

Review

Human Capacity Development and National Security in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: Human capacity development has become increasingly central to security outcomes in Africa, where persistent deficits in education, health, employment, and institutional capacity intersect with rising threats, including violent extremism, cybercrime, transnational crime, and climate-related insecurity. This study analyses how investments in human capacity development shape national security across African states and identifies implications for sustainable development. It also examines key dimensions of capacity development (education, healthcare, vocational training, and skills initiatives) and how gaps, such as youth unemployment, weak service delivery, and brain drain, generate security vulnerabilities. The study adopts a qualitative desk-based research design, drawing on peer-reviewed literature, policy documents, and comparative evidence. It synthesises regional trends and integrates illustrative African case evidence (including Rwanda and Nigeria) to examine pathways through which human capital formation influences security governance and development outcomes. The analysis indicates that stronger education and skills systems improve employability, productivity, and civic cohesion, reducing structural drivers of insecurity such as marginalisation and grievance mobilisation. Improved health systems enhance societal resilience and state capacity, while vocational and skills initiatives strengthen livelihoods and lower vulnerability to recruitment into violent or criminal networks. Conversely, low school participation, widespread informal employment, and sustained brain drain erode institutional performance and weaken security preparedness. Human capacity development is best understood as a preventive security strategy and a core requirement for sustainable development in Africa. Policy emphasis should prioritise quality education and skills expansion, strengthen research and innovation ecosystems, professionalise security institutions, invest in public health resilience, and deepen regional cooperation through continental and sub-regional mechanisms.

Keywords: Human capital, Security governance, Sustainable development, Education policy, Public health resilience, Brain Drain.

1. Introduction

Human capacity development is a foundational pillar of national security, as the quality of a nation's human capital directly shapes its ability to anticipate, manage, and respond to internal and external threats. Strategic investments in education, skills acquisition, and professional training enhance workforce competence, institutional resilience, and the effectiveness of security and governance systems. An educated and competent workforce drives economic growth and promotes innovation and adaptation, both essential for managing contemporary security challenges, including cyber threats, terrorism, and geopolitical tensions. Human capacity development and national security are crucial to human development and well-being. It refers to enhancing individuals' abilities, skills, knowledge, and competencies; it fosters social cohesion and inclusivity, reducing the risk of internal conflicts and improving societal stability, which is crucial for national security (Pollyn et al., 2016). National security safeguards a nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the safety of its citizens.

Effective human capacity development projects encompass education, vocational training, healthcare, and socio-economic empowerment (Adelakun, 2011). Governments can reduce insecurity by equipping citizens with the essential information, skills, and resources to address poverty, inequality, and marginalisation, thereby fostering a more robust and secure community. Investing in human capital also strengthens national identity and solidarity, encouraging patriotism and civic engagement, which are crucial for safeguarding against internal discord and external invasion. For a society to develop and maintain internal cohesion, it is essential to prioritise investments in education, healthcare, and skills training. These components are vital to a nation's security architecture, underscoring the link between human capacity development and national security.

Globally, human capacity development and national security are influenced by governance, cooperation, trade, migration, and environmental change (Warner, 2010). A more developed and secure nation contributes to global peace and prosperity, while a less developed and insecure nation threatens global stability and security. According to the World Population Review (2024), most developed countries have a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.8 or above, placing them in the very high human development tier. These countries, which include Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Hong Kong, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, and the Netherlands, have stable governments,

affordable education and healthcare, high life expectancies, quality of life, and growing economies. These countries also rank highly in global governance, development assistance, and human security (UNDP, 2020).

In contrast, the world's least developed countries (LDCs) tend to have HDI scores below 0.55, placing them in the "low human development" category. LDCs face unstable governments, widespread poverty, limited access to healthcare, and poor education. They also have low incomes, low life expectancies, and high birth rates. Some of these countries, such as Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria, have low levels of human capital development and national security, as well as high levels of conflict, violence, and displacement (UNDESA, 2019). These countries also face challenges in global governance, development cooperation, and human security.

In Africa, enhancing human capability is crucial for strengthening national security. Providing citizens with education, skills, and opportunities improves their socio-economic position and strengthens a nation's stability and resilience. Efforts to enhance human capital in Africa have been made; yet, obstacles persist.

According to UNESCO (2019), more than 20% of African children aged 6-11 are not attending school. Approximately 60% of adolescents aged 15-17 are not enrolled in school (Kaledzi, 2022). High levels of adult illiteracy impede children's education. Parents' lack of basic literacy skills hinders their ability to support their children's education. The percentage of youth not attending school remains significant despite advances. Many youth face obstacles such as poverty, geographic distance from schools, and cultural traditions that limit their access to education. Participation in technical and vocational education and training is limited. This affects the development of essential practical skills needed for economic growth and employment prospects (African Union Commission, 2019).

Furthermore, unemployment, underemployment and brain drain exacerbate the issue, potentially creating vulnerabilities in national security structures. The continent is characterised by a predominance of informal employment, which often lacks job security, social benefits and decent working conditions. Many workers are trapped in low-quality jobs, limiting their capacity to contribute effectively to national progress and security (United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU WIDER), 2014). In South Africa, the country grapples with a youth unemployment rate of 56%. Despite a relatively high level of education, graduates struggle to secure suitable employment, resulting in underemployment and wasted potential (Penar, 2021). More than

4,000 health workers left Zimbabwe in 2021 and 2022 in search of better job security, further exacerbating the brain drain of doctors and nurses. The shortage of healthcare professionals affects the quality of medical services and creates vulnerabilities in the country's health system (Olufemi, 2023). The brain drain also affects various sectors in Africa, including agriculture. Traditional cash crops such as cotton, coffee, cocoa and groundnuts employ millions of Africans. These crops share features with manufacturing exports, such as high labour intensity and quality-sensitive markets. However, the departure of skilled workers hampers their potential for growth and development (UNU WIDER, 2014).

Nigeria has experienced rising poverty, disease, high youth unemployment, inadequate medical care, and poor housing due to flawed development plans over the years (Njoku, 2021). These challenges directly affect residents' well-being and weaken national security. Pursuing modernisation alone has proven insufficient; a shift towards prioritising people as the centrepiece of development is essential. Sustainable development projects that eliminate hunger, address health challenges, and create job opportunities are crucial to long-term national security. Strengthening security measures and employing security personnel are essential, but they will be effective only if basic human needs are addressed (Orhero, 2020).

Investing in education, skills training, and professional development can enhance workforce capabilities, thereby fostering innovation, economic growth, and social stability. Nigeria's literacy rate in 2018, according to World Bank data, was 62%. The literacy rate has increased by approximately 14% since 2010, but it remains below the sub-Saharan Africa average of 65% (Global Data, 2022). The Global Terrorism Index emphasises that Nigeria is threatened by many extremist groups, such as Boko Haram, whose actions are driven by socio-economic inequalities and limited opportunities (Ebi, 2018). Healthcare professionals are leaving Nigeria for nations such as the US, Canada, the UK, and Australia, contributing to the brain drain in the country. Nigeria is experiencing a severe lack of doctors, with one doctor for every 5,000 patients, and nurses, with a ratio of one nurse for every 1,160 patients. The absence of quality assurance measures and insufficient teacher preparation worsens the problem (BusinessDay, 2024).

2.1 Various Dimensions of Human Capacity Development

Human capacity development is essential for enhancing and sustaining the skills and capacities of organisations, communities, and individuals. It also helps create and

strengthen frameworks that enable individuals, communities, and organisations to achieve their full potential. Every human development strategy focuses on enhancing proficiency in essential tasks, overcoming challenges, setting and achieving objectives, and emphasising personal knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and talents, as well as broadening and strengthening personal and organisational networks (Pollyn et al., 2016). Human capacity development encompasses various dimensions that contribute to individual and societal growth. These dimensions include education, healthcare, and vocational training and skill-building initiatives.

Education

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable individuals to participate effectively in society and contribute to their own well-being and development (Brenda, 2015). It can take place in formal, non-formal, or informal settings and be delivered through various modes, such as face-to-face, online, or blended learning. Education serves multiple purposes and outcomes, including personal enrichment, social inclusion, civic engagement, economic empowerment, cultural diversity, and environmental sustainability. It also fosters critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and lifelong learning. Education is essential for human development and growth, as it enhances the capabilities and potential of individuals and groups to achieve their goals and aspirations (UNESCO, 2020).

Healthcare

Healthcare is a broad term encompassing various aspects of health and well-being. It is one of the key dimensions of human capacity development and growth. The components of healthcare comprise the various health services and products available to individuals and communities. These include preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care, as well as health promotion and education. The objectives of healthcare are to improve the quality and accessibility of health services and products, reduce the incidence and prevalence of diseases and disabilities, enhance the physical and mental well-being of people, and promote social cohesion and equity (Aluttis et al., 2014).

Healthcare is essential for human capacity development and growth because it has direct and indirect impacts on various aspects of human potential and performance. Healthcare improves people's health and life expectancy, thereby increasing productivity and innovation. It also reduces the economic and social costs associated with diseases and disabilities, thereby improving individuals' income and employment opportunities

(DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018). Healthcare further fosters the social inclusion and empowerment of marginalised groups, such as women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and poor people, who often face barriers to accessing quality health services and products.

Vocational training

Vocational training is one dimension of human capacity development and growth. It refers to the process of acquiring specific skills and knowledge relevant to a particular occupation or trade (Lambert, Vero & Zimmermann, 2012). Vocational training offers many benefits for individuals and society as a whole. These include increased employability and income for individuals, enabling access to more and better job opportunities in the labour market; improved productivity and competitiveness for businesses and industries by providing access to a skilled and qualified workforce; contributions to social and economic development by reducing poverty, unemployment, inequality, and social exclusion; and fostering lifelong learning and personal development, enabling individuals to adapt to changing technologies and demands and to pursue their interests and passions.

Skill-building initiatives

Skill-building initiatives are one of the dimensions of human capacity development and growth. These initiatives aim to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals or groups to perform specific tasks or roles effectively and efficiently (Danquah et al., 2023). They can take various forms, including training, mentoring, coaching, apprenticeships, internships, certifications, and accreditations. They offer benefits such as improved productivity, quality, innovation, competitiveness, employability, satisfaction, and motivation. They also address challenges such as skill gaps, mismatches, obsolescence, and shortages. Skill-building initiatives are therefore essential for human capacity development and growth in the changing and complex world of work.

2.2 Overview of National Security

National security is the protection of a nation and its citizens from external and internal threats. It encompasses a range of policies, strategies, and actions aimed at ensuring the survival and well-being of a nation-state and its values. Key objectives of national security include safeguarding the nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political system, economic development, and social cohesion (Ajayi & Nwogwugwu, 2014).

One of the main aspects of national security is defence, which involves maintaining a strong military capability and deterring potential adversaries. Defence also encompasses intelligence, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and homeland security. These activities aim

to prevent, detect, and respond to attacks on the nation's sovereignty, territory, infrastructure, and people (Anyadike & Nkechi, 2013).

Another aspect of national security is diplomacy, which entails engaging with other countries and international organisations to advance the nation's interests and values. It also promotes cooperation, resolves conflicts, builds alliances, and supports human rights and democracy (Cornago, 1999). These activities aim to foster a peaceful and stable international environment that benefits the nation and its allies.

Element of national security

Military security

This is typically considered the earliest recognised form of national security. Military security refers to a nation's capacity to defend itself against external military threats. Each nation forms an armed force comprising the army, navy, and air force to achieve this. These forces are crucial for safeguarding the public and the nation's territorial integrity. The security of a nation-state encompasses several entities, including the military, police, customs and immigration, prisons, national security, the civil defence corps, and citizens, including vigilante groups when necessary. The military is undoubtedly crucial in defending a nation against external threats. It can also be utilised in extraordinary situations to uphold internal security during declared states of emergency (Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015).

Economic security

Economic security is the ability of a nation to protect or advance its economic interests in the face of circumstances that may threaten or obstruct them. It is closely linked to a nation's physical security, as a strong economy can support a strong military, and economic instruments can serve as a non-military form of defence (Ronis, 2011). Economic security is also related to the well-being and prosperity of a nation's people, as it affects their living standards, employment opportunities, and access to essential goods and services.

Economic security is not only a domestic issue but also an international one, as nations are interconnected through trade, investment, finance, and other forms of economic cooperation and competition. A nation's economic security depends on its ability to participate in and benefit from the global economy while managing the risks and challenges that arise from it. Economic security also requires a nation to balance its economic interests with its political, strategic, and moral values, as well as its obligations to its allies and partners (Milkevich, 2022). Economic security is not a static concept but a dynamic,

evolving one that responds to the changing economic environment and the emerging threats and opportunities it presents. Various factors, such as technological innovation, demographic change, environmental change, geopolitical change, and ideological change, influence economic security. Economic security also depends on the policies and actions of a nation and its leaders, as well as the cooperation and coordination among different actors and institutions within and across nations.

Political security

Political security refers to the stability and legitimacy of a state's political system and institutions. It encompasses the protection of the state's sovereignty, values, and interests from both external and internal threats (Paleri, 2022). A key aspect of political security is the prevention or resolution of conflicts that may undermine the peace and stability of the state or region. This may include addressing issues such as territorial disputes, ethnic tensions, ideological differences, human rights violations, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation.

Environmental security

Environmental security focuses on the role of the environment and natural resources in peace and security. It encompasses the environmental causes and drivers of conflict, the environmental impacts of conflict, environmental recovery, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Environmental security also includes the human well-being and livelihoods that depend on the Earth's ecosystems and the services they provide (Elliott, 2015).

According to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), four dimensions of environmental security are relevant to the GEF's mandate of achieving global environmental benefits: 1) ecosystem goods and services that underpin human well-being and security; 2) natural resource governance and social resilience to environmental shocks and stresses; 3) environmental causes and drivers of conflict and violence; and 4) environmental recovery, restoration, and peacebuilding.

Environmental security is important for national security because environmental degradation and resource scarcity can undermine the stability, prosperity, and development of states and regions. It also contributes to conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding by addressing the root causes of environmental disputes, promoting cooperation and dialogue over shared resources, restoring damaged ecosystems, and supporting livelihoods and social cohesion (Hough, 2020).

2.3 Linkages between Human Capacity Development, National Security and African Development

Africa faces unique security challenges, including conflicts, terrorism, and climate-related risks. Human capacity development is crucial for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and peacebuilding. African countries must align national security strategies with development priorities. To achieve this, the African Union emphasises inclusive governance, regional cooperation, and the use of natural resources for development. These measures play a vital role in ensuring a nation's stability, resilience, and prosperity.

Investing in human capacity enhances Africa's ability to respond effectively to internal and external threats. Educated and skilled citizens are better equipped to contribute to the economy, innovate, and adapt to evolving challenges, thereby strengthening the nation's overall security posture (Azmi & Ibrahim, 2023). Additionally, a well-educated populace fosters national unity and identity, which are essential for maintaining social cohesion and resilience in the face of security challenges. By investing in education, healthcare, and vocational training, African countries can empower their citizens to participate meaningfully in the economy, reduce poverty, and address social inequalities (Pollyn et al., 2016). This not only strengthens the societal fabric but also helps mitigate grievances that can lead to instability and conflict.

Human capital development serves as a preventive measure against the emergence of security threats, creating a more stable and secure environment. Moreover, a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is essential for driving innovation and technological advancement, both of which are critical for national security in today's world (Orhero, 2020). Countries with highly educated populations are better placed to leverage emerging technologies for military defence, intelligence gathering, and cybersecurity. Additionally, a robust research and development sector, fuelled by human capital, is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in strategic industries and staying ahead in the global geopolitical landscape.

Furthermore, human capacity development is crucial to promoting good governance and strengthening democratic institutions, both of which are essential for upholding the rule of law and safeguarding citizens' rights. By investing in education, training, and professional development for public officials, African countries can improve governance practices, enhance transparency, and combat corruption (Enyekit et al., 2011). This fosters

trust between the government and its citizens, reducing the likelihood of internal conflicts and facilitating cooperation in addressing common security challenges.

Human capacity development is essential not only for individual empowerment and socioeconomic progress but also for national security. Policies and initiatives to enhance human capital should be prioritised as integral components of national security strategies, covering education, healthcare, skills training, and governance reforms. Doing so enables countries to build a resilient and capable workforce able to address emerging threats, promote sustainable development, and safeguard national interests in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

3.1 Case Studies and Best Practices from Different African Countries on Human Capacity Development and National Security

Rwanda

Rwanda, a landlocked country in East Africa, has made remarkable strides in capacity development. Despite its tragic history, including the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has emerged as a beacon of progress. The country has invested heavily in education, particularly in security-related fields such as law enforcement, intelligence and military training. Rwanda's emphasis on education and skills development has helped build a capable security apparatus that is responsive to emerging threats (Beswick, 2014).

One of the key factors that has enabled Rwanda to achieve remarkable socio-economic development in recent years is its strategic approach to capacity development. Rwanda has identified capacity development as a cross-cutting issue in its National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), which aims to transform the country into a private-sector, middle-income economy by 2035 and a high-income economy by 2050 (Ngirente, 2017). To realise this vision, Rwanda has prioritised capacity development initiatives aligned with the national development agenda, responsive to the needs of both the public and private sectors, and supported by effective coordination and resource mobilisation mechanisms.

Rwanda's capacity development strategy has achieved notable successes across several fronts. Firstly, it has enhanced productive capacity across sectors such as agriculture, energy, manufacturing, tourism, ICT, health, and education. This has been achieved through targeted interventions that addressed skills gaps, improved access to finance and markets, fostered innovation and entrepreneurship, and promoted quality standards and competitiveness (Mukeshimana & Nshimiyimana, 2021).

Secondly, the strategy has focused on strengthening the institutional capacities of public sector entities, including ministries, agencies, and local governments. This involved designing and implementing evidence-based policies and programmes, enhancing financial management and procurement functions, establishing performance-monitoring systems, and ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to citizens. Furthermore, Rwanda's strategy has aimed to build human resource capacity within both the public and private sectors, as well as civil society organisations. Various mechanisms such as scholarships, fellowships, training, mentorships, coaching, peer learning, and knowledge exchange have been utilised to achieve this goal (Power, Millington & Bengtsson, 2015).

Additionally, the strategy has involved developing tools for future skills planning and forecasting to anticipate and respond to changing labour market and economic demands, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Rwanda has actively engaged in establishing strategic partnerships with private sector actors, development partners, academia, research institutions, regional and international organisations, and other stakeholders (World Health Organisation, 2015). These partnerships leverage expertise, resources, and networks to further capacity development efforts.

Nigeria

Nigeria faces diverse security challenges, ranging from terrorism to communal violence and organised crime. Despite these challenges, Nigeria has made strides in integrating human capacity development into its national security agenda. The country has focused on professionalising its security forces through improved training, equipment, and recruitment processes (Chikwe, Ogidi, & Nwachukwu, 2015). Additionally, Nigeria has invested in countering violent extremism programmes to prevent radicalisation and promote community resilience. These programmes include dialogue and mediation, education and skills development, social and economic empowerment, and civic engagement (Awodola, 2021). The goal of these programmes is to address the root causes of violent extremism, such as poverty, inequality, marginalisation, and a lack of opportunities. By providing alternative pathways and positive narratives, these programmes aim to reduce the appeal of extremist groups and foster a culture of peace and tolerance (Elayo & Agu, 2021).

One practical example of a policy implemented to promote HCD in Nigeria is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, established in 1973 to foster national unity and integration among Nigerian youths. The scheme provides opportunities for graduates to

serve in various sectors of the economy, including education, health, agriculture, engineering, and security. It also exposes them to diverse cultures and environments, enhancing their civic responsibility and patriotism. According to Arubayi (2015), the NYSC has contributed to Nigeria's social, economic, and political development by promoting national cohesion, volunteerism, and patriotism among the youth.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), established in 2002 to provide access to quality and affordable education for all Nigerians, especially those unable to attend conventional universities due to financial, social, or geographical constraints, offers courses in various fields of study, including arts, sciences, law, education, management, and health. NOUN also uses information and communication technology (ICT) to deliver its programmes and services to learners across the country. As Otamere, Mohammed, Mohammed, and Dangani (2022) noted, NOUN has increased access and equity in education in Nigeria by providing flexible, learner-centred education for millions of Nigerians who would otherwise be excluded from higher education.

The Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), initiated in 2009 to address the security crisis in the Niger Delta region caused by armed militants agitating for a fair share of the oil wealth and environmental justice, offered amnesty and rehabilitation to ex-militants who surrendered their arms and renounced violence. The PAP also provided them with vocational training, education, employment, and empowerment opportunities to enable them to reintegrate into society and contribute to the development of the region and the nation. Chidiobi and Ibekwe (2022) observed that the PAP has reduced the level of violence and insecurity in the Niger Delta region by transforming ex-militants from agents of destruction into agents of development.

Launched in 2019, the National Security Strategy (NSS) provides a comprehensive framework for addressing current and emerging threats to Nigeria's security and stability. It emphasises human security, defined as the protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of all Nigerians. The NSS also recognises the importance of human capital development (HCD) in enhancing Nigerians' capabilities and resilience to cope with challenges and opportunities. The NSS outlines measures and initiatives to improve HCD across education, health, agriculture, industry, science and technology, culture, and sports. As Buhari (2019) states, the NSS aims to create a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Nigeria that can fulfil its potential and aspirations.

Other examples of HCD in Nigeria include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), established in 2001 to coordinate and monitor poverty eradication efforts nationwide. NAPEP implements various programmes, such as the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS), and Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP). These programmes aim to provide skills training, microcredit facilities, infrastructure development, and social welfare services to impoverished Nigerians.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established in 1986 to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment in Nigeria (Ikonne & Nwogwugwu, 2020). The NDE implements various programmes, including the Vocational Skills Development Programme (VSDP), the Small-Scale Enterprises Programme (SSEP), the Agricultural Sector Employment Programme (ASEP), and the Special Public Works Programme (SPWP). These programmes aim to provide vocational skills training, entrepreneurship development, and agricultural extension services to unemployed Nigerians.

The Human Capacity Building Initiative (HCBI), launched in 2018 by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in collaboration with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), is a five-year programme that aims to train 1,000 Nigerians annually in various technical skills required for oil and gas operations, such as welding, fabrication, and electrical installation. HCBI also provides certification, mentorship, and employment opportunities for the trainees.

In human capacity development, Nigeria has made progress in improving its education, health, and social sectors. For example, according to the World Bank (2020), the primary school completion rate rose from 64% in 2010 to 76% in 2019, while the adult literacy rate increased from 59% in 2008 to 62% in 2018. The government has also implemented policies and programmes to promote vocational and technical education, entrepreneurship, and innovation among the youth. Moreover, Nigeria has invested in strengthening its health infrastructure and services, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has also made efforts to reduce poverty and inequality, including through the National Social Investment Programme, which provides cash transfers, school feeding, microcredit, and skills training to millions of poor and vulnerable

households (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, 2021).

On the national security front, Nigeria has faced several threats and challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, cybercrime, and secessionist movements. The government has deployed a range of strategies and measures to combat these threats, including military operations, intelligence gathering, diplomacy, dialogue, and cooperation with regional and international partners. Notable achievements include the degradation of the Boko Haram terrorist group, the recovery of territories previously occupied by insurgents, the rescue of abducted persons, the arrest and prosecution of criminals, and the prevention of major attacks on strategic targets (Nigerian Army Headquarters, 2021). However, these achievements have come at a high cost in terms of human lives, resources, and social cohesion.

4.1 Implications for National Security

Human capacity development is pivotal to national security across Africa. By investing in education, vocational training, and skills development programmes, countries can empower citizens to contribute actively to their nations' economic, social, and political spheres. A well-educated and skilled populace is better equipped to address the multifaceted challenges that undermine security, including poverty, unemployment, and social unrest (Oluka & Igwe, 2020). Moreover, human capital development fosters national identity and cohesion, mitigating the risk of internal conflicts and promoting unity within diverse societies. Ultimately, by prioritising human capacity development, African countries can build resilient societies capable of confronting emerging security threats and fostering sustainable development.

Furthermore, the link between human capacity development and national security extends beyond national borders, with implications for regional stability and international relations. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce enhances a nation's competitiveness globally, attracting investment and fostering economic growth. Additionally, investment in education and skills programmes mitigates the risk of brain drain, where talented individuals seek opportunities abroad, thereby retaining human capital critical for national development. Moreover, a well-educated populace is better equipped for diplomacy and negotiation, strengthening a country's position in regional and international forums. Therefore, human capacity development not only enhances national security but also contributes to Africa's collective advancement and integration into the global community.

5. Conclusion

Human capacity building and national security have been fundamental aspects of African development over the past sixty years. International development agencies and African governments have allocated substantial financial resources for capacity building during this period. The outcomes of this growth have been somewhat unsatisfactory, but there is still room for improvement. The government needs to address the root causes of insecurity and underdevelopment, such as corruption, poor governance, unemployment, marginalisation, and lack of inclusiveness. The government also needs to balance its hard and soft approaches to security and development by ensuring respect for human rights, the rule of law, accountability, and participation. Furthermore, the government needs to foster a culture of peace and dialogue among the diverse ethnic, religious, and regional groups in the country.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the study's analysis of the link between human capacity development, national security, and sustainable development outcomes, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen institutional resilience, human capital formation, and security governance at national and continental levels:

i. **Prioritise Education and Skills Development as Strategic Security Investments:** The Federal Government should prioritise sustained investment in education and skills development as a core pillar of national security. Expanding access to quality education at all levels, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), would strengthen human capital, improve workforce adaptability and reduce structural vulnerabilities that fuel insecurity.

ii. **Strengthen Research, Innovation, and Knowledge Production for Security and Development:** The Federal Government should promote research and innovation across strategic sectors such as technology, agriculture, healthcare, and security. Strengthening collaboration between universities, research institutions, industry, and government agencies would support evidence-based policymaking and the development of locally relevant solutions to national security challenges.

iii. **Enhance Professionalism and Capacity within the Security Sector:** To improve national security outcomes, the Federal Government should strengthen recruitment standards, training frameworks, and professional development across defence and security

institutions. Emphasising technical competence, ethical conduct, and modern security practices would enhance operational effectiveness and public trust.

iv. Invest in Healthcare as a Foundation of National Security and Development: The Federal Government should prioritise investment in healthcare infrastructure, access to quality services, and public health systems as integral to national security. Healthy populations contribute to economic productivity, social stability, and institutional resilience, whereas weak health systems exacerbate vulnerability to crises and insecurity.

v. Strengthen Regional Security Cooperation through Continental and Sub-Regional Frameworks: At the continental level, the African Union should facilitate deeper cooperation among African states to address shared security challenges. Strengthening joint training, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic coordination through regional mechanisms such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, and the East African Community would enhance collective security capacity.

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