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Psychological Strategies for Addressing Youth Restiveness, National Insecurity, and Promoting Sustainable Youth Development in North-West Nigeria

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Abstract: This study evaluated psychological strategies for addressing youth restiveness and national insecurity while promoting sustainable youth development in North-West Nigeria. The primary objectives were to examine the impact of psychological interventions on national security, identify effective strategies for mitigating youth restiveness, and evaluate approaches for fostering youth involvement in national development. Utilizing an ex-post facto research design, the study targeted a population of 25,139,426 youths residing in North-West Nigeria. Data were collected from a representative sample of 384 respondents through structured questionnaires, utilizing a simple random sampling procedure, and subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that psychological interventions are critical in addressing national insecurity, as failing to implement them can perpetuate socio-economic instability and undermine national defense. Regarding youth restiveness, the results highlight the efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and the implementation of mindfulness practices. Furthermore, the study identifies sound education and the promotion of good governance as pivotal psychological strategies for encouraging meaningful youth participation in national security and sustainable development. The study recommends that youth leaders, community stakeholders, and government bodies collaborate to cultivate a culture of patriotism and national security. It further suggests that educationists and community development practitioners work in synergy with policymakers to ensure the effective adoption and integration of these psychological strategies within the North-West geopolitical zone.

Keywords: Psychological Strategies, Restiveness, National Insecurity, Youth Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, one of the most populous nations in Africa, possesses one of the world's largest youth demographics. According to the United States Census Bureau (2026), approximately 70% of Nigeria's population which currently stands at 250.2 million with a median age of 18.1 years is under the age of 30. This equates to over 170 million people falling within the children, adolescent, and young adult categories. Notably, children and adolescents under 15 years old account for roughly 40% to 45% of the total population. Projections further indicate that this rapidly expanding youth demographic will exceed 400 million by 2025, positioning Nigeria to become the world's third most populous country.

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The North-West geopolitical zone is a critical region in Nigeria, comprising seven states: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The region is predominantly inhabited by the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, though it is also home to diverse communities including the Kanuri, *Jaba, Gwari, Baju, Nupe, Maguzawa, Zuru, and Zabarmawa.* With an estimated population exceeding 60 million (NPC, 2022), the region is predominantly Sunni Muslim. Economically, approximately 80% of the population relies on farming, pastoralism, or small-scale entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the North-West possesses significant solid mineral deposits, which are frequently exploited through artisanal open-pit mining.

Despite its potential, the region currently faces widespread insecurity driven by armed banditry, insurgency, terrorism, and kidnapping. These challenges, compounded by deep-seated poverty and high youth unemployment, have severely undermined regional stability and economic sustainability. The persistent insecurity threatens lives and property, discourages agricultural production, stifles local businesses, and deters foreign investment. As noted by Edmund and Obomanu (2021) and Ewetan and Urhie (2014), there is an undeniable correlation between security and sustainable development; instability inevitably hinders political and socio-economic progress.

In response to this crisis, the federal government has launched various interventionist measures, including the deployment of security forces under operational codenames such as *Operation Puff Adder*, *Diran Mikiya*, *Sharan Daji*, *Hadarin Daji*, *Thunder Strike*, and *Exercise Harbin Kunama III*. While these operations have successfully neutralized some insurgent hideouts and resulted in numerous arrests, bandit-related violence, killings, and kidnappings persist in states such as Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina, and Niger (WANEP, 2019). Consequently, many communities remain deserted, and displaced persons are often unable to return home due to a pervasive fear of renewed attacks and a lack of confidence in the capacity of security agencies to provide lasting protection (Edmund, 2021).

Furthermore, youth restiveness has emerged as a severe national concern. Recent years have seen an escalation in violence including protests, thuggery, cult clashes, and riots which has led to the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property, thereby impeding national development goals (Mohammed & Ahmed, 2023). Given these realities, it is evident that a purely military response is insufficient. There is an urgent need to supplement traditional security measures with holistic, multifaceted strategies, including psychological interventions and socio-cultural frameworks. Within this context, this paper aims to examine psychological strategies for addressing youth restiveness and national insecurity, while promoting sustainable youth development in North-West Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite various government-led security initiatives and socio-economic interventions, the North-west region of Nigeria continues to experience a surge particularly youth-led insecurity, characterized by armed banditry, insurgency, terrorism, herder-farmer conflicts, ethno-religious and ethnic conflicts, communal clashes, and mass kidnappings for ransom and violent extremist. The existing framework for addressing this crisis has been predominantly reactive, focusing on military deployment and economic empowerment programs that often overlook the underlying psychological drivers of youth participation in such violence. There is a significant gap in understanding how exposure to long-term conflict, socio-economic marginalization, and lack of psychosocial support has impacted the mental well-being and decision-making processes of youth in the region. Without integrating evidence-based psychological strategies such as trauma-informed interventions, cognitive-behavioral approaches to de-radicalization, and positive identity development-efforts to achieve sustainable youth development remain superficial.

Consequently, current policies fail to address the internal, psychological triggers of restiveness, resulting in a cyclical pattern of violence that undermines national security and hinders the potential for sustainable regional development. Therefore, in addition to Adisa & Aworant (2015), Amadi & Ofura (2020, Asamu (2016), Ating & Amadi (2016) and other empirical studies on the cause and effect of youth restiveness, implication of national insecurity and promoting youth sustainable development in the nation, this study addressed psychological strategies for addressing youth restiveness, national insecurity, and promoting sustainable youth development in North-West Nigeria, such as improve cognitive behavioral therapy among youth**,** Engage youth in mindfulness practice**,** Motivate youth with positive reinforcement and so on.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine "psychological strategies for addressing youth restiveness, national insecurity, and promoting sustainable youth development in North-West Nigeria**".** The specific objectives are: To

1. Examine the impacts of psychological strategies for addressing national insecurity on youth sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria.
2. Determine the psychological strategies for addressing youth restiveness in North-West, Nigeria.
3. Evaluate psychological strategies for addressing for promoting youth involvement in national security and sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW: YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Conceptualizing Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness in Nigeria represents a multifaceted socio-political challenge characterized by deviant, socially unacceptable behaviors that threaten communal and national stability. Conceptually, it is defined as an extreme manifestation of dissatisfaction where young people, feeling marginalized or neglected, exhibit a lack of impulse control and engage in confrontational actions (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013; Ibeh, 2024). This phenomenon frequently manifests as protests, agitations, and, in severe cases, violent upheaval against perceived social injustices, political marginalization, and economic deprivation (Ojoba, Chima, & Emina, 2020; Okafor, 2020).

Scholars posit that youth restiveness is not merely an impulsive act but often a calculated response to systemic failure. Amadi and Ofuru (2020) categorize these behaviors into economic, political, and religious dimensions, noting that such actions are frequently motivated by a desire to challenge the status quo enforced by established authorities (Yusuf, 2014). Consequently, the youth—often conceptualized as the "vanguard of tomorrow"—are increasingly portrayed as agents of societal disruption, contributing to a cycle of violence, destruction of infrastructure, and loss of life (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013).

The Nexus of Youth, National Security, and Governance

National security extends beyond military might; it encompasses the preservation of a nation's territorial, ideological, and cultural integrity, creating an environment conducive to sustainable development (Asmau, 2016; Orji, 2011). Because youth constitute the demographic backbone of Nigeria, their empowerment is inextricably linked to the state's survival. Edmund and Obomanu (2021) argue that any nation that fails to adequately secure, educate, and harness the potential of its youth population faces existential threats.

The current Nigerian landscape is replete with evidence of this volatility. Mohammed and Ahmed (2023) highlight the proliferation of youth-led thuggery groups since 1999—such as *Boko Haram* in the North-East, *Yandaba* in Kano, and *Yan-kalare* in Gombe—linking their

emergence to political recruitment practices where disenfranchised youth are mobilized by elites for electoral violence and subsequently abandoned. These cycles of violence are further exacerbated by sporadic incidents, such as the 2013 confrontation between Eggon youth and security forces, and broader movements like the 2020 #EndSARS protests, which underscore the youth's collective reaction to perceived state failure (Edmund & Obomanu, 2021; Okafor, 2020).

Empirical Perspectives on Restiveness and Stability

Empirical research confirms a bidirectional relationship between socio-economic exclusion and national security (Agbaji, 2018). Relative Deprivation Theory provides a robust framework for understanding this: when aspirations for social and economic mobility are systematically obstructed, collective discontent matures into militant or criminal activity (Lawal, 2024).

Quantitative analysis, particularly in the Niger Delta and North-West regions, identifies unemployment and systemic poverty as the primary predictors of restiveness (Agbaji, 2018; Edeki, 2026). Furthermore, psychological and developmental research indicates that early-onset behavioral markers, such as concentration difficulties and chronic frustration, are statistically linked to later involvement in antisocial violence (Hawkins et al., 2000). Exposure to ongoing community violence further erodes social cohesion, inducing long-term psychological distress—such as post-traumatic stress—which may permanently alter the behavioral trajectory of the adolescent (Margoli et al., 2009).

Synthesis: A Cyclical Crisis

The literature suggests that youth restiveness creates a self-perpetuating cycle of instability:

1. Institutional Failure**:** Poor governance, lack of educational opportunities, and economic exclusion induce psychological stress among youth.
2. Destabilizing Action: This frustration manifests as "restiveness" (e.g., kidnapping, vandalism, ethno-religious violence), which degrades the national security environment.
3. Resource Depletion: Insecurity deters investment and forces the state to redirect resources toward reactive security measures rather than proactive developmental interventions (Agbaji, 2018; Obananya, 2026).

Addressing this crisis requires a multifaceted strategy that moves beyond purely punitive measures. Contemporary scholarship advocates for the integration of targeted psychological interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, to foster resilience, alongside robust policy frameworks. These policies must prioritize sustainable skill acquisition, economic inclusion, and the active participation of youth in national development, effectively decoupling the demographic from the drivers of insecurity (Agbaji, 2018).

Psychological Strategies for Mitigating Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Adolescent restiveness poses a significant challenge to national stability in Nigeria. To address this phenomenon, scholars have proposed various psychological interventions aimed at behavior modification and social integration. Drawing on the framework established by Garba (2024), twelve strategic approaches are outlined below to foster a more secure and productive youth population.

1. Assertive Training (AT)

Assertive training is a structured intervention designed to modify behavior by fostering confidence and effective communication. It empowers youth to express their needs and resolve conflicts without resorting to aggression. By cultivating these skills, young people are better

equipped to resist the instigation and indoctrination often employed by political actors, allowing them to reject harmful influences while maintaining their personal integrity and social relationships.

2. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a systematic, goal-oriented psychotherapy that addresses the nexus between thoughts, emotions, and actions. It is instrumental in treating mental health concerns, including substance use and mood disorders. By restructuring irrational beliefs—such as the perception that violence is the sole vehicle for social expression—CBT helps adolescents adopt rational problem-solving strategies, thereby promoting peaceful engagement in societal development (Igbo & Innocent, 2013).

3. Community Engagement (CE)

Community engagement fosters social inclusion through the active, voluntary participation of youth in decision-making and civic affairs. By integrating young people into community-building efforts, such as volunteerism and local organizations, this strategy provides them with a sense of purpose and belonging, effectively mitigating the alienation that often leads to restive behavior (McNeish, 2021).

4. Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA)

Extracurricular involvement, including sports, music, and academic clubs, is essential for holistic development. These activities promote social competence and personal growth outside the traditional classroom. Engagement in structured social activities helps youth build positive peer networks, which serves as a protective factor against antisocial behaviors (Klyushina, 2020).

5. Group Counselling Methods (GCM)

Counsellors can utilize workshops, seminars, and interactive platforms to disseminate crucial information regarding citizenship, patriotism, and the rule of law. These group sessions serve as educational forums to highlight the deleterious effects of restiveness on socio-economic growth, encouraging youth to view themselves as active, constructive participants in national security (Igbo & Innocent, 2013).

6. Mindfulness Meditation (MM)

Mindfulness involves cultivating focused attention and emotional regulation through non-judgmental acceptance. Research suggests that mindfulness meditation enhances cognitive function and reduces emotional dysregulation (Creswell & Lindsay, 2014). By practicing mindfulness, adolescents can increase their self-awareness, allowing them to manage their reactions to stressors and make more informed, deliberate decisions (Ruchika, 2021).

7. ***Parental Involvement and Support (PIAS)***

Parental guidance is a cornerstone of youth stability. High levels of parental engagement—characterized by emotional support, active participation in a child's education, and consistent guidance—are strongly correlated with reduced delinquent behavior. A stable, supportive home environment serves as a foundational defense against the pressures that contribute to adolescent unrest (Jeynes, 2005).

8. Provision of Positive Reinforcement (POPR)

Positive reinforcement utilizes incentives—such as awards, scholarships, and public recognition—to encourage pro-social behavior. By rewarding achievement and positive contributions, society can reinforce the value of hard work and integrity, thereby incentivizing youth to align their actions with peaceful societal norms (Tugba, 2020).

9. Role Modeling (RM)

Positive role models are vital for shaping the aspirations and value systems of young people. By providing visible examples of success through ethical behavior and achievement, mentors can guide youth toward productive career paths and life goals, effectively redirecting energy that might otherwise be channeled into restiveness (Garba, 2024).

10. Self-Regulation Technique (SRT)

Self-regulation encompasses the ability to manage one's behaviors and emotions to achieve specific objectives. Techniques such as self-monitoring, reflection, and delayed gratification (e.g., pausing before reacting to a provocation) allow individuals to exert greater control over their impulses. Developing these cognitive habits is essential for curbing reactionary and impulsive behaviors (Rueda & Rothbart, 2019).

11. Social Support (SS)

Social support involves the collective assistance provided by family, philanthropists, and community organizations. Establishing strong support systems helps youth navigate developmental challenges, reduces feelings of isolation, and fosters a sense of security and mental well-being (Seidman et al., 2016).

12. Value Re-orientation (VRO)

It is imperative to address the prevailing misconceptions that equate national development solely with the distribution of resources. Value re-orientation focuses on replacing unproductive mindsets—such as dependence on political patronage—with a commitment to hard work, honesty, and meritocracy. Addressing the precursors of restiveness, such as cultism and substance abuse, remains a critical component of this cultural and psychological shift (Chapkovski, 2021).

The Impact of Adolescent Restiveness on National Security in Nigeria

Adolescent restiveness—characterized as a state of impatience, agitation, and a refusal to adhere to established authority—serves as a significant impediment to Nigeria's socio-economic advancement. When young people pursue their objectives through aggressive agitation, they often inadvertently undermine national productivity and exacerbate their own socio-economic vulnerability, frequently transitioning into criminal behavior. The following points delineate the broader consequences of adolescent restiveness on national security:

Exacerbation of Brain Drain (EOBD): Adolescent restiveness often catalyzes the emigration of talented and skilled youth in search of more stable environments. As noted by Opara (2015), this exodus of human capital carries profound implications for the nation's long-term development trajectory and internal security.

Psychosomatic Trauma and Security Strain (PTASS): Participation in restive activities often subjects youth to significant mental and emotional distress, including chronic anxiety, burnout, and depression. These conditions, combined with the instability caused by unrest, place an immense burden on state security agencies tasked with maintaining public order (Garba, 2024).

Disruption of Critical Economic Sectors (DOCES): Economic volatility, often driven by inflation and mismanagement, is significantly compounded by youth unrest. Ating and Amadi (2016) highlight that by disrupting vital sectors—such as oil and gas, transportation, and agriculture—restiveness cripples economic growth, creating a cycle of unemployment and fiscal instability that threatens national security.

Cultivation of Rebellious Social Behavior (CORSB): Persistent and unaddressed grievances can foster a culture of communal rebellion. This shift not only stifles social and economic life

but also exposes the youth to severe judicial repercussions, including lengthy incarceration or capital punishment (Garba, 2024).

Proliferation of Criminality (POC): The gap between the aspirations of young people and their access to quality education or relevant vocational skills often drives them toward criminal enterprise. This shift in behavior poses a direct and immediate threat to societal safety.

Increased Rates of Underemployment and Fraud (IROUAF): Amidst rising unemployment, the lack of gainful opportunities has led to a surge in fraudulent schemes. Many youths, desperate for financial stability, are increasingly susceptible to participating in illicit economic activities (Garba, 2024).

Escalation of Cybercrime (EOC): Modern adolescent unrest is increasingly manifested through digital channels. The exploitation of technological proficiency for activities such as hacking and identity theft constitutes a critical security vulnerability for both private citizens and national institutions (Onwuka, 2014).

Fueling National Conflicts (FNC): Restiveness serves as a catalyst for widespread civil strife, eroding the foundations of peaceful coexistence among domestic populations and foreign residents alike (Garba, 2024).

Progression toward Militancy (PTM): When left unchecked, adolescent unrest frequently escalates into organized militancy. These armed confrontations between youth groups and the state represent a severe threat to national stability and the maintenance of the rule of law (Adisa & Aworanti, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an *ex-post facto* research design. The target population comprised a projected 60,150,400 youths (National Population Commission, 2022). A sample size of 384 respondents was determined using the Research Advisor (2006) table, with participants drawn from Jigawa (55), Kaduna (55), Kano (55), Katsina (55), Kebbi (55), Sokoto (55), and Zamfara (54). Participants were selected using a simple random sampling procedure to ensure equal representation. Primary data were gathered via a structured, Likert-scale questionnaire titled "Psychological Strategies for Addressing Youth Restiveness Questionnaire (PSAYRQ)." Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, mean scores, and standard deviation. Consistent with the decision rule established by Yusuf et al. (2017), a criterion mean score of 2.50 was applied: a mean score of 2.50 or higher indicated agreement with the statement under investigation, while a score below 2.50 indicated disagreement. To ensure validity, the research instrument was submitted for rigorous review and refinement to experts in Educational Psychology, Adult Education and Community Development, and Criminology and Security Studies at the Federal University, Dutse.

RESULTS

Table 1: The Impacts of Psychological Strategies for Addressing National Insecurity on Youth Sustainable Development

Self-confident of the impact of Nat. Security	Freq.	Mean	*SD*	Remarks
Foster socio-economic stability, prosperity and technical defense of the nation	347	4.26	0.85	Affected
Protection of sovereignty, border and territorial integration	326	4.24	0.84	Affected
Preventing extremism, rebelliousness, radicalization external and internal crime	311	4.05	0.81	Affected
Improve physical and psychological well-being against internal and external threat	304	3.96	0.79	Affected
Ensure public safety, cyber and infrastructure resilience	319	4.15	0.83	Affected
Allows democratic institutions to function without coercion or disruption	356	4.64	0.93	Affected
Grand Total	**384**			

Source: (Field Survey; 2026)

Table 1 presents the impacts of psychological strategies for addressing national insecurity on youth sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria. The item "Foster socio-economic stability, prosperity and technical defense of the nation" received a frequency count of 347, a mean score of 4.26, and a standard deviation of 0.85. "Protection of sovereignty, border and territorial integration" had a frequency count of 326, a mean score of 4.24, and a standard deviation of 0.84. Preventing extremism, rebelliousness, radicalization external and internal crime" showed a frequency count of 311, a mean score of 4.05, and a standard deviation of 0.81. "Improve physical and psychological well-being against internal and external threat" garnered a frequency count of 304, a mean score of 3.96, and a standard deviation of 0.79. "Ensure public safety, cyber and infrastructure resilience" recorded a frequency count of 319, a mean score of 4.15, and a standard deviation of 0.83. Lastly "Allows democratic institutions to function without coercion or disruption" had the highest frequency count of 356, a mean score of 4.64, and a standard deviation of 0.93. Overall, the results indicate significant impacts of national security on youth sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria.

Table 2: The Psychological Strategies for Addressing Youth Restiveness

Psychological Strategies	Freq.	Mean	*SD*	Remarks
Improve cognitive behavioral therapy among youth	327	4.26	0.85	Affected
Engage youth in mindfulness practice	296	3.86	0.77	Affected
Motivate youth with positive reinforcement	311	4.05	0.81	Affected
Encourage self-regulation techniques	304	3.96	0.79	Affected
Organize group counselling sessions	309	4.02	0.80	Affected
Focus on assertive training skills	296	3.85	0.77	Affected
Encourage parental involvement and support	289	3.76	0.75	Affected
Promote social support from philanthropists and other stakeholders	310	4.04	0.81	Affected
Develop role model behavior	298	3.88	0.78	Affected
Regular organization of extracurricular activities	345	4.49	0.90	Affected

Empower adolescents for active community participation/service accomplishments	321	4.18	0.84	Affected
Systematic sensitization on patriotism and value re-orientation	344	4.48	0.89	Affected
Grand Total	**384**			

Source: (Field Survey; 2026)

Table 2 presents the psychological strategies for reducing adolescent restiveness in North-West, Nigeria. Improving cognitive behavioral therapy among youth had a frequency count of 327, a mean score of 4.26, and a standard deviation of 0.85. Engaging youth in mindfulness practice showed a frequency count of 296, a mean score of 3.85, and a standard deviation of 0.77. Motivating youth with positive reinforcement had a frequency count of 311, a mean score of 4.05, and a standard deviation of 0.81. Encouraging self-regulation techniques had a frequency count of 304, a mean score of 3.96, and a standard deviation of 0.79. Organizing group counselling sessions had a frequency count of 309, a mean score of 4.02, and a standard deviation of 0.80. Focusing on assertive training skills had a frequency count of 296, a mean score of 3.85, and a standard deviation of 0.77. Encouraging parental involvement and support had a frequency count of 289, a mean score of 3.76, and a standard deviation of 0.75. Promoting social support from philanthropists and other stakeholders had a frequency count of 310, a mean score of 4.04, and a standard deviation of 0.81. Developing role model behavior had a frequency count 298, a mean score of 3.88, and a standard deviation of 0.78. The regular organization of extracurricular activities had a frequency count 345, a mean score of 4.49, and a standard deviation of 0.90. Empowering adolescents for active community participation/service accomplishments had a frequency count of 321, a mean score of 4.18, and a standard deviation of 0.84. Systematic sensitization on patriotism and value re-orientation had a frequency count of 272, a mean score of 3.54, and a standard deviation of 0.71. Consequently, the results strongly indicate that these psychological strategies, if properly adopted, will be effective in reducing adolescent restiveness in North-West, Nigeria.

Table 3: Psychological Strategies for Addressing for Promoting Youth Involvement in National Security and Sustainable Development

The Strategies for Promoting Youth Sus. Dev.	Freq.	Mean	*SD*	Remarks
Provision of sound education	327	4.26	0.85	Affected
Ensure active entrepreneurship skills	346	4.51	0.90	Affected
Good governance	351	4.57	0.91	Affected
Cheap and standard electricity	304	3.96	0.79	Affected
Inclusive social amenities	350	4.56	0.91	Affected
Implementation of justice and fairness	296	3.85	0.77	Affected
Eliminate corruption	332	4.32	0.86	Affected
Encourage food security and modern farming	296	3.86	0.77	Affected
Ensure national security coverage	289	3.76	0.75	Affected
Proper adaptation of Asset-Based Community Development Method	298	3.88	0.78	Affected
Grand Total	**384**			

Source: (Field Survey; 2026)

Table 3 outlines psychological strategies for promoting youth sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria. The provision of sound education had a frequency count of 327, a mean score of 4.26, and a standard deviation of 0.85. Ensuring active entrepreneurship skills had a frequency count of 346, a mean score of 4.51, and a standard deviation of 0.90. Good governance showed a frequency count of 351, a mean score of 4.57, and a standard deviation

of 0.91. Cheap and standard electricity had a frequency count of 304, a mean score of 3.96, and a standard deviation of 0.79. Inclusive social amenities had a frequency count of 350, a mean score of 4.56, and a standard deviation of 0.912. The implementation of justice and fairness had a frequency count of 296, a mean score of 3.85, and a standard deviation of 0.77. Eliminating corruption had a frequency count of 332, a mean score of 4.32, and a standard deviation of 0.86. Encouraging food security and modern farming had a frequency count of 296, a mean score of 3.86, and a standard deviation of 0.77. Ensuring national security coverage had a frequency count of 289, a mean score of 3.76, and a standard deviation of 0.75. The proper adaptation of the Asset-Based Community Development Method had a frequency count of 298, a mean score of 3.88, and a standard deviation of 0.78. Subsequently, the results revealed that psychological strategies, if properly adopted, will be powerful instruments for promoting youth sustainable development in North-West, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The enduring axiom that "the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow" highlights the critical necessity of investing in the younger generation—a principle foundational to progress in education, governance, and social stability. In Nigeria, however, adolescent and youth restiveness has emerged as a significant threat to national security and peaceful coexistence. This unrest, manifesting through conflicts, terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping, severely impedes the attainment of sustainable development goals. The drivers of this phenomenon—particularly in Northern Nigeria and across the nation—are deeply rooted in systemic issues, including poverty, unemployment, underemployment, and a failing educational infrastructure.

While government bodies, philanthropists, and non-governmental organizations have initiated various interventions, these efforts remain insufficient. Addressing such pervasive challenges requires the formulation of more robust, innovative strategies. It is imperative that the government incorporates psychological interventions as a primary mechanism to mitigate youth restiveness, strengthen national security, and foster sustainable youth development in North-West Nigeria. Such a multidimensional approach is essential for achieving lasting stability and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Foster Collaborative Leadership: Youth and community leaders must collaborate closely with the government, grounding their joint initiatives in patriotism to effectively safeguard national security.
2. Integrate Psychological Expertise: Elites, academics, and educational professionals should partner with government psychologists, psychiatrists, and guidance counselors to develop and implement evidence-based psychological strategies designed to curb youth restiveness in North-West Nigeria.
3. Implement Asset-Based Development: Qualified professionals in community development and education should work in tandem with government sustainable development agencies and youth ministries. This collaboration should focus on adopting structured community development frameworks, such as the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) strategy, to address the root causes of restiveness and empower youth in the region.

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