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# Beyond Crime Control: Can Peace Education Transform Criminology and Security Studies? An Appraisal from Iconic Open University, Sokoto

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## Abstract

This paper examines whether peace education, integrated into criminology and security studies curricula, can shift the emphasis of policing and security scholarship from reactive crime control toward preventive, community-centered, and restorative approaches. Using a qualitative conceptual-analytical methodology, the study synthesizes secondary data from scholarly literature, policy documents, and institutional curricular materials. It maps curriculum strengths and gaps, reflects on international exemplars of university-police partnerships, and analyses how open and distance learning (ODL) modalities—exemplified by the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS) can advance continuing professional development for serving officers. Findings indicate that peace education offers strong theoretical and pedagogical leverage to reorient criminology toward ethical reasoning, community engagement, and conflict transformation, but its impact is mediated by curriculum design, experiential learning opportunities, institutional partnerships, and infrastructural capacity. The paper concludes with policy recommendations for curriculum redesign, university-police collaboration, and ODL enhancement to ensure that peace education contributes meaningfully to police professionalization and security sector reform in Nigeria.

## Keyword:

Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS), Social Learning Theory, Community Policing Theory, Human Capital Theory, Peace Education.

## 1.0 Introduction

Criminology and security studies in Nigeria have historically evolved within a paradigm dominated by crime control, deterrence, and punitive justice. This orientation, largely inherited from colonial administrative systems, continues to influence the training, structure, and operational philosophy of law enforcement agencies (Alemika, 2010). Yet, despite decades of policy reforms, Nigeria's policing system remains plagued by low public trust, excessive use of force, and poor community relations. These challenges expose a fundamental limitation of conventional

criminology education — its narrow focus on crime suppression rather than peace-building and social cohesion. Globally, criminology as a discipline has undergone significant transformation. Modern criminological education now integrates insights from peace studies, psychology, and sociology to produce more ethically grounded and socially responsive professionals (Loader & Sparks, 2010). Countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa have successfully adopted peace education frameworks within criminology programs, leading to measurable improvements in police-community partnerships, conflict mediation, and restorative justice practices (Manning, 2017; Mogeckwu, 2019). In contrast, Nigeria's university curricula remain predominantly theoretical, often detached from experiential learning and peace-oriented pedagogy (Ogunleye, 2021).

The Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS), through its open and distance learning (ODL) approach, presents a unique opportunity to re-imagine criminology and security studies beyond traditional models. As an institution that promotes lifelong learning and professional accessibility, IOUS is strategically positioned to integrate peace education principles into its criminology curriculum. This integration would enable serving officers, security professionals, and adult learners to develop critical thinking, empathy, and negotiation skills essential for 21st-century policing. However, despite its potential, there is limited scholarly examination of how peace education can concretely reshape criminology pedagogy within ODL systems in Nigeria.

Peace education, as conceptualized by Harris and Morrison (2013), goes beyond the absence of conflict to encompass ethical consciousness, dialogue, tolerance, and human rights orientation. When embedded in criminology education, it transforms the learner's worldview from enforcement-centered authority to collaborative problem-solving. This reorientation is vital for Nigeria, where insecurity often stems not only from criminal acts but from structural injustices, social exclusion, and weak trust between citizens and the police. Empirical observations from prior studies (Adewale & Johnson, 2021; Ajadi, 2020) reveal persistent disconnects between academic instruction and practical policing competencies. While Nigerian universities have expanded criminology programs, many lack experiential components such as community-based research, simulation-based learning, and field practicums. The result is a generation of graduates well-versed in theory but ill-prepared for field realities. Moreover, within open and distance learning contexts, challenges such as limited digital infrastructure and low tutor-student engagement further hinder effective skill acquisition (Naidu, 2019). These gaps underscore the need for a transformative curriculum framework that situates peace education at the core of criminology and security studies. The current study, therefore, explores how peace education—conceptually, theoretically, and practically—can transform criminology education and strengthen security professionalism in Nigeria, using the Iconic Open University, Sokoto, as a case reference. The inquiry is not merely pedagogical but developmental, seeking to identify how learning for peace can contribute to sustainable security reform.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to criminology and security studies in Nigeria, a persistent disconnect remains between university-based education and practical policing needs. Traditional curricula emphasize theoretical criminology and criminal law while neglecting peace education, ethical reasoning, and conflict transformation. The absence of peace-centered pedagogy undermines police professionalism, fosters reactive rather than preventive policing, and perpetuates cycles of violence and mistrust. This study addresses the critical question: Can peace education transform criminology and security studies into tools for sustainable peace and ethical policing in Nigeria? From the foregoing, the following objectives stand firm to guide this study. The objectives are:

- a) To examine the current state and orientation of criminology and security studies curricula in Nigerian universities, particularly within open and distance learning frameworks.
- b) To explore the conceptual and theoretical linkages between peace education and criminology as complementary fields for promoting ethical and preventive policing.
- c) To evaluate the potential of the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS), in integrating peace education principles into criminology pedagogy and professional training.
- d) To identify challenges and opportunities in embedding peace education within criminology curricula to enhance the effectiveness and moral grounding of security personnel.
- e) To propose policy and pedagogical recommendations for transforming criminology education into a vehicle for peace-building, restorative justice, and community security.

## 2.0 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on three interrelated theories—Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), and Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1987) which collectively provide a multidimensional understanding of how education, behavior, and institutional collaboration can transform criminology and security studies. These theories explain the processes through which individuals acquire professional competence, how educational investment contributes to institutional effectiveness, and how community engagement enhances sustainable security practices. Together, they form a conceptual foundation for integrating peace education into criminology curricula, particularly within open and distance learning (ODL) systems such as the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS). These frameworks together justify an educational model where theoretical knowledge (criminological theory), ethical formation (peace education), and practical skills (forensics, analytics, community engagement) are integrated to produce graduates competent in prevention, accountability, and partnership.

### 2.1 Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, offers a behavioral-cognitive explanation of how individuals learn by observing, imitating, and modeling others within their social environment. It posits that learning is not solely a product of direct experience but also occurs through observation and symbolic representation, where individuals internalize the behaviors, values, and attitudes of role models. Central to this framework is the principle of reciprocal determinism, which highlights the dynamic interaction among behavior, cognitive factors, and environmental influences. In criminology and security studies education, Social Learning Theory underscores the necessity of experiential learning as a foundation for producing ethically conscious and operationally competent professionals. Learning processes such as simulations, role-playing exercises, fieldwork, and mentorship enable students to apply theoretical concepts to real-life policing and security situations. Through these experiences, learners not only acquire technical knowledge but also develop situational awareness, ethical decision-making, and interpersonal communication skills—qualities critical for effective policing and conflict resolution. When linked with peace education, Social Learning Theory emphasizes behavioral transformation through reflective and participatory learning. It supports pedagogical methods that encourage empathy, accountability, and nonviolent problem-solving, thus preparing students to engage constructively with diverse communities. Consequently, the theory provides a conceptual bridge between criminology's cognitive domain and the behavioral outcomes that peace education seeks to achieve in professional practice.

#### 2.1.1 Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993)

Human Capital Theory, popularized by Gary Becker, conceptualizes education and professional training as strategic investments that increase individual productivity and institutional efficiency. The theory maintains that knowledge, skills, and ethical competencies constitute valuable assets that yield both private and social returns. Within this framework, universities are not merely centers of intellectual development but also catalysts for national growth, innovation, and institutional reform. Applied to criminology and security studies, Human Capital Theory provides a robust justification for integrating peace education into professional curricula. Peace education enhances the cognitive, ethical, and operational capacities of security personnel by equipping them with critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and conflict management abilities. These competencies strengthen professional judgment, improve decision-making under pressure, and foster public trust—key determinants of effective policing and sustainable peace. From an institutional perspective, open and distance learning universities like IOUS serve as vital platforms for continuing professional development (CPD) of in-service officers who may lack access to traditional academic pathways. By leveraging technology and flexible delivery methods, ODL institutions expand the reach of human capital development to marginalized or geographically distant professionals. Thus, in the Nigerian context, Human Capital Theory positions peace-oriented criminology education as a national investment in building a competent, ethical, and reform-minded security workforce.

### 2.1.2 Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1987)

Community Policing Theory, advanced by Herman Goldstein, provides a transformative paradigm for understanding modern policing as a collaborative, preventive, and problem-solving enterprise. The theory challenges traditional models of reactive law enforcement by emphasizing partnerships, proactive engagement, and community participation in addressing security challenges. It conceptualizes policing as a shared social responsibility rather than a unilateral exercise of state authority. According to Goldstein, effective crime prevention depends on sustained cooperation between the police and the communities they serve. Officers are therefore expected to act as facilitators, negotiators, and peace-builders, rather than merely enforcers of the law. This theoretical approach aligns closely with the principles of peace education, which stress dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding as foundations for social harmony. In criminology and security studies education, Community Policing Theory provides the normative and operational framework for embedding peace education into curricula. It supports pedagogical practices such as community-based research, participatory learning, case studies, and conflict mediation exercises, which enable students to connect academic theories with grassroots realities. Within open and distance learning systems like IOUS, these principles can be operationalized through blended learning models that combine online instruction with local field engagements, thereby fostering practical problem-solving skills and community partnership capacities. Ultimately, Community Policing Theory reinforces the idea that effective policing is people-centered, knowledge-driven, and peace-oriented—values that peace education seeks to institutionalize.

### 2.1.3 Synthesis of Theoretical Perspectives

Collectively, these three theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how peace education can transform criminology and security studies. Social Learning Theory explains how individuals internalize professional ethics and nonviolent behaviors through modeling and practice. Human Capital Theory justifies why investment in peace-oriented education enhances institutional and societal outcomes by improving the quality of policing and governance. Community Policing Theory defines what such transformation entails collaborative, preventive, and community-engaged approaches to maintaining public order. Together, they establish a multidimensional foundation for curriculum reform in Nigerian universities and open learning institutions. Integrating these theories enables a paradigm shift from crime control to peace-building, positioning education as both a behavioral and institutional strategy for sustainable security and social cohesion.

### 2.1.4 Conceptual Framework Summary

**Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Theoretical Foundation</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
Peace Education	Teaching of empathy, conflict resolution, and dialogue within criminology studies	Social Learning Theory	Ethical and reflective learners
Criminology Curriculum	Platform for integrating peace and justice principles into professional education	Human Capital Theory	Competent, peace-oriented graduates
Open & Distance Learning (ODL)	Flexible and inclusive educational model	Human Capital & Community Policing Theories	Wider access and continuous skill development
Behavioral Transformation	Application of learned peace values in professional contexts	Social Learning & Community Policing Theories	Responsible and community-focused officers
Institutional & Societal Impact	Strengthened public trust, reduced violence, improved collaboration	Combined Theoretical Integration	Sustainable peace and security reform

**Source: Author's Compilations, 2025**

## 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

The empirical literature on criminology, policing, and peace education reveals a gradual but significant shift from coercive law enforcement toward preventive and community-centered approaches to security management. Across global and regional contexts, studies have examined how educational interventions—particularly peace-oriented curricula—affect the ethical orientation, operational competence, and community engagement of security professionals. This section reviews key empirical contributions under four interrelated themes: Peace Education and Policing Practice, Criminology Curriculum and Professional Training, Open and Distance Learning in Security Education, and Peace-building through Higher Education in Nigeria. For instance, according to Harris and Morrison (2013), peace education cultivates nonviolent communication and empathy, which enhance officers' ability to manage community tensions without excessive use of force. In Kenya, Omeje (2017) found that police officers who participated in peace and conflict resolution workshops exhibited significantly reduced incidences of violent crowd control responses compared to those without such training. Similarly, Sridharan (2020) demonstrated that integrating peace modules into police academies in India improved public perceptions of police legitimacy and accountability. In the Nigerian context, Eze and Okafor (2022) revealed that most police training institutions still prioritize tactical enforcement over ethical and community engagement training, resulting in a disconnect between policy expectations and operational realities. This gap highlights the absence of structured peace education within the criminology curriculum and police development programs. The evidence suggests that systematic inclusion of peace education could transform police–community relations by promoting communication, trust, and respect for human rights.

Globally, the content and structure of criminology programs significantly shape the professional competence of graduates. Jones and Newburn (2013) observed that universities in the United Kingdom and Canada successfully linked criminology with applied policing studies through experiential modules such as investigative fieldwork, data analytics, and forensic documentation. Manning (2017) provided empirical evidence that these curricula led to measurable improvements in evidence-based policing and accountability standards. In Nigeria, Adewale and Johnson (2021) reported that criminology programs remain largely theoretical, with insufficient exposure to practical tools such as crime mapping, forensic analysis, and community engagement techniques. The authors emphasized the need for a curriculum that balances theoretical criminology with experiential and ethical components. Ogunleye (2021) corroborated this finding, noting that graduates of security studies programs often lack operational readiness due to the absence of simulation-based learning and supervised internships. Empirical studies from South Africa (Mogekwu, 2019) and Ghana (Mensah, 2020) further confirm that embedding peace education within criminology and security curricula enhances student awareness of human rights, social justice, and community collaboration—skills essential for preventive policing and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) model has been increasingly adopted to broaden access to professional education for law enforcement personnel. Naidu (2019) demonstrated that blended learning combining online instruction with field workshops significantly enhances cognitive retention and skill application among adult learners in policing contexts. Similarly, Ajadi (2020), studying Nigerian ODL institutions, highlighted that while ODL expands access and flexibility, limitations in tutor–student interaction and infrastructural support can reduce pedagogical effectiveness. At the Open University of Nigeria, criminology and security studies programs utilize multimedia courseware, virtual classrooms, and regional study centers to reach diverse learners, including serving officers. However, empirical assessments by Olatunji and Ibrahim (2021) show that despite the inclusivity of ODL, many learners struggle with inadequate digital literacy and limited mentorship opportunities, reducing experiential learning outcomes. International comparisons such as the Open University of South Africa and the UK's Open University (Smith & Robinson, 2020), indicate that integrating interactive simulations, peer forums, and community-based research projects within ODL environments significantly improves critical reasoning and ethical decision-making among criminology students.

Empirical research on peace education within Nigerian higher institutions remains limited but growing. Alemika (2010) highlighted how the colonial policing legacy, characterized by force and control, continues to influence both the training and orientation of law enforcement officers. He argued that peace education can help deconstruct this legacy by

reframing policing as a service-oriented profession. Obi and Akintoye (2018) demonstrated that universities offering peace and conflict resolution programs contribute indirectly to national security by producing graduates who mediate community disputes and promote social cohesion. At the Iconic Open University, Sokoto, preliminary institutional data (IOUS Report, 2023) indicate that criminology students who participated in community-based peace projects displayed stronger communication and negotiation skills than their counterparts who undertook only traditional coursework. This aligns with Okeshola (2019), who found that practical engagement in peace clubs, simulations, and restorative justice initiatives significantly improves students' empathy and situational awareness key indicators of readiness for modern policing and conflict management roles.

### 3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and conceptual-analytical design, guided by the interpretivist paradigm which emphasizes meaning-making, contextual understanding and theoretical synthesis over statistical generalization. The purpose of this methodological approach is to explore the transformative potential of peace education within criminology and security studies curricula, with specific reference to the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS). According to Creswell (2018), qualitative inquiry is suitable for exploring complex social phenomena where human perception, institutional culture, and educational philosophy interact dynamically. Therefore, this study does not seek to quantify relationships but to interpret patterns, analyze conceptual linkages, and synthesize secondary evidence regarding how peace education principles can reform criminology education and influence policing practices in Nigeria.

The study relies exclusively on secondary data, drawn from a diverse range of reputable sources to ensure reliability and academic rigor. These sources include: Peer-reviewed journal articles on criminology, policing, and peace education (both local and international). Institutional documents such as the IOUS criminology curriculum, policy handbooks, and annual reports. Government policy frameworks including the 2020 Police Act, the 2014 Police Reform Roadmap, and the National Policy on Peace and Security Education. Publications from international bodies such as UNESCO and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) on peace education and open learning systems were also used. All documents were retrieved from digital databases such as JSTOR, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, and the National Open University archives to ensure authenticity and relevance. The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis and conceptual mapping techniques, following the procedure outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

### 4.0 Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study are derived from a comprehensive synthesis of secondary data, curriculum mapping, and theoretical analysis. They reveal how peace education—when integrated into criminology and security studies can serve as a transformative mechanism for reorienting policing culture, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting societal harmony. For clarity and depth, the findings are presented under five major thematic dimensions.

#### 1. Curricular Gaps and Theoretical Overload in Criminology Education

Evidence from Nigerian universities reveals that criminology and security studies programs remain predominantly anchored in traditional theoretical paradigms such as classical, positivist, and sociological criminology, with insufficient integration of practical, peace-oriented competencies. While these theoretical foundations provide students with essential analytical perspectives on crime causation and justice systems, they often fail to cultivate the interpersonal, ethical, and mediation skills required for effective policing and community engagement in complex social environments. Studies by Adewale and Johnson (2021) and Ogunleye (2021) affirm that most criminology curricula in Nigeria lack structured modules on conflict transformation, emotional intelligence, restorative justice, and dialogue-based problem-solving, which are critical for building trust and legitimacy in law enforcement. At the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS), for instance, the existing criminology curriculum includes foundational courses such as Introduction to Criminology, Police and Society, and Criminal Justice Administration, which offer students a sound conceptual understanding of crime and institutional responses. However, explicit peace education content remains largely absent or peripheral, resulting in a curriculum that emphasizes theoretical analysis over applied learning. The

absence of simulation-based exercises, supervised field practicums, and community service components significantly limits students' experiential understanding of collaborative policing, negotiation, and social justice ethics.

Moreover, this academic-practice divide undermines the development of holistic security professionals capable of addressing Nigeria's multi-dimensional security challenges—ranging from insurgency and communal conflicts to cybercrime and human rights abuses. Without opportunities for reflective practice, students often graduate with strong theoretical literacy but limited operational readiness to apply knowledge in real-world security contexts. This shortfall highlights an urgent need for curricular reform that deliberately embeds peace education, conflict resolution, human rights, and ethical leadership within criminology and security studies programs. Integrating such modules would not only align criminology education with global best practices but also operationalize the principles of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993)—by viewing peace-oriented education as an investment in the intellectual, ethical, and professional capacities of future security personnel. Through this approach, institutions like IOUS can transform criminology from a reactive, control-centered discipline into a proactive and peace-driven field, equipping graduates with both the cognitive and emotional intelligence needed for 21st-century policing and social stability.

## **2. Peace Education as a Catalyst for Ethical and Cognitive Transformation**

Findings from comparative studies across South Africa (Mogekwu, 2019), Ghana (Mensah, 2020), and India (Sridharan, 2020) provide compelling evidence that the integration of peace education into criminology and police training programs enhances ethical reasoning, empathy, and analytical problem-solving capacity among law enforcement personnel. In these contexts, peace education has been shown to foster not only cognitive understanding of justice and conflict resolution but also affective competencies such as emotional regulation, cultural sensitivity, and nonviolent communication—qualities essential for modern democratic policing. These outcomes demonstrate that when police and criminology students engage with peace-oriented curricula, they are more likely to adopt reflective, ethical, and community-centered approaches to security management.

Applying these insights to the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS) context suggests that embedding structured peace education modules covering areas such as Conflict Mediation and Negotiation, Human Rights and Justice Ethics, and Restorative Policing Practices could significantly strengthen students' cognitive, moral, and professional competencies. Peace education encourages critical reflection on the social, moral, and human dimensions of crime, helping students to understand criminal behavior not merely as a violation of law but as a manifestation of social tension, inequality, or moral dislocation. This transformative orientation redefines policing from a punitive, reactive model toward a preventive, peace-centered framework that prioritizes dialogue, prevention, and social inclusion. Empirical evidence further indicates that students exposed to peace-oriented instruction demonstrate a heightened ability to manage interpersonal conflicts, resist corrupt influences, uphold procedural fairness, and act with empathy and restraint in the exercise of authority. Such behavioral and attitudinal changes have long-term institutional implications, as they promote accountability, professionalism, and public trust in law enforcement. Within the theoretical lens of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), peace education represents a strategic investment in human capacity development, where moral intelligence and ethical discipline are treated as core assets for institutional effectiveness. The dividends of such investment extend beyond individual skill acquisition—they contribute to the building of a policing culture grounded in integrity, civic responsibility, and sustainable peace.

## **3. The Role of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in Expanding Access and Inclusivity**

An analysis of the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS) operational model reveals that its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system has significantly democratized access to criminology and security studies education, particularly for non-traditional learners such as serving police officers, paramilitary personnel, and adult learners seeking professional advancement. By leveraging digital courseware, regional study centers, and asynchronous e-learning platforms, IOUS has created flexible pathways for continuous learning, enabling law enforcement professionals stationed in remote or conflict-prone areas to upgrade their competencies without interrupting active service. This inclusivity positions IOUS as a strategic institutional actor in broadening the human capital base for Nigeria's security sector.

However, consistent with findings by Ajadi (2020) and Olatunji and Ibrahim (2021), this study observes that structural and infrastructural constraints limit the transformative potential of ODL delivery. Persistent issues such as unstable

internet connectivity, inadequate digital infrastructure, and limited real-time tutor-student engagement hinder the development of higher-order skills such as empathy, ethical reasoning, and collaborative problem-solving—core tenets of peace-oriented criminology education. These challenges often reduce online learning to content transmission rather than dialogic engagement, thereby constraining its ability to cultivate reflective and peace-conscious practitioners. The findings further suggest that technological access alone is insufficient to achieve educational transformation. To actualize the transformative promise of ODL, there is a pressing need to integrate innovative pedagogical designs—including interactive simulations, virtual fieldwork, scenario-based learning, and collaborative case studies—that mirror real-world peace-building and policing contexts. Such approaches would help bridge the experiential gap inherent in distance education and promote situational awareness, conflict sensitivity, and ethical decision-making among learners. In essence, while the ODL framework at IOUS provides an inclusive platform for criminology education, its transformative impact depends on the fusion of technology with participatory pedagogy. Peace education, when embedded within such an adaptive and experiential framework, can transform criminology from a purely theoretical discipline into a practical, human-centered instrument for sustainable security and social harmony.

#### **4. Institutional Collaboration and Community Linkages Remain Weak**

The study reveals a persistent disconnect between academic institutions and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, a gap that significantly limits the practical impact of criminology education on policing outcomes. The Nigeria Police Academy, Kano, though established to integrate academic rigor into police training, operates largely in institutional isolation from mainstream universities and research networks. Similarly, most Nigerian universities offering criminology and security studies lack formal mechanisms for internship placements, collaborative research, or curriculum co-design with law enforcement agencies. This fragmentation weakens the theory–practice nexus, as academic outputs often fail to inform operational strategies, while policing reforms remain detached from empirical and theoretical evidence. Empirical analyses by Eze and Okafor (2022) and Omeje (2017) provide strong evidence that university–police partnerships generate mutual benefits, including the co-production of knowledge, the adoption of evidence-based policing models, and the creation of feedback mechanisms that refine both academic content and field operations. Such collaborations enhance the capacity of police institutions to adapt to evolving security threats ranging from cybercrime and terrorism to community-level violence—while grounding their responses in data-driven and ethical frameworks.

Within this context, the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS) emerges as a strategically positioned catalyst for bridging this institutional divide. Its nationwide reach, technological infrastructure, and open and distance learning (ODL) model provide unique opportunities to facilitate cross-sector collaboration. IOUS can pioneer a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework designed specifically for police officers, paramilitary personnel, and community safety advocates. Through short, modular, and flexible courses on cybercrime awareness, forensic documentation, ethics in policing, human rights, and community mediation, IOUS can align academic instruction with operational realities and reform priorities. Furthermore, integrating peace education principles into these CPD programs can promote reflective practice, ethical conduct, and community engagement, in line with Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1987) and Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993). By fostering a shared culture of learning between academia and law enforcement, IOUS can transform criminology education from a classroom discipline into a practical instrument for social change, institutional accountability, and peacebuilding. This model would not only elevate the professional competencies of officers but also strengthen public trust—thereby advancing the broader goal of sustainable peace and security in Nigeria.

#### **5. Peace Education Strengthens Community Trust and Institutional Legitimacy**

The analysis reveals that peace-oriented criminology education generates significant social dividends by strengthening the moral and relational foundations of law enforcement in society. Rather than confining policing to coercive crime control, such education broadens its scope to include trust-building, empathy, and community partnership—essential components of sustainable peace. Findings from Harris and Morrison (2013) and Goldstein (1987) demonstrate that when police officers receive systematic training in conflict resolution, communication, and human relations, levels of public cooperation, intelligence sharing, and community participation in crime prevention increase markedly. This transformation occurs because peace education cultivates interpersonal sensitivity and ethical awareness, encouraging officers to approach policing as a collaborative rather than adversarial enterprise. At the Iconic Open

University, Sokoto (IOUS), preliminary evidence supports this transformative potential. Data from institutional reports (IOUS, 2023) indicate that students who engaged in community-based peace and mediation projects exhibited stronger civic responsibility, tolerance, and advocacy for nonviolent conflict resolution. These outcomes reinforce the proposition of Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1987), which posits that genuine safety and order are products of mutual trust and cooperation between police and citizens, not merely the application of legal force.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings underscore how peace education functions as a pedagogical mechanism for moral reorientation—one that reshapes police identity from that of a mere enforcer of law to a facilitator of justice and peace. This aligns with the broader tenets of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), suggesting that educational investments in ethical reasoning, empathy, and problem-solving enhance both institutional productivity and public legitimacy. In practical terms, integrating peace education into criminology curricula enables future officers and security practitioners to navigate complex social dynamics with emotional intelligence and procedural fairness. Over time, this fosters a virtuous cycle: as communities perceive law enforcement as partners in peace rather than instruments of repression, trust deepens, cooperation improves, and crime prevention becomes more effective. Ultimately, this shift enhances the moral legitimacy of law enforcement institutions and contributes to the broader project of democratic policing and social cohesion in Nigeria.

**Table 4.1: Summary of Key Findings**

<b>Thematic Focus</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Curriculum Design	Criminology education remains theoretical; lacks peace and practical modules	Need for experiential, peace-integrated learning
Ethical Competence	Peace education fosters empathy, ethics, and professional integrity	Reorientation of policing philosophy
ODL Delivery	Expands access but limited by poor infrastructure and engagement	Improve digital tools and blended learning
Institutional Collaboration	Weak linkage between academia and police institutions	Develop CPD partnerships and research collaboration
Community Trust	Peace education enhances police-community relationships	Promotes legitimacy and sustainable security

**Source: Author’s Compilations, 2025**

## 5.0 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study, titled “Beyond Crime Control: Can Peace Education Transform Criminology and Security Studies? An Appraisal from Iconic Open University, Sokoto,” explored the intersection between peace education, criminology pedagogy, and policing transformation within Nigeria’s evolving security landscape. Drawing insights from theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives, the study established that criminology education—if anchored on peace-oriented frameworks—can move beyond the narrow confines of crime control to embrace a broader vision of social harmony, restorative justice, and human security.

The analysis confirmed that Nigeria’s criminology and security studies curricula remain largely theoretical, lacking the experiential and ethical dimensions necessary for modern policing. Despite the emergence of open and distance learning (ODL) platforms like the Iconic Open University, Sokoto (IOUS), significant pedagogical and infrastructural gaps persist. The current approach often emphasizes criminological theories and criminal law at the expense of critical peace-building competencies such as conflict resolution, negotiation, and community engagement.

However, peace education offers a transformative pathway. When integrated into criminology curricula, it enhances ethical reasoning, empathy, and problem-solving among students and serving officers. This transformation aligns with Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993) by treating education as an investment in cognitive and moral capacity, and with Community Policing Theory (Goldstein, 1987) by fostering collaboration and trust between law enforcement and communities. Likewise, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) supports the use of experiential pedagogies—

simulations, fieldwork, and mentorship—that shape professional identity through observation and modeling. The findings further reveal that IOUS, as an ODL institution, possesses unique potential to democratize access to criminology education for serving officers across Nigeria. However, the realization of this potential requires not just digital expansion but a deliberate infusion of peace-oriented content and interactive learning experiences. Through this model, IOUS can become a national laboratory for reimagining policing education—linking knowledge, ethics, and technology toward a peace-centered security paradigm. In summary, the study concludes that peace education is not merely an adjunct to criminology and security studies but its moral and philosophical foundation. Its integration transforms policing from a reactive force to a proactive social service, grounded in justice, human rights, and community trust.

## 5.1 Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the integration of peace education into criminology and security studies, particularly within the framework of open and distance learning institutions like IOUS:

### **I. Curriculum Reform and Integration of Peace Modules**

The National Universities Commission (NUC) should mandate the inclusion of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Human Rights and Security Ethics, and Community Mediation courses in criminology and security studies curricula. Universities should design interdisciplinary modules that merge criminology, sociology, and peace studies to build comprehensive analytical and ethical capacities.

### **II. Institutional Collaboration Between Academia and Law Enforcement**

Establish partnerships between universities and the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) to facilitate joint curriculum development, internship placements, and continuous professional development (CPD) programs. Encourage collaborative research on evidence-based policing and nonviolent conflict management, ensuring academic outputs directly inform police policy reforms.

### **III. Strengthening Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Delivery**

The Federal Government and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should invest in digital infrastructure—such as learning management systems, high-speed internet, and interactive simulation tools—to enhance online criminology instruction. IOUS should adopt blended learning models, integrating virtual practicums, online case studies, and field-based community projects to enhance experiential learning outcomes.

### **IV. Promoting Ethical and Reflective Policing Culture**

Introduce mandatory peace education modules for in-service police training programs to strengthen officers' ethical orientation, cultural sensitivity, and community relations. Institutionalize reflective learning assessments (journals, peer dialogues, and case reflections) to promote moral reasoning and self-accountability among trainees.

### **V. Encouraging Community-Based Peace Projects**

Universities offering criminology and security studies should collaborate with local communities to establish Peace Clubs, Restorative Justice Clinics, and Community Mediation Units where students can practice applied peace-building. Such initiatives will bridge the gap between academic theory and field practice while strengthening police-community trust.

### **VI. Monitoring and Evaluation of Peace-Oriented Outcomes**

The NUC and Nigerian Police Service Commission should develop a Peace Education Evaluation Framework (PEEF) to monitor how peace education integration influences ethical conduct, community trust, and policing outcomes. Periodic impact assessments should be conducted to ensure that educational investments translate into measurable social and institutional improvements.

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