EXTENT OF USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) LEARNING TOOLS BY TEACHERS TO COUNTER TERRORISM IN BASIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Children in the 21st century are digital natives, it is appropriate that their education be conveyed through digital platforms.This study was on extent of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority of Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 516 teachers in the 42 public primary schools in Orumba South L.G.A. The study adopted simple random sampling to draw the sample population of 120 teachers for this study. The instrument for data collection was a 20 item questionnaire drafted by the researchers titled "Extent of Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Learning Tools in Countering Terrorism in Basic Education (EXICTLERT). The research instrument was a questionnaire validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish reliability and a coefficient of 0.79 obtained for the entire instrument. Data collected were analyzed using the mean scores. The findings showed that the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism was to a low extent and the effectiveness of ICT learning tools in countering terrorism was to a high extent. Based on these findings, it was recommended among other strategies, the recruitment of trained and ICT-skilled teachers, organizing seminars, workshop and in-service training for teachers on counter terrorism among others.

Key words: Basic Education, Digital Learning Tools, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Terrorism, Radicalization

Introduction

Education is a potent tool for the liberation of the human mind. Nord and Charles in Samuel (2019) describe education as a moral enterprise that has the capacity to develop and shape the hearts and minds of individuals in a society. In Nigeria, childhood education is embedded in the basic education level which according to Keefe (2016) comprises a wide range of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable a learner acquire functional literacy. The child is the pathway to the next generation, therefore basic education is pivotal for shaping the human mind towards making a healthy choice of living a life devoid of terror. The Nigerian Constitution (1999) defines the child as a human being under 18 years of age. This is the age before one becomes a young adult. Quality basic education by implications childhood education, is needed, and this should be a type of education that aims at empowering students to think critically, teach them to challenge ideas, construct rational thoughts and engage in meaningful debate. Formal education is given in schools; as a result, schools have gained growing importance as platforms for different kinds of instruction, prevention protocols and survival strategies especially against terror. Children spend long hours in schools, starting from the early stages of their lives and this makes the school a fertile ground for inculcating into the child the tenets of peaceful living.

Today in Nigeria terror has been unleashed in various forms ranging from the activities of insurgents, militants, herdsmen, agitators and the likes. According to the Global Terrorism Database (2015) (terrorist) groups killed roughly 43,412 people in 2014, rising from 22,211 in 2013 and 3,329 in 2000 and the vast majority of terrorist attacks have occurred in just five countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria. Nigeria being one of the countries where such terrorist acts are rampant, leaves the children affected as double victims, either as recipients or as perpetrators of terrorist acts.

Terrorism is most of the time the offspring of radicalization. Mohanan (2022) noted that radicalization happens when a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically. There is most of the time a deliberate attempt to change someone's perception of issues. Neumann's as cited in Schmid (2013) refers to radicalization as what goes on before the bomb goes off, indicating that before the physical battle even begins, radicalization must occur and it is precisely this radicalization process that education should seek to engage with and defeat. In radicalization, the bottom line is the distortion of normal human thought action sequence leading to guided violent behaviour. Lakhani (2010) observed that children at a young age are deeply vulnerable, malleable and impressionable, traits often manipulated by terrorist group leaders in conflicts throughout the world.

Radicalized young people serve as a vital source of support for groups that engage in terrorism. The 2015 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) Report states that terrorism is the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation. Elucidating the connection between children and terrorism, United Nations International Children Fund (UNICEF,2018) highlighted that since 2013, Boko Haram had kidnapped more than 1,000 children in Nigeria. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Elam (LTTE) have actively recruited children into their ranks. Tamil children were said to have been targeted for recruitment from age 11. In the same vein, Lakhani (2010) noted that in Pakistan, a significant and disturbing number of suicide bombers were between 12 and 18 years of age, with one estimate placing that number at 90% and some militant groups, recruit children as young as six years old. From the foregoing, it is now clear that urgent action needs to be taken to save our children from terrorism especially through the instrument of education.

In the past decade, the focus of international and national strategies for countering terrorism has shifted from using hard security procedures as a means of ending terrorism. There is a growing understanding that a soft power approach, and in particular, the use of education, is a promising way to move forward in counter terrorism. In Nigeria, there should be a paradigm shift from corrective to pre-emptive actions against terrorism and only education can serve this purpose. Education can no longer be seen as a resultant line of defense; rather, it must be viewed as the crucial line of defense against terrorism, for no terrorist attack can take place until and unless prospective terrorists are identified, radicalized, and enlisted. Such up-and-coming terrorists are most of the time children who have been radicalized. The Nigerian education sector should visualize and plan to protect learner populations against radicalization to violence in the ten or more years that the learner is in an institution of learning by implication, the basic education. This is because arming terrorists starts from the mind, before the gun; disarming them must also start from the mind. The instrument of education for effective counter terrorism then, needs to be packaged to suit the 21st century child.

Children in the 21st century are digital natives and such their education needs to be conveyed through digital means. Jiuzi and Xinyuan (2019) assert that their (children's) toys, daily

supplies, teaching aids, books and so on, are becoming increasingly digital and intelligent. In light of this, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the education of the young to counter terrorism makes eminent sense. Pratt (2019) defined Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as all devices, networking components, applications and systems that combined, allow people and organizations to interact in the digital world. It is not that technologies have not been in use in education before, but the use of digital learning tools has been limited. Ahmed (2022) noted that using technology used to be a choice, but now it is a requirement. Today, ICT has become an increasingly powerful tool in education especially after the pandemic which opened the world to digital learning tools for education.

Digital learning tools include a wide variety of applications, websites, and learning platforms that facilitate learning by connecting students, teachers, and sometimes even parents. Pavlova (2022) enumerated some examples of digital learning apps to include Piktochart, Storybird, Animoto, Kahoot, Glogster among others. These can be shared on other websites or on social networks, such as Twitter and Facebook. Chauhan (2018) refers to Glogster as one of the amazing digital tools which allows teachers to create multimedia posters by combining text information, photos, and videos. With some of these tools on the mobile phones or computers, teachers can transform their classes into entertaining yet educating sessions and embed counter terrorism contents in their lessons.

Digital learning tools can play serious roles in countering or escalating terrorism. Berger and Morgan as cited in Da Silva (2020) noted that initial contact for new recruits is usually done through social media (messaging, Facebook, snapchat etc.) and that Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) alone reportedly has hundreds of online platforms including at least 46,000 Twitter accounts. Emphasizing on the use and effects of digital tools on the psyche, Blair (2020) noted that Cartoon Network a popular digital medium, has moved past stories with important morals, according to this author, the cartoons are not just harmless fun anymore, they are weapons. Arvisais, Guidère, Belporo, Bérubé, Chamsine and Amine-Mahho (2022) affirmed that there was instrumentalization of digital educational material as a tool of ideological indoctrination targeting youths in conflict areas. Digital platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and the likes constitute avenues for radicalization process. There is need to utilize such means but this time in a positive manner to sensitize the younger generation against terrorism. For this process to take place, the role of the teacher is pivotal.

For the institutions of learning to serve as a channel to counter terrorism, the teacher should be the focal point of this initiative, as they are in the exclusive position to effect change, impart positive messages, or facilitate pre-emptive activities due to their daily interactions with students. The role of educators in the change process is vital and can take various forms. Due to the paradigmatic shift in teachers' roles in this digital era, Freire as cited in Hatzigianni (2017) stated that educators of young children can move away from their established, conforming role of reproducing inequalities and understand their roles as "cultural workers" and as agents of change. Considering the crucial role of teachers in the use of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools to counter terrorism in basic education, it is not known if the teachers perceive the use of these learning tools as meaningful therefore it became imperative to investigate the perception of these teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Digital learning tools are veritable instruments to be used in schools to counter terrorism because they promote a conducive environment for children in the 21st century. The basic level of

education is also an ideal place to start the sensitization process against any form of radicalization and terrorism. In Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra state, South East Nigeria, the unknown gunmen menace is widespread. Children in this area are exposed to various degrees of violence and terror. There is need for education that counters terrorism and also for appropriate digital tools to convey the content of this education. This cannot be done without the teacher who is a focal point of this initiative. It is not known how far the teachers make use of digital learning tools and how effective the use of these tools are. This study will therefore investigate the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools to counter terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority, Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of the study was to determine teachers' perception on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority. Specifically, this study sought to:
1. Investigate the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority.
2. Examine the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority.

Research Questions
To guide this study, the following research questions were posed:
1. What is extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools by teachers in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority?
2. How effective is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority?

Method
The study was on teachers' perception on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority. Three research questions guided the study. The research adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 516 teachers in the 42 public primary schools in Orumba South L.G.E.A. The study adopted simple random sampling technique for selection of the sample. The researcher used balloting without replacement to select 21 public primary schools (which is half the number of schools in the local government education authority) and all teachers from each of the selected schools gave a total of 120 primary school teachers. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Extent of Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Learning Tools in Countering Terrorism in Basic Education (EXICTLERT). The Instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from the Department of Educational Foundations both in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability and a reliability coefficient of 0.78, 0.78 and 0.80 was obtained for the three clusters with an overall reliability coefficient of

0.79 obtained for the entire instrument. Data collected were analyzed using the mean scores. The level of extent of the items for research questions was determined in relation to the boundary limits as indicated in the four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50 - 4.00, High Extent (HE) = 2.50 - 3.49, Low Extent (LE) = 1.50- 2.49 and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.00 - 1.49.

Results

Research Question1: What is the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority?

Table 1: Mean scores of respondents on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority.

S/N	Extent of use of ICT	X	Decision
1	I have knowledge of the use of digital learning tools in teaching	3.50	VHE
2	I am aware of the benefits of digital learning tools in teaching	1.21	VLE
3	I am aware of my roles in teaching contents on peace education.	2.42	LE
4	I feel confident learning new computer skills for my roles in counter terrorism.	1.22	VLE
5	I am aware of the great opportunities that ICT tools offers for effective teaching of values.	2.51	HE
6	The use of ICT helps teachers get more updated materials on counter terrorism	1.83	LE
7	The use of ICT helps to prepare teaching resources and materials on counter terrorism.	1.68	LE
8	I am aware that learners' pay more attention when ICT tools is used in teaching	2.62	HE
9	I am aware of the great opportunities that ICT tools offers for effective learning on counter terrorism	2.02	LE
10	The use of ICT enables the students' to be more active and engaging in the lesson.	2.65	HE
	Cluster Mean	**2.16**	**LE**

Table 1 above shows the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in Orumba South LGA of Anambra State. Seven of the items showed low extent. This shows that the extent to which Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in Orumba South LGA of Anambra State is used is low. This can be attested to by the grand mean for all the respondents which shows a mean of 2.16 which is to a low extent.

Research Question 2: How effective is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority?

Table 2: Mean scores of respondents on how effective is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority?

SN	Items	$\overline{x}$	Decision
11	The use of ICT tools promotes active and critical thinking for pupils' best learning experience on counter terrorism.	3.52	VHE
12	ICT tools increases learners' confidence to participate actively in counter terrorism class activities.	2.81	HE
13	The use of ICT tools creates lasting impressions on learners' mind especially in counter terrorism.	3.42	HE
14	The use of ICT tools enables teachers to visualize counter terrorism ideas and thoughts better	3.52	VHE
15	Digital learning tools conveys counter terrorism ideas in a concise and play-based way	2.51	HE
16	Digital learning tools awaken the curiosity of students about civic and peace content	2.83	HE
17	Digital learning tools inspires learners to develop emotional resilience against terrorism	2.68	HE
18	Digital learning tools helps create simulating environment needed for counter terrorism.	2.82	HE
19	The use of ICT tools enables the teacher communicate counter terrorism content as vividly as possible	3.12	HE
20	ICT tools enables individualized instruction and home teaching on counter terrorism especially in conflict zones	2.65	HE
	Cluster Mean	**2.59**	**HE**

Table 2 above shows How effective is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority? Six out of the 10 items ranged from very high extent to high extent. This shows that the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in Orumba South LGA of Anambra State is to a high extent. This can be attested to by the grand mean for all the respondents which shows a mean of 2.59 which is to a high extent.

Discussion

The findings in Table 1 showed that the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in Orumba South LGA of Anambra State is to a low extent. The teachers agreed that digital learning tools can be used in teaching, can also be useful because of the great opportunities that ICT tools offers for effective teaching of values, that learners' pay more attention when ICT tools is used in teaching and agreed to the benefits of digital

learning tools in teaching to a high extent. However, they responded that they are aware of their roles in teaching contents on peace education, that the use of ICT helps teachers get more updated materials on counter terrorism, that they are confident learning new computer skills for roles in counter terrorism, that ICT helps to prepare teaching resources and materials on counter terrorism, and are aware of the great opportunities that ICT tools offers for effective learning of counter terrorism content to a low extent.

The findings from the table shows that many teachers are not aware of the use of ICT learning tools in counter terrorism, therefore do not use digital tools in teaching peace and safety education to counter terrorism. The attendant consequence is that the teacher does not use these digital resources and child is not adequately exposed to peace education which can counter terrorism. This is in line with the submissions of Zhang (2018) which shows that they have not well integrated internet into teaching and learning so far; teachers' knowledge about ICT and network technology is very limited. The teachers seem to be oblivious of the use of digital learning tools in teaching most especially contents to counter terrorism. The implication is that children may not benefit adequately from teaching and may likely imbibe wrong doctrine from predators and get radicalized. But if teachers are knowledgeable about ICT tools, they can then deliver their lessons effectively, efficiently and achieve the ultimate role of teaching children that will develop to be global citizens.

Findings in Table 2 showed that the extent of effectiveness of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in basic education in Orumba South Local Government Education Authority is to a high extent. They agreed that use of ICT tools promotes active and critical thinking for pupils' best learning experience on counter terrorism, increases learners' confidence to participate actively in counter terrorism class activities, creates lasting impressions on learners mind especially in counter terrorism, that the use of ICT tools will enable teachers' to visualize counter terrorism ideas and thoughts better, also that the digital learning tools conveys counter terrorism ideas in a concise and play-based way, digital learning tools awaken the curiosity of students about civic and peace content, inspires learners to develop emotional resilience against terrorism, helps create simulating environment needed for counter terrorism and enables the teacher communicate counter terrorism content as vividly as possible.

This is a healthy development because teachers are key participants in the development of the child. If teachers perceive the use of ICT as effective, it will motivate them as agents of change to key into its use thereby inculcating values and norms that will engender peace in the minds of students. These findings are in consonance with that of Darder as cited in Hatzigianni (2017) that they (teachers) can be their own learning coordinators and facilitators, not just for the sake of learning but for transforming society, diminishing inequalities, supporting equity, interrogating power decisions, understanding the complexity and developing a new dynamic philosophy. This is also in agreement with Ahmed (2022) that digital tools allow for practical work, with different types of technologies students have access to resources, not only about the topic being studied, but also additional knowledge ,as well as the possibility to use different types of technologies, allowing them to obtain the appropriate level of education. Da Silva (2020) stated that research has shown that digital school programs are a powerful antidote and may have more of an impact on the lives of youth than the formal classroom setting. It is also encouraging that teachers acknowledge ICT tools as effective in suppressing terrorism because that will help them to develop positive attitude towards its usage.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the extent of use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning tools in countering terrorism in Orumba South LGA of Anambra State is low. This situation is deplorable because the teacher is among the people who are well placed for the discovery and sensitization of radicalized children. If teachers do not use these tools, it will not augur well with the idea of propagating instruction, prevention protocols and survival strategies especially against terror. Teachers' agreement to the effectiveness of ICT learning tools in countering terrorism in basic schools is encouraging, but there is still need for teachers to be unbiased, informed and conscious of their responsibilities toward the inculcation of positive values to the child to enable the child shun violence and terrorism through enhanced use of ICT tools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Federal and state governments should organize public enlightenment campaigns to educate the teachers and the public on the need and methodologies of counter terrorism.
2. Federal and state government should organize seminars, workshop for teachers and other stakeholders on the use of ICT learning tools especially in countering terrorism.
3. Teachers should be empowered with basic ICT learning skills and tools for this important responsibility.

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