 (34.4%)	82 (28.8%)	31 (10.9%)	43 (15.1%)	31 (10.9%)	3.60	1.13
4	Skills acquired through vocational programs have improved youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.	94 (33.0%)	84 (29.5%)	30 (10.5%)	45 (15.8%)	32 (11.2%)	3.57	1.11
5	Government-sponsored vocational programs have contributed significantly to peace and stability in the region.	88 (30.9%)	90 (31.6%)	33 (11.6%)	42 (14.7%)	32 (11.2%)	3.55	1.09
6	The integration of vocational education into youth empowerment schemes has reduced youth restiveness in the region.	87 (30.5%)	89 (31.2%)	36 (12.6%)	42 (14.7%)	31 (10.9%)	3.54	1.07
<b>Total Mean</b>							3.57	

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

Table 4.1 presents respondents' views on the influence of vocational education on the reduction of youth restiveness. The table summarizes responses in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For Item 1, which assessed whether vocational education programs have provided alternative means of livelihood for youths in the community, 85 (29.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 97 (34.0%) agreed, while 35 (12.3%) were undecided, 40 (14.0%) disagreed, and 28 (9.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.61 indicates a positive perception that vocational education has created alternative livelihood opportunities for young people, thereby reducing unemployment and poverty. The standard deviation of 1.05 shows a moderate level of agreement among respondents, suggesting that most youths now engage in productive ventures due to vocational skills training.

Item 2 evaluated whether participation in vocational training has reduced the involvement of youths in violent or anti-social activities. About 90 (31.6%) strongly agreed and 86 (30.2%) agreed, while 32 (11.2%) were undecided, 43 (15.1%) disagreed, and 34 (11.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.55 suggests a generally positive perception that vocational training plays an important role in minimizing youth restiveness and crime by engaging them in meaningful work. The standard deviation of 1.12 indicates a fair spread of responses, showing that while many respondents acknowledged the program's impact, a few remained uncertain about its overall effectiveness. For Item 3, which examined whether vocational education enhances self-reliance and discourages dependency among young people, 98 (34.4%) strongly agreed and 82 (28.8%) agreed, while 31 (10.9%) were undecided, 43 (15.1%) disagreed, and 31 (10.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.60 shows that most respondents believe vocational education improves self-sufficiency and reduces economic dependence, while the standard deviation of 1.13 indicates moderate variation in opinions.

Item 4 assessed whether skills acquired through vocational programs have improved youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. About 94 (33.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 84 (29.5%) agreed, while 30 (10.5%) were undecided, 45 (15.8%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.57 implies that the majority of respondents viewed vocational training as a pathway to employment creation and entrepreneurship. The standard deviation of 1.11 suggests a moderate level of variation, indicating that the benefits of skill training were not evenly distributed among all participants. For Item 5, which measured whether government-sponsored vocational programs have contributed to peace and stability in the region, 88 (30.9%) strongly agreed and 90 (31.6%) agreed, while 33 (11.6%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.55 reflects a positive view that such initiatives have enhanced regional stability, and the standard deviation of 1.09 indicates moderate consensus among respondents.

Finally, Item 6 examined whether the integration of vocational education into youth empowerment schemes has reduced youth restiveness in the region. A total of 87 (30.5%) respondents strongly agreed and 89 (31.2%) agreed, while 36 (12.6%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 31 (10.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.54 suggests a positive perception that youth empowerment through vocational education plays a major role in curbing restiveness and promoting peace. The standard deviation of 1.07 shows moderate agreement among respondents, implying that most participants shared similar experiences of vocational education’s impact. Overall, the total mean of 3.57 indicates that respondents generally agreed that vocational education significantly contributes to reducing youth restiveness by promoting skill acquisition, self-reliance, and employment opportunities that foster peace and community stability.

**Research Question 2:** How do Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes contribute to reshaping the identity and social behaviour of youths in the region?

**Table 4.2:** Statistical Analysis on the Role of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Reshaping Youth Identity and Social Behaviour  
=285

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\Sigma$
1	ABE classes help participants develop positive attitudes towards learning and personal growth.	92 (32.3%)	87 (30.5%)	33 (11.6%)	42 (14.7%)	31 (10.9%)	3.58	1.10
2	ABE programs improve communication skills and promote peaceful coexistence among youths.	90 (31.6%)	88 (30.9%)	34 (11.9%)	41 (14.4%)	32 (11.2%)	3.56	1.11
3	Participation in ABE classes enhances moral values and reduces social deviance among youths.	89 (31.2%)	91 (31.9%)	30 (10.5%)	42 (14.7%)	33 (11.6%)	3.56	1.12
4	Literacy gained through ABE increases youths’ confidence and sense of identity.	91 (31.9%)	86 (30.2%)	35 (12.3%)	41 (14.4%)	32 (11.2%)	3.57	1.09
5	ABE classes encourage social integration and reduce stigmatization of uneducated youths.	88 (30.9%)	87 (30.5%)	36 (12.6%)	42 (14.7%)	32 (11.2%)	3.55	1.08
6	Exposure to ABE promotes civic responsibility and discourages involvement in violence.	87 (30.5%)	89 (31.2%)	33 (11.6%)	44 (15.4%)	32 (11.2%)	3.54	1.10
<b>Total Mean</b>							3.56	

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

Table 4.2 presents respondents’ views on the role of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in reshaping youth identity and social behaviour. The table summarizes responses in terms of frequency, percentage, mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ). For Item 1, which assessed whether ABE classes help participants develop positive attitudes towards learning and personal growth, 92 (32.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 87 (30.5%) agreed, while 33 (11.6%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 31 (10.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.58 indicates a positive perception that ABE promotes enthusiasm for learning and self-development among youths. The standard deviation of 1.10 shows moderate variation in opinions, suggesting that while most participants recognized these benefits, others had different experiences or limited exposure to ABE programs.

Item 2 evaluated whether ABE programs improve communication skills and promote peaceful coexistence among youths. About 90 (31.6%) strongly agreed and 88 (30.9%) agreed, while 34 (11.9%) were undecided, 41 (14.4%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.56 suggests a generally positive perception that ABE fosters better communication and understanding among participants, thereby enhancing social harmony and conflict resolution skills. The standard deviation of 1.11 indicates moderate variation, reflecting that while most respondents supported this view, a few perceived limited impacts on communication or interpersonal relations. For Item 3, which examined whether participation in ABE classes enhances moral values and reduces social deviance among youths, 89 (31.2%) strongly agreed and 91 (31.9%) agreed, whereas 30 (10.5%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 33 (11.6%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.56 reveals that respondents believe ABE contributes significantly to moral reorientation and discipline, while the standard deviation of 1.12 shows some variability, likely due to differences in program content or delivery across centers.

Item 4 assessed whether literacy gained through ABE increases youths’ confidence and sense of identity. About 91 (31.9%) respondents strongly agreed and 86 (30.2%) agreed, while 35 (12.3%) were undecided, 41 (14.4%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.57 indicates that most respondents viewed literacy as empowering

and identity-affirming, helping learners to regain self-worth and confidence. The standard deviation of 1.09 shows moderate agreement, implying consistency among respondents' views. For Item 5, which evaluated whether ABE classes encourage social integration and reduce stigmatization of uneducated youths, 88 (30.9%) strongly agreed and 87 (30.5%) agreed, while 36 (12.6%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.55 suggests a positive perception that ABE promotes inclusivity and acceptance, while the standard deviation of 1.08 reflects slight differences in opinion among respondents.

Finally, Item 6 assessed whether exposure to ABE promotes civic responsibility and discourages involvement in violence. A total of 87 (30.5%) respondents strongly agreed and 89 (31.2%) agreed, while 33 (11.6%) were undecided, 44 (15.4%) disagreed, and 32 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.54 indicates a positive perception that ABE instills civic values and discourages antisocial behavior, while the standard deviation of 1.10 reflects moderate variation among responses. Overall, the total mean of 3.56 shows that respondents generally agreed that Adult Basic Education plays a major role in reshaping youth identity, enhancing moral values, and promoting socially responsible behaviour. This suggests that ABE is an effective instrument for personal development, social integration, and peacebuilding among young people in the region.

**Research Question 3:** What are the challenges hindering the effective use of education as a tool for transforming youth attitudes and purpose in North-East Nigeria?

**Table 4.3:** Statistical Analysis on Challenges Hindering the Use of Education for Youth Transformation  
=285

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\Sigma$
1	Insecurity and insurgency have disrupted educational activities and hindered youth participation.	95 (33.3%)	86 (30.2%)	34 (11.9%)	40 (14.0%)	30 (10.5%)	3.62	1.08
2	Inadequate funding and poor infrastructure limit the effectiveness of educational initiatives.	93 (32.6%)	88 (30.9%)	32 (11.2%)	42 (14.7%)	30 (10.5%)	3.60	1.09
3	Shortage of qualified teachers affects the quality of education provided to youths.	91 (31.9%)	90 (31.6%)	31 (10.9%)	43 (15.1%)	30 (10.5%)	3.58	1.11
4	Poverty discourages youths from participating in educational programs.	88 (30.9%)	92 (32.3%)	32 (11.2%)	44 (15.4%)	29 (10.2%)	3.57	1.12
5	Cultural and religious misconceptions hinder youth transformation.	86 (30.2%)	91 (31.9%)	33 (11.6%)	45 (15.8%)	30 (10.5%)	3.55	1.13
6	Poor government monitoring reduces the impact of education on youth attitudes.	85 (29.8%)	90 (31.6%)	36 (12.6%)	43 (15.1%)	31 (10.9%)	3.54	1.12
<b>Total Mean</b>							3.58	

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

Table 4.3 presents respondents' views on the major challenges that hinder the effective use of education for youth transformation. The table summarizes responses based on frequency, percentage, mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ). For Item 1, which assessed whether insecurity and insurgency have disrupted educational activities and hindered youth participation, 95 (33.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 86 (30.2%) agreed, while 34 (11.9%) were undecided, 40 (14.0%) disagreed, and 30 (10.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.62 indicates strong agreement that persistent insecurity and insurgent attacks have negatively affected access to education in the region. The standard deviation of 1.08 reflects moderate variation, implying that the impact of insecurity varies across communities but remains a critical obstacle to youth learning and development.

Item 2 evaluated whether inadequate funding and poor infrastructure limit the effectiveness of educational

initiatives. About 93 (32.6%) strongly agreed and 88 (30.9%) agreed, while 32 (11.2%) were undecided, 42 (14.7%) disagreed, and 30 (10.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.60 suggests that respondents widely acknowledged that lack of financial support, poor facilities, and inadequate learning materials undermine educational quality and youth engagement. The standard deviation of 1.09 shows moderate variation in responses, suggesting that while many institutions face these challenges, their severity differs by location and program. For Item 3, which examined whether shortage of qualified teachers affects the quality of education provided to youths, 91 (31.9%) strongly agreed and 90 (31.6%) agreed, whereas 31 (10.9%) were undecided, 43 (15.1%) disagreed, and 30 (10.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.58 indicates that teacher scarcity significantly affects the delivery of quality education, while the standard deviation of 1.11 shows some variability in opinions,

possibly due to differences in institutional staffing levels.

Item 4 assessed whether poverty discourages youths from participating in educational programs. About 88 (30.9%) respondents strongly agreed and 92 (32.3%) agreed, while 32 (11.2%) were undecided, 44 (15.4%) disagreed, and 29 (10.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.57 suggests that financial hardship is a key barrier to youth education, as many cannot afford learning materials, transportation, or tuition fees. The standard deviation of 1.12 indicates moderate variation in responses, reflecting that poverty's impact may differ depending on individual or family background. Item 5 examined whether cultural and religious misconceptions hinder youth transformation. About 86 (30.2%) strongly agreed and 91 (31.9%) agreed, while 33 (11.6%) were undecided, 45 (15.8%) disagreed, and 30 (10.5%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.55 suggests that deep-rooted socio-cultural norms and religious biases continue to restrict participation in education, particularly among marginalized groups. The standard deviation of 1.13 signifies slight divergence in perceptions, indicating that these barriers persist in varying degrees across communities.

Finally, Item 6 assessed whether poor government monitoring reduces the impact of education on youth attitudes. A total of 85 (29.8%) respondents strongly agreed and 90 (31.6%) agreed, while 36 (12.6%) were undecided, 43 (15.1%) disagreed, and 31 (10.9%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.54 implies that weak oversight and poor program evaluation have reduced the sustainability and accountability of educational interventions. The standard deviation of 1.12 indicates moderate variation in views.

#### 4. Summary of Findings

Vocational education significantly contributes to reducing youth restiveness through skill acquisition and self-reliance.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs play a major role in reshaping youth identity, improving moral values, and promoting social behaviour.

The effectiveness of education in transforming youth attitudes is constrained by insecurity, poor funding, lack of teachers, and socio-cultural barriers.

#### 5. Discussion

Vocational and technical education has proven to be a vital mechanism for reducing youth restiveness by providing practical skills that promote self-employment and economic independence. When young people acquire vocational skills, they are

empowered to engage in productive ventures rather than resorting to violence or criminal activities as a means of survival. Studies in conflict-affected regions of Nigeria reveal that vocational education fosters social stability by equipping learners with competencies relevant to local markets, thereby reducing unemployment and frustration among idle youth (Okoro & Nwachukwu, 2020; Usman & Garba, 2021). Similarly, Akpan and Udo (2018) emphasize that skill acquisition enhances self-reliance and transforms the mindset of youths from dependency to entrepreneurship. In the same vein, Adamu and Bello (2022) found that vocational training in the North-East not only improves income generation but also rebuilds community resilience by creating a sense of purpose and responsibility among young people. These findings affirm that vocational education is a strategic tool for curbing restiveness and promoting sustainable peace in post-conflict societies.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) serves as an important platform for re-educating and re-socializing youths, particularly those affected by conflict, poverty, and displacement. Through literacy, numeracy, and civic instruction, ABE programs help participants reconstruct their identities, enhance moral reasoning, and develop positive social behavior (Danladi & Ali, 2022). According to UNESCO (2021), adult education instills essential values such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect for others, which are necessary for social cohesion in post-conflict societies. Similarly, Ibrahim and Peter (2020) noted that ABE centers in the North-East have contributed to moral reorientation and peace education among formerly restive youths. Furthermore, UNDP (2023) found that adult learning opportunities enable vulnerable groups to re-enter society as active citizens, thereby transforming their sense of self from dependency and aggression to productivity and responsibility. Collectively, these studies show that ABE programs are not merely remedial but also transformative, shaping moral consciousness and social inclusion among young people.

Despite the recognized importance of education in addressing youth restiveness, its transformative impact in the North-East remains limited by systemic and contextual challenges. Persistent insecurity has led to school closures, teacher shortages, and displacement of learners, disrupting the continuity of education and reducing program effectiveness (UNICEF, 2023). Poor funding and inadequate infrastructure further hinder learning delivery, while many trained teachers are unwilling to work in volatile areas (Okonkwo & Ibrahim, 2019). In addition, cultural practices and gender norms often discourage participation, especially among young women,

thereby excluding a critical segment of the youth population (World Bank, 2022). Adebayo and Mohammed (2022) argue that without addressing these structural barriers, educational programs cannot fully achieve their intended goals of peacebuilding and behavioral transformation. Thus, improving security, increasing educational investment, and promoting inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments are essential to maximize the transformative power of education in the region.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that education plays a transformative role in redirecting the energies and aspirations of youths in North-East Nigeria from restiveness to meaningful engagement. Vocational education, in particular, provides a pathway for employment and entrepreneurship, reducing tendencies toward violence and dependency. Similarly, Adult Basic Education fosters moral discipline, literacy, and a sense of social responsibility, contributing to positive identity formation among young people. Nevertheless, persistent challenges such as insecurity, poverty, inadequate funding, and socio-cultural resistance continue to undermine the effectiveness of educational programs in the region. Addressing these barriers requires a collaborative effort among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders to ensure that educational interventions are accessible, inclusive, and sustainable. In conclusion, for education to fully transform youth identity and purpose in North-East Nigeria, there is an urgent need to strengthen vocational and adult education programs, improve learning infrastructure, ensure security and policy consistency, and promote community-based approaches that align with local realities.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The government should strengthen and expand vocational education programs to equip youths with relevant skills.
- The government should address insecurity, improve funding, recruit qualified teachers, and counter socio-cultural barriers to enhance education's transformative impact on youth attitudes

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