



IMPACT OF POVERTY ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR AMONGST YOUTHS IN Uvwie LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Many developing countries now grapple with the problem of unemployment. The unemployment rate among the youth is particularly higher than other demographic segments especially in developing economies. Interestingly, the cities in many developing economies with high rates of youth unemployment also battle high rates of urban crime. The purpose of this study was to establish how youth unemployment influences crime rates in Uvwie Local Government area in delta state. With the aim of identifying strategies to mitigate crime among the youth. The study objectives were to explore the extent that youth unemployment influences the crime rates in Uvwie, establish the prevalence of youth unemployment, examine the factors that cause youth unemployment, determine the connection between youth unemployment and high crime rates, and to identify the best strategy to mitigate the high number of crime rates in Uvwie. The foundational framework for this study is Relative Deprivation Theory which argues that a discord between people's goals and means results in criminality. The theory asserts that people hold a universal social goal of attaining material wealth and success; and that there is inequality in achieving these goals leading to deprivation. Individual propensity to commit crime can also be explained through Albert Bandura's social learning theory. According to this theory, people learn to commit crime from one another by modelling their behavior, imitating them, or making observations. They look at the rewards and punishments brought by crime, and make a decision to either accept crime and pursue it for the rewards, or shun it to avoid the punishments. The research design involved a descriptive survey on a sample of 125 urban youth (both male and females) between the ages of 18- 35 years. Self-administered questionnaires were also used to collect data. The target population for this study was the urban youth (both male and females) between the ages of 18- 35 years who are living in Uvwie Local Government area. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study with a non- probability design. This sampling method was applied to select youths aged 18- 35 years in Uvwie Local Government area. The sample size used for this study was 125 people who were selected from urban youth in Uvwie Local Government area. The two research tools used to obtain primary data were an interview guide and a questionnaire. The findings indicate that youth unemployment could influence the rates of crime in Uvwie Local Government area. Job creation can therefore help decrease criminal activities among the youth. Education is one of the strategies that can help push youth away from criminal activities and create jobs for themselves. The study further recommends that the government could develop an integrated information system which captures the bio-data of all youth who are unemployed in Uvwie Local Government area and make deliberate move to help them create employment.

KEYWORDS: Poverty, Criminal Behaviour, Youths, Local Government

1. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, youth unemployment has been identified as one of the pressing problems facing the country, and efforts at curtailing this have not yielded the needed result, especially in Delta State, located in the south southern part of Nigeria. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009) in its definition of youth says that it is a period of passage from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of interdependence with other members of a community. Furthermore, the second Nigerian National Youth Policy (2009) sees youths as those that are characterized by energy, enthusiasm, ambition, creativity, and promise; they are faced with high levels of socio-economic uncertainty and volatility thereby becoming the most, vulnerable segment of the population. As to who constitutes a youth, the United Nations places the youth as those within the age bracket of 15-24, but due

to cultural, social, and some institutional factors, the age bracket is not being used for statistical purposes in Nigeria. According to the NYP (2009), "the youth shall comprise of all young males and females aged 18-35 years old who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria." At this age, the youth is believed to undergo serious all-around development be it socially, politically, or culturally among others.

Poverty has a great influence on the crime rate. Poverty can be in a state of absolute where there is a lack of the basic resources needed to maintain a minimum of physical health, normally calculated in calories, while relative poverty has quantitative dimensions which refer to the general standard of living in different societies due to cultural sensitivity and variations between and within societies over time. Poverty is due to massive inequality, poor allocation of investment, education, planning,



and policy implementation, inadequate health facilities, human rights violations such as economic empowerment, right to protection, security, children's rights, and right to life. There are conflicts over scarce resources like land ownership, safe drinking water, streams, food, education, health which results in conflicts and criminal activities, and offenses due to poverty. Crime and violent conflicts are growing due to disparities in wealth, increasing unemployment among the youths, population pressure on land and resources leading to environmental degradation which provokes social discontent, polarization leading to social strife in the region.

Poverty is essentially deprivation suffered by a large segment of some essentials for sustenance such as sufficient income to provide housing, clothing, food and education, health facilities adequate opportunities for productive employment which leads to societal stress. Stress leads to increasing the anger and frustration of the poor suffering that are then exploited by violence promoting war-bent demagoguery. Indeed scarcities of the basic needs amongst the population cause social segmentation, group formation, and strengthen groups identity which creates violent collective action which takes forms from rime war, terrorism, riots, civil insurgencies, political repressions to its ultimate forms. Most of the inhabitants of Uvwie Local Government area live on subsistence farming on smallholdings of less than Mi an acre and with poor farming methods, lack of farm inputs, and technical agricultural know-how have to lessen the yield to sustain the family needs. They are no income-generating investments such as factories, plantations (cash crops) to employ the youths in the areas leading to severe unemployment and crime in the region. In 1991 the United Nations crime prevention journals stipulated that crime has accelerated far beyond the current reach of the international community. Crime is a particularly serious impediment to harmonious development. It dissipates or misdirects the gains of economic growth and impairs the quality of life; crime threatens the safety wellbeing and personal integrity of us all (United Nations, 2013). This study seeks to address the impact of poverty among youth on criminal behavior in Uvwie Local Government. Objective of the study was to investigate the impact of poverty on criminal behavior amongst youths in Uvwie Local Government area in delta state. The specific objectives of the study will be: to determine if finance can lead to criminal behavior among youths in Uvwie Local Government area in delta state and investigate how unemployment increases crime rate among youths in the Uvwie Local Government area in delta state. In line with the research objectives, the following research questions were generated:- Does the financial standing influence crime among youths in Uvwie Local Government area in delta state and How does unemployment increase crime among youths Uvwie Local Government area in delta state?

Research Hypotheses

In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were drawn

i. There is no relationship between finance and criminal behavior among youths Uvwie Local Government area in delta state.

ii. There is no relationship between Unemployment and Criminal behavior among youths Uvwie Local Government area in delta state

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Poverty

The concept of poverty is highly contested in the literature. In fact, according to Alcock (2006), there is no single clear-cut definition of the term. Perhaps, the reason for the lack of a generally accepted definition of the term is partly due to the scholars who attempted to define it according to their various intellectual temperaments. However, traditionally, poverty is conceived in terms of 'distributional issues: the lack of resources at the disposal of an individual or household to ensure a suitable standard of subsistence or living' (Barnes, 2005). Beyond an individual's ability to satisfy minimum living standards of food, clothing, and shelter, it is also about 'having what you need to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in the society (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

According to the United Nations (1998), Poverty is fundamentally a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.

Security, according to Ball (2019) refers to desire for safety and protection. Security, in this sense, implies that there is no threat to life and well-being of people. Afolabi (2015) describes security as feeling of being safe from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression, danger, poverty, defence, protection and preservation of core values and threat to such values. Stone (2020) described security "to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile". From the above definitions, security refers to freedom from fear, harm, danger, oppression, anxiety and threat to life and well-being of people. It is absence of threat to safety and well-being. Poverty is a social issue of society at the local and world level, representing a living condition in which individuals fail to achieve the minimum standard of living. Thus, the various practices of policies are oriented to remove it from human society (Wenger, 2007). Ngwube (2020) in the same vein, identified the security threats in Nigeria to include poverty, election violence, boko haram, kidnapping, illegal arms importation, power generation, oil bunkering, and corruption. (Townsend, 1970). Thus, poverty represents the inability to gain a sound livelihood, assist oneself without relying on others, and have a suitable house to reside in; and the failure to obtain good healthcare, proper educational training, and so forth. According to (Lewontin, 2000);



Laub and Sampson, 2003). Unemployment is concerned with such a state in which a person who is at the working age to work but cannot find a job (Berghind, 1991).

Problem of Persistent Poverty in Nigeria

Poverty has remained a constant recurring factor in Nigerian society. The magnitude of poverty in Nigeria is alarming and indeed has assumed a crisis dimension. Nigeria is blessed with mineral resources and rich in crude oil. Ironically, the citizens are hungry and poor amid an abundance of these resources. To be sure, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) classified Nigeria as the 141 poorest nations on the human development index. In its report, Nigeria is considered one of the 20th poorest countries in the world with 70% of the population classified as poor and 54.4% living in absolute poverty (UNDP-HDI, 2006). Nigeria instead of advancing has lately degenerated into the head quarter of the world's poorest country. Furthermore, recent report of UNDP (2019) on the Multidimensional Poverty Index MPI of Nigeria reveals that even when the proportion of people who are multidimensionality poor has remained at over 50% decade up to 2017, the actual number of people who are multidimensional poor increased from 86 million people to 98 million people over the same period. The MPI report also adds that when compared to the national poverty line which measures income/consumption, a large proportion of Nigerians (51%) are multidimensional poor than those that are income poor (46%). What the MPI report clearly suggests is that the number of multidimensional poor Nigerians has risen by 10 million.

The Relationship between Youth Unemployment and Urban Crime

Crime incidences in most countries follow an almost universal age pattern. Young people increase their criminal activity as they grow up, with the peak being in their late teens. Thereafter, their involvement in crime starts to fall. According to Wu and Wu (2012), in the year 2005, Swedish men in the 19-24 years age bracket had a conviction rate of 4.2%. In comparison, the conviction rate for men in the 29-34 years age bracket was almost half the figure for the 19-24-year-olds. One common reason for this age pattern in criminality is the common susceptibility of many young people to unemployment when compared to middle-aged adults. From an economic perspective, unemployed youths have an income loss that reduced their perception of the opportunity cost for crime involvement. There is also a viable hypothesis that the state of joblessness causes anger and frustration among people, and triggers them to adopt violent behavior. Unemployed people also have much free time that allows them to commit a crime (Ponge, 2013).

Adebayo (2013) points out that a proper knowledge of how youth unemployment is related to crime is valuable because it explains the age patterns and age distributions of crime. It also provides key policy insights on how investments in labor market programs can be used to bring immense social benefits such as the reduction of insecurity. The level of opportunities in the labor market is negatively correlated to the levels of crime in many societies.

Most researchers normally use aggregated measures of crime and unemployment because of data limitations. With such data sources, there is a good chance that some general equilibrium effects may confound the common manner in which youth unemployment relates to criminality. For example, some communities with high rates of unemployment may have fewer available resources for stealing, and fewer people in the streets that could potentially be mugged or robbed. In a study done by Fougère, et al. (2009) across several regions in France, youth unemployment was determined to have a significant economic and statistical effect on the rates of property crime. The findings also determined that youth unemployment has no significant effect on violent crimes – following the economic theory. In a study done by Oster and Agell (2007) on several Swedish municipalities, the findings showed that youth unemployment caused no significant effect on criminality.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study will adopt a survey research design because it shall elude historical, content analysis and qualitative to examine the impact of poverty on criminal behavior among youths in uvwie local government of delta state, in an attempt to justify our findings we shall adopt indexes relating to poverty and these includes Unemployment, Family structure, financial standing and level of education among others. The population for this study is focused on the youths in Uwea local government. Uvwie is a local government in Delta State has its administrative headquarters in the town of Effurun with a total population of 251,265 people. Uvwie local government comprises of 15 towns which includes Ekpan, Enerhen, Jeddo, Okpaka, Okuamowah, Okuireroh, Okwemowa, Okwetata, Okwtata, Opete, Ugbokodo, Ugbolokposo, Ugbomoro, Ugboroke and Ughoton. The population for the youths in uvwie which falls between the ages of 18-35 gives a total of 190,000 (NBS, 2006). This research concentrate on 5 towns with a youth population of 21,431 (Effurun, Ekpan, Okuamowah, Okwemowa and Ohore) (Census, 2006). The objective of the research is to draw inferences from a population to generalize the target population. However, because of the large population, in most studies, researchers hardly study the entire population. Therefore the sample is always drawn from the population. The research will deploy Yamane's (1973) scientific approach for arriving at an acceptable sample size for a chosen study.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The Techniques of Data Analysis for this study will be presented using robust quantitative analysis to systemically analyze the data collected. First, the study will utilize descriptive statistics to identify and analyze the respondents under investigation. Secondly, the study will adopt the Pearson's Product moment Correlation Coefficient (R) for the main analysis of this work because the variables in the hypotheses can be measured at the interval level and this justifies the usefulness of this statistical tool. The research work will adopt SPSS version 26 in carrying out the mentioned statistical analysis.



This study anticipated to use the feedback from 165 respondents. The researcher gave out 125 questionnaires to all the respondents that had agreed to participate in the study. A total

of 107 respondents returned their duly filled questionnaires on time. The response rate for this study was 85.6%. The researcher determined this response rate to be sufficient. In comparison, the non-response rate stood at 14.4%.

Table 2: Residents' Response Rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Response	107	85.6
Non – response	18	14.4
Total	156	100

Demographic Information

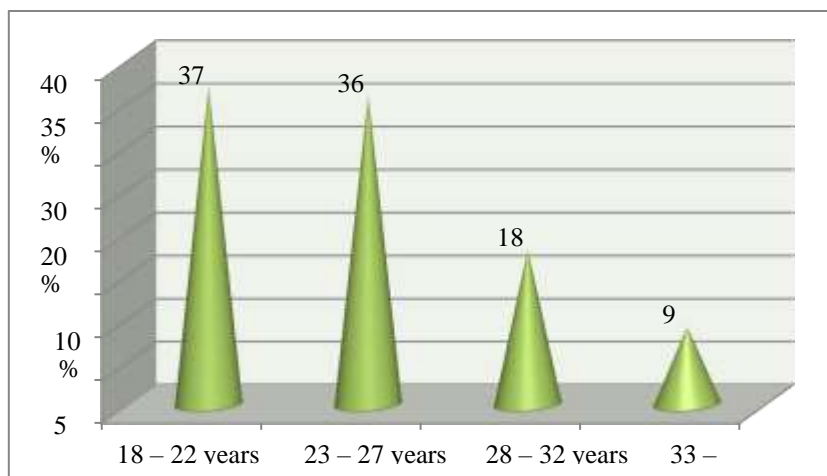
The results show that 78 respondents (translating to 73% of total respondents) were male and the remaining 29 respondents (translating to 27% of total respondents) were female. These study findings show that unemployed male youth were more likely to engage in crime than unemployed female youth. This finding is in line with the aggressive nature of male people as described by psychologists in the “male-warrior” hypothesis. Male and females in all age brackets have significant differences in their ability to exercise self-control whenever they face stressful conditions such as long periods of unemployment.

Female youth tend to have a strong innate ability for self- control, as compared to their impulsive male peers. Their social roles superseded their unemployment status in influencing their criminal behavior. Only a few of the female youth to engage in crime just 8 of the unemployed female youth (translating to 27% of female respondents in this study) engaged in crime.

Age Bracket

The study recorded the ages of the respondents. The results are presented below in figure 1

Figure 1 Age Bracket



In figure 1, the study findings show that 40 respondents (translating to 37%) who believed that youth unemployment was strongly linked to crime engagement were aged between 18-22 years, followed by 38 respondents (translating to 36%) aged from 23 years to 27 years, 19 respondents (translating to 18%) who were aged from 28 years to 32 years, and 10 respondents (translating to 9%) who were aged from 33 years to 35 years. The results, therefore, show that the age of most respondents ranged from 18 years to 22 years.

Most street criminals reach their peak in crime engagement before the age of 25 years. People develop higher executive functioning when they attain 25 years and above. Higher executive functioning helps one to achieve emotional control, impulse control, and planning. A study done by Farall (2009), indicates

that most young adults below the age of 25 years lack the desired mental development that would give them higher executive functioning for emotional control, impulse control, and planning. When the youth attain 25 years, the level of street crimes takes a sharp decline because many of the youth develop improved executive functioning.

Aging has a foundational influence on the age-crime relationship. Beyond 25 years of age, young people experience the development of certain brain faculties that are responsible for risk taking, decision making, delayed gratification, impulse control, emotional maturity, and resistance to peer pressure. The age differences in crime tend to be consistent across many societies, with the overall likelihood for involvement dropping after the youth attain 25 years (Farall, 2009). This consistency in time and

social contexts provide a strong hint that the age differences in crime are founded on some biological basis, or there are constant age-graded norms and age socializations across different societal settings that are responsible for the consistency.

The unemployed youth with ages ranging from 18 years to 22 years and those ranging from 23 year to 27 years have high likelihood of indulging in crime as compared to other age groups because they still have strong physical development that helps them to commit crime. Their good physical development (aggression, strength, stamina, prowess, and speed) pushes young people in the two age brackets to engage in physically demanding crimes, and more dangerous ones (Farall, 2009). They can use their physical power to protect themselves during crime, recruit and manage criminal associates, enforce criminal contracts, and perpetuate violence with the goal of robbing others. Since physical strength declines with age, the unemployed youth in the 28-32 age bracket and the 33-35 age bracket perceive crime to be

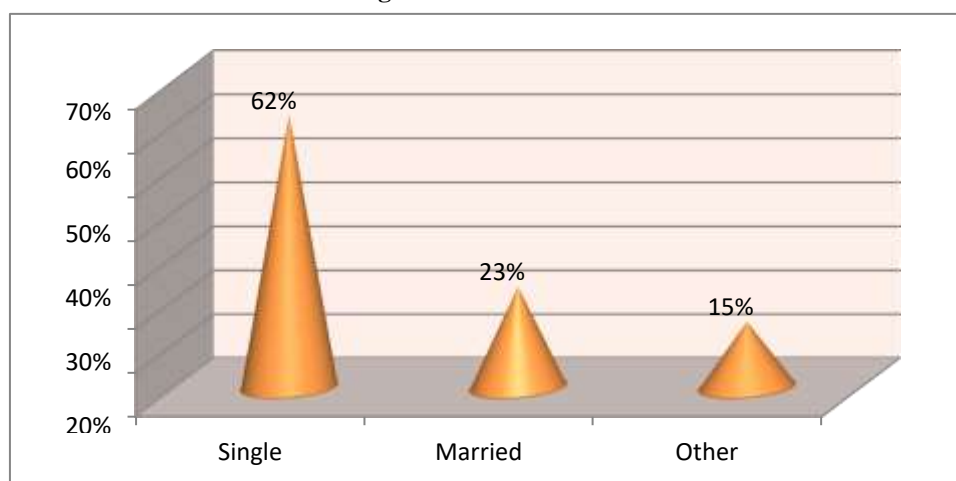
too dangerous and with little chances of success.

The age-crime relationship seems to peak in the 18-22 year age bracket because of variation in testosterone. At this age, many youths contend with new upsurges in testosterone that make them susceptible to criminality and violence. Testosterone difference is also the main reason why many unemployed male youth commit more crime than their female counterparts (Farall, 2009). In-group differences also exist with testosterone levels, where some people with higher testosterone levels commit more crime than others. For this study, high testosterone surges for youth in the 18-22 years bracket makes them commit more crime than young adults and middle-aged adults.

Marital Status

The study analyzed the marital status of the respondents. The results are presented in figure 2

Figure 2. Marital Status



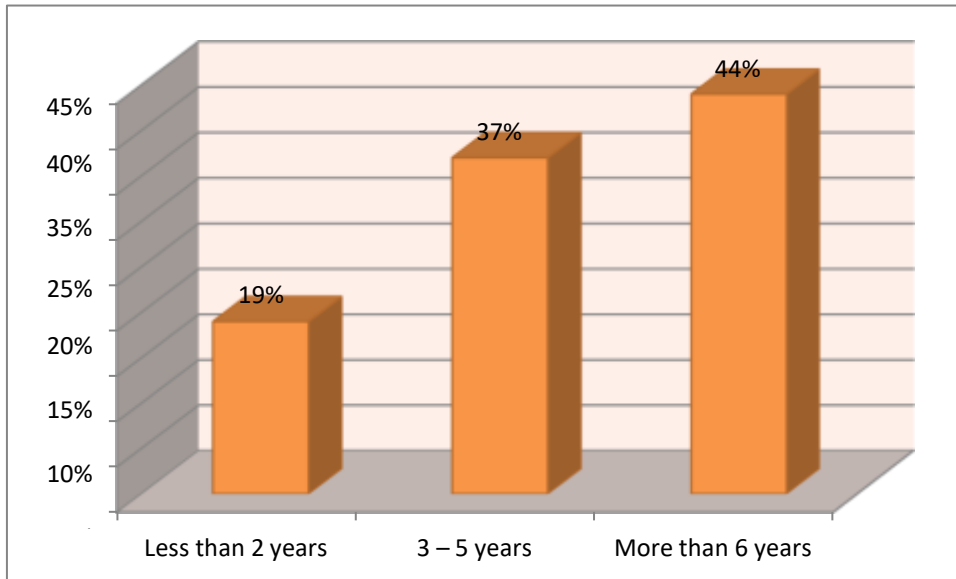
In figure 2, the study findings show that 66 respondents (translating to 62%) were single, 25 respondents (translating to 23%) were married while 16 respondents (translating to 16%) were widowed. The findings show that most of the study participants were single as indicated by 66 respondents (translating to 62%). In this study, the marriage effect significantly reduced the level of criminal recidivism for married who had a criminal past. It also dissuaded new young people from joining crime.

The marriage effect describes the moderating role that marriage plays in the life of criminals. Depending on the strength of marital ties between couples, marriage may cause medium to strong effects on crime desistance for people with a criminal past.

The peer association theory anchors its marriage effect on the idea that marriage increases opportunity for one's spouse to impart good examples on the other, and also reduces the time that one spends with delinquent peers- effectively eliminating their negative influence. However, it fails to highlight the special cases where the spouse is similarly delinquent as the peers that one wishes to stay away from. It is possible for delinquent men who marry delinquent spouses to just force the spouses into accepting their friends. They eventually integrate the spouses into the man's delinquent group. The marriage effect on crime desistance and recidivism is contingent on the criminal profile of a person. The marriage effect is reduced to insignificant levels of both spouses and delinquent at the time they are getting into marriage.



Duration of Stay in Uvwie Local Government

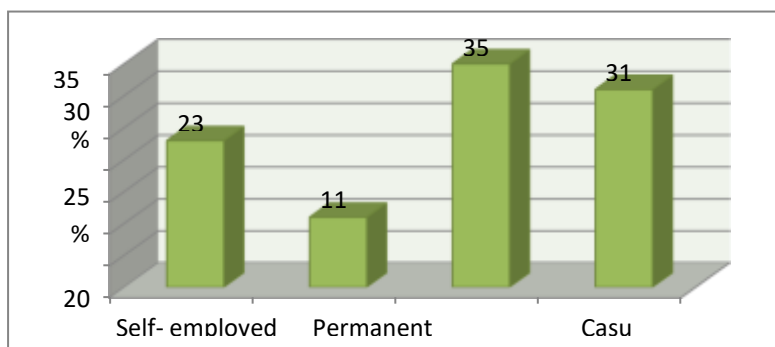


The study asked respondents to indicate how long they had lived in Uvwie. Their responses are presented in figure 3. In figure 3, the study findings show that 20 respondents (translating to 19%) had stayed in Uvwie Local Government area in delta state for less than 2 years, 40 respondents (translating to 37%) had stayed there for between 3-5 years while 47 respondents (translating to 44%) had stayed for more than 6 years. The results show that a majority 44% had stayed for more than 6 years.

Some 40 respondents (translating to 37%) had stayed in the slums for more than three years, but less than six years. As one stays longer within a residential environment, they tend to adapt to it. Increased duration of stay within a residential location consequently affects individual perception about deviant behavior. People who stay for the longest period in a slum area are more likely to develop coping mechanisms and pursue social networking with other residents in the area. They become more willing to excuse deviant behaviors by other slum dwellers. Individuals who stay longer in the slums are also more likely

pursue deviant behavior when compared to new tenants who move into the slums. Individuals who stay for more than six years in the slum perceive deviant behavior among slum youth to be low. This is because they get accustomed to seeing the criminal behavior in slums, and begin to accept outright deviant behavior as normal. In some fringe cases, their perception of youth deviant behavior becomes low, and they may even think that their peer youth who have stayed in the slum for long duration engage in less crime as compared to new slum entrants. This fringe case goes against the common trend where youth who have lived in slums for longer durations have higher risk of adopting deviant behavior when compared to newcomers. They also approve most of the deviant behaviors committed by their peers, out of belief that such conduct constitutes normal slum life that should not be construed as risky behavior. In comparison, new slum entrants may lack exposure to the criminal behavior of most slum dwellers. The new entrants also lack proper social networks among the slum youth, and can easily judge the normal activities pursued by the slum youth as deviant.

Respondent's Employment





In figure 4, the study results indicate that the majority 92 respondents (translating to 86%) were unemployed while only 15 respondents (translating to 14%) were employed. This study further sought to know the forms of employment pursued by the respondents. The results are shown in figure 4.

The study shows that 25 respondents (translating to 23%) were self-employed, 12 respondents (translating to 11%) were employed on a permanent basis and 37 respondents (translating to 35%) were on contracts while 33 respondents (translating to 31%) were on a casual basis. The study shows that majority 35% were employed on a contractual basis.

A majority of the respondents (92 participants) were unemployed at 86% – signifying the grave problem of unemployment in the slum. Even those who indicated that they were in employment (15 participants translating to 14%) were mainly engaged in seasonal

work – with only 11% of the employed people having permanent jobs. The rest were relying on other erratic jobs, with casuals forming 31% of the employed people, contractors forming 35% of the employed and self-employed people accounting for 23% of the employed people. These poor employment statistics could partly explain the origins of high crime rates in the slums.

Unemployment often creates systemic channels of marginalization and frustration for the affected populations. Such frustration may eventually force the vulnerable young people to engage in crime.

Influence of Youth Unemployment on Crime Rates

The researcher sought to determine how levels of youth unemployment influence the crime rates in Uvwie Local Government area. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Influence of Youth Unemployment on Crime Rates
 (Where 5 – Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, and 1 - Strongly Disagree).

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Total Cumulative Frequency
Lack of legal sources of income forces youth to use illegal income activities	20%	44%	16%	20%	0%	100%
High unemployment levels lead to high crime rates	60%	26%	10%	0%	4%	100%
Poverty forces unemployed people to engage in criminal activities for income	19%	41%	26%	8%	6%	100%
Rich individuals also engage in crime.	27%	43%	10%	16%	4%	100%
Robbery, rape and prostitution in Uvwie are due to unemployment.	24%	36%	28%	8%	4%	100%
Youths lack the skills required for formal employment, forcing them to pursue crime	16%	54%	18%	8%	4%	100%
Terrorist groups and gangs target poor youths.	21%	29%	26%	18%	6%	100%
Years of joblessness and frustration due to lack of opportunity, makes graduates resort to criminal activity for survival	12%	51%	29%	8%	0%	100%
Employment opportunities prevent potential offenders from criminal activities	19%	45%	22%	10%	4%	100%
People living in less privileged areas spend more time in the streets thereby associating themselves with gangs	20%	46%	28%	6%	0%	100%

The results indicate that 68 respondents (translating to 64%) agreed, 6 respondents (translating to 6%) were neutral while 22 respondents (translating to 20%) disagreed that the unemployed people lack legal income sources thus turning to illegal ways of making some income. The results indicate that 92 respondents (translating to 86%) agreed, 11 respondents were neutral (translating to 10%) while 4 respondents (translating to 4%) disagreed that high unemployment levels lead to high crime rates. This finding indicates the majority opinion of the respondents that reduction of unemployment in the area will reduce their likelihood of committing crime. Creation of jobs for young people can be used as a viable way of providing work opportunities for them to reduce their susceptibility to crime.

In chart 3, the results indicate that some 64 respondents (translating to 60%) agreed, 28 respondents (translating to 37%) were neutral while 15 respondents (translating to 14%) disagreed that poverty prompted by unemployment forced unemployed people to pursue crime as an alternative for acquiring an income.

This finding indicates the majority opinion of the respondents that poverty creates a major role in pushing people to crime. Urban youth pursue crime as a means of earning an income, after failing to find other legitimate means of work. The results indicate that some 75 respondents (70%) agreed, 11 respondents (10%) were neutral while 21 respondents (20%) disagreed that in some instances, a rich individual also engages in crime. This finding



indicates the majority opinion of the respondents that crime is a spontaneous activity that is influenced by many other factors beyond poverty. Rich people who have wealth also find some alternative incentives to engage in crime.

The results indicate that 62 respondents (58%) agreed, 30 respondents (28%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that robbery, rape and prostitution in Uvwie Local Government area. Were as a result of unemployment. This finding indicates that creation of employment for urban youth in Uvwie Local Government area would reduce the rates of robbery, rape and prostitution in the area. The results indicate that 75 respondents (70%) agreed, 19 respondents (18%) were neutral while 13 respondents (12%) disagreed that youth unemployment has forced people to use illegal means to achieve societal expectations. This finding indicates the majority opinion of the respondents that creation of increased opportunities for technical education and professional training will give young people the skills required for formal employment and cushion them from crime. The results indicate that 51 respondents (48%) agreed, 30 respondents (26%) were neutral while 29 respondents (26%) disagreed that unemployed youth are the main target for terrorist group and political violence. This finding indicates the majority opinion of the respondents that poor youths are vulnerable for manipulation by terrorist groups and gangs because they lack income. Results indicate that 67 respondents (63%) agreed, 31 respondents (29%) were neutral while 9 respondents (8%) disagreed that after some years of joblessness and frustration due to lack of opportunity in the society, many young graduates resort to criminal activity for survival or as an alternative means to actualize their expectations. This finding may indicate that creation of alternative jobs for graduates as a way of reducing their frustration may reduce their susceptibility to engage in crime. The results indicate that 68 respondents (64%) agreed, 24 respondents (22%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that employment opportunities work as forces which prevent potential offenders from engaging in criminal activities. This finding may indicate the majority opinion of the respondents that urban youth crime can be solved by creating new employment opportunities for young people.

In chart 4.2.12, the results indicate that 79 respondents (74%) agreed, 17 respondents (16%) were neutral while 11 respondents (10%) disagreed that people see crime as the only way that can help them obtain material goods which they can't obtain through legitimate ways.

These results indicate that youth unemployment influences the rates of crime as supported by 76 respondents (71%) who are in agreement with the statement that youth unemployment has forced people to use illegal means to achieve societal expectations. These findings were in line with Graversen and Jan (2008) who noted the existence of a positive relationship between unemployment and criminal activities. In their study, they observed that youth unemployment can be connected to high crime rates, as youth engage in unlawful activities as an alternative strategy to earn a living. Economic marginalization only focuses on poverty and unemployment but fails to consider other factors such as inequality and peer groups.

Graversen and Jan (2008) also note that high unemployment levels lead to high crime rates. To demonstrate the effect of inequality, Graversen and Jan (2008) observed that crime levels are higher in inner-city neighborhoods than in rural areas. Perhaps the implications of unemployment to urban youths are more severe as compared to the consequences of unemployment for youth in rural areas. The cost of living in inner urban neighborhoods is often higher than rural areas due to commercialization of all basic necessities with cost factors such as housing rent, and food. For this reason, unemployed youth in inner urban neighborhoods have the highest likelihood of engaging in crime while compared to the unemployed young people in rural areas.

The Impact of Youth Unemployment on Crime Rate

The researcher sought to establish the extent to which youth unemployment affects the rates of crime in Uvwie Local Government area. The Table 4.3 below presents the results given by the respondents

Table 4 Impact of Youth Unemployment on Crime Rates

(Where 5 – Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2 - Disagree, and 1 - Strongly Disagree).

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Total Cumulative Frequency
Inadequate government policy for youth employment raises the crime rates	15%	26%	33%	22%	4%	100%
Hopeful youths who lack gainful opportunities resort to crime	8%	49%	29%	14%	0%	100%
Youth unemployment causes unsustainable economic growth due to limited youth participation	8%	29%	49%	10%	4%	100%
The consequences of unemployment like poverty and inequity lead to crime	26%	49%	10%	15%	0%	100%
Most unemployed young people move to urban						



slums to engage in crime, prostitution, drug abuse, and alcoholism	41%	39%	6%	0%	14%	100%
Overpopulation coupled with poor policy governance leads to increased crime rates	24%	41%	21%	9%	5%	100%
Youth crime increase forces businesses to hire armed security personnel at more costs	19%	43%	18%	16%	4%	100%
Inadequate training and outdated school curriculum undermine skill development, and increase crime rates	31%	35%	20%	8%	6%	100%
Unemployed youths are easily lured to terror gangs, political violence	23%	50%	10%	8%	9%	100%

The results indicate that 44 respondents (41%) agreed, 35 respondents (33%) were neutral, while 28 respondents (26%) disagreed that lack of consistent government policy, law and order, and rule of law limited the youth absorption by the labor market thus increasing the crime rates. A mean of 4.245 and standard deviation of .6234 was recorded. One can conclude that lack of law and order, and inconsistent government policies for youth employment contributes significantly to the rising crime rates among young people in Uvwie Local Government area. The results indicate that 79 respondents (74%) agreed, 17 respondents (16%) were neutral while 11 respondents (10%) disagreed that people see crime as the only way that can help them obtain material goods which they can't obtain through legitimate ways. Some 61 respondents (57%) of the respondents agreed, 31 respondents (29%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that when youth continue to hope for better chances in the future but lack opportunities, they resort to crime. A mean of 3.541 and standard deviation of .3543 was recorded. These findings leads to the conclusion that hopelessness and lack of opportunities among working age youth makes them vulnerable and predisposes them to criminal activities.

In chart 4.3.3, the results indicate that 40 respondents (37%) agreed, 52 respondents (49%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that unemployment leads to unsustainable growth of the economy, reduced number of workforce absorption into the labor market, limited youth participation in production activities, retarded economic growth and encourages young people to join criminal insurgencies. A mean of 3.678 and standard deviation of .3543 was recorded. These findings have high number of neutral respondents who do not give conclusive indications on the link between unemployment and limited youth participation in production or their absorption into the labor market. In chart 4.3.4, the results indicate that 86 respondents (80%) of the respondents agreed, 6 respondents (6%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that majority of unemployed youths ended up in the slums and streets where they engage in petty crimes such as drug abuse, prostitution and alcoholism. Therefore, unemployment predisposes youth people to slum dwelling and exposes them to criminal social groups known for prostitution, drug abuse, alcoholism and crime. The results indicate that some 70 respondents (65%) agreed, 22

respondents (21%) were neutral while 15 respondents (14%) disagreed that the current situation of overpopulation coupled with inadequate employment policies have led to increased crime rates. The results indicate that 66 respondents (62%) agreed, 19 respondents (18%) were neutral while 21 respondents (20%) disagreed that due to the increase in crimes committed by unemployed youths, businesses have opted to hire armed security personnel, leading to additional cost of running businesses. This leads to the conclusion that overpopulation coupled with lack of adequate employment policies could lead to increased crime rates among the youth and that youth crime increases business costs for entrepreneurs. The results indicate that 66% of the respondents agreed that inadequate training and an outdated school curriculum have led to increases in crime rates since the youths do not have job related skills. Some 14% of the respondents disagreed with this claim, while 20% remained neutral. These results confirm the notion that skills mismatch among young people is caused by outdated school curricula that do not meet the realities in the job market. The finding leads to the conclusion that crime rates can be reduced if the government renews school curricula and provide adequate training to young people. The results indicate that 78 respondents (73%) agreed, 11 respondents (10%) were neutral while 18 respondents (17%) disagreed that unemployed youths are easily lured to terror gangs, and political violence. This leads to the conclusion that unemployment is a risk factor for young participation in terror gangs, and political violence.

From the findings, the researcher further determined that unemployment forces young people to cohabit with their parents for youth longer periods than expected. This increases tension levels in the families with both mental and financial crisis. The research data shows that unemployment leads to early school drop out by girls and women in order to facilitate their family's wellbeing by earning some income. This leads to depression, increased crime rates, and substances abuse among the youth. The violence meted on politicians by slum dwellers shows that they are not ready to forget these promises. Furthermore, the researcher's data pointed to the reality that the government is yet to deal with the problem of organized political gangs that were formed in 2007 after a decade.



The second objective of this study was to analyze the impact of youth unemployment on crime rates. After the research, it was found that 41% of the respondents agreed to the statement that lack of consistent government policy, law and order, and rule of law limited the rate of youth absorption into the labor market, and consequently increased the rates of crime. A mean of 4.245 and standard deviation of .6234 was recorded.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study tested the theory that youth unemployment influences the rates of crime in Uvwie Local Government. The results confirmed that high rates of youth unemployment cause increased crime rates in Uvwie Local Government. A majority of the study respondents identified youth unemployment as a leading cause for increased crime rates in Uvwie Local Government. This is because youth unemployment forces young people to seek for alternative ways to earn a living. Quite often, the unemployed youth will engage in illegal activities like prostitution, violent robbery, and stealing to meet their basic needs when they fail to get legal gainful employment. For this reason, any interventions that seek to address the problem of high crime rates among urban youth must deliver programs and initiatives that will reduce the rates of youth unemployment.

Recommendations

To address the first objective of this study about interrogating the influence of youth unemployment on urban crime, this study recommends that the government should develop an integrated information system which stores bio-data of all youth who are unemployed in Uvwie Local Government so that they can receive unemployment benefits. This recommendation would meet the first objective of this study by providing sufficient data on youth unemployment to the government. This information would be used to interrogate the influence of youth unemployment on urban crime. A great reduction in the number of violent crimes reported could be observed if these measures are put in place.

To address the second objective of this study about analyzing the impact of youth unemployment on crime rates, the study confirmed that there is a connection between youth unemployment and high crime rates. This study recommends that proper policies for youth empowerment should be developed to fight the problem of youth unemployment by enhancing access to initiatives like youth funds and 30% preference in public procurement for youth. There is also need to increase youth access to information on affordable sources of funding such as the youth fund and 30% preference in public procurement for youth.

To address the third objective of this study about investigating the reasons why urban youths are attracted to criminality, the study determined that youth unemployment, high rates of poverty, perceived political disenfranchisement, high rewards from crime, and other myriad factors lead youth into criminality. In order to address the problem of youth unemployment, and high rates of poverty as some of the factors that attract youth to crime, this study recommends that entrepreneurship training and skills

should be made mandatory in all stages of the education system. Its implementation should be overseen by a special team of monitors so as to uphold standards and resources accountability. This study also recommends the establishment of vocational training centers in poor neighborhoods and slums to provide graduates with the right technical skills required for the job market. Theyouths can also be engaged in direct employment for casual labor in public projects to reduce their rampant unemployment and enhance their working experience.

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