

Poor Education and Unemployment Implications for Youth Crimes in Nigeria

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Abstract: Research on the correlation between education, occupation and criminality among the youth has grown both in length, and complexity in the last two decades. Using a mixed-method analysis, this study concurs that educational and occupational variables are significant determinants of criminal propensities but maintains two sides of the same coin by contending that the level of educational attainment of the youth does not grossly influence their involvement in criminal activities, whereas it draws on occupational attainment as a strong factor for the pervasive involvement of youth in criminality. Taking evidence from Nigeria, the study recommends policies that will review and implement youth entrepreneurial development, educational re-orientation and creation of more job opportunities, as a life-changing instrument against crime.

Keywords: Crime, Educational and occupational attainment, Socio-economic variables, Youth criminality.

INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic conditions have shown to influence the behavior of Nigerian youth in recent times. These same constraints have also been observed to play a cardinal role in the unabated growth of more egregious criminal activities recorded among this population. In effect, the incidence of crime in Nigeria has taken a dramatic turn since its independence in 1960 and appears to have grown worse since the end of the Nigerian civil war in January 1970 (Aremu and Buhari, 2017). In the wake of the 21st century, the trends became more exacerbated with the introduction of newly-invented sophisticated technologies (Jensen and Levin, 2020). However, according to a wide array of recent research inquiries on crime in Nigeria, the high trend of crime has led to an incontrovertible assertion that Nigeria has a “cumbersome crime problem”. Such that has pushed the nation to the forefront of criminality; and thus, being labelled as one of the most dangerous crime zones in the world (Jensen and Levin, 2020; Brown, 2003.)

Today in Nigeria, millions of our youths wander the streets daily in search of non-existent jobs. Children who should be in schools are on the highways hawking pure water, bread, plantain chips, bananas and oranges (Umar, Johnson, and Cheshire, 2020). With this awkward situation persisting in the nation, suggestions such as expansion of the country’s productive base (rather than the consumption base) will ensure gainful employment opportunities for these

youths, and this is likely to lead to a drop in the crime rate (ibid). In discussing the continuing increase of crime in Nigeria over the two decades, the Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledged that “the rate of increase far outstrips our economic, technological and social development rates, either individually, or put together”. (Aliyu, 2018; Meagher, 2010; the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1980:2)

The pervasiveness of youth criminality in Nigeria has wholly and partly ascribed to an individual’s socioeconomic status. Socio economic status (SES), concerning this study, is an economic and sociological total combined measure of a person’s work experience and individual’s or family’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. This study has put together enough evidence to argue that social and economic factors have exerted an impact on the state of people’s lives, which in turn, influence their behaviour (Manstead, 2018; Ellis, 1991).

Socio-economic factors are measures that attempt to classify individual’s families or households in terms of indicators such as religion, education, occupation, income, age, marital status, family and housing condition, etc. (Oakes and Andrade, 2017; Nayak, 2012). Research has shown that several factors influence the incidence of crime and violence in any society. These factors include but are not limited to poverty and inequality, unemployment and underemployment, the growing economic gap between the rich and the poor, a lack of judicious parental guidance and the reluctance to pursue positive opportunities (Roy, Ray and Haldar, 2019). However, the involvement of youths in crime and violence has

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also been linked to other developmental issues including poor educational opportunities and feelings of exclusion from the governance process (Abdullah, 2018; Amin and Ahmad, 2018). Every Society has rules and regulations or the “dos” and “don’ts” that govern individual as well as group conducts. Without these rules and regulations, the society would be a chaotic place to live in while in some cases, may degenerate into the Hobbesian State of Nature - “war of all against all” (Allen and Thora, 2016; Igbo, 2007). Therefore, people are expected to obey the norms or rules and regulations of their society. While some do, others do not. Those who do not are called by various names such as, non-conformists, innovators or deviants, or (sometimes, criminals, when adjudged by the court of law)

Although, Emile Durkheim (1938) as cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2013) as well as Ben-Yehuda (2019), established that crime is an inevitable and normal aspect of social life. Crime is present in all types of society; indeed, the crime rate is higher in more industrialized countries. According to Durkheim, crime is “an integral part of all healthy societies”. It is inevitable because not every member of society can be equally committed to the collective sentiments (the shared values and moral beliefs) of society. However, crime according to (Zucca, 2020; Tappan, 1960:10; quoted in Safdar Shabir and Javed, 2016), refers to any instrumental conduct or act that violates the criminal law and for which punishment is prescribed and administered by the state. Legally speaking, without criminal law, there cannot be a crime. Criminal law, on the other hand, is a branch of public law which deals with the relationship between members of the public and the state (Safdar Shabir and Javed, 2016). Moreover, “section 2 of the Nigerian Criminal Code Act (2004), defines crime as an act or omission which renders the person doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment under this code, or under any act, or law”. From the standpoint of this study, it is grossly apparent that Nigeria has several active criminal laws, yet the situation of crime among the youth continues to escalate on daily basis at every nook and cranny of the country without any viable and substantive measures for improvement.

Furthermore, criminality has touched almost all sectors of the country. It has not even spared the bureaucrats, politicians, religious preachers, and law executors. Hence crime has become a major area of concern and it needs tremendous joint efforts by the state agency to fight against such criminality and revert

the youth criminal mind into the society through the process of streamlining them with social values and responsibilities. To address this scourge among the affected group, two salient questions are raised by Academicians, Sociologists, Criminologists, Researchers, Reformers and Legislators:

- i. Why are youths indulged in crime commission?
- ii. What are the possible steps available for their rehabilitation?

The current research has been conducted to investigate the socio-economic conditions of the youth, attempting to analyze the educational and occupational statuses of the affected group; given the fact that these two variables are important determinants of youth criminal tendencies in Lagos, Nigeria. Nonetheless, our youths are the most active part of our population. They are energy-packed, vibrant, inquisitive, restless, promising, and often unlimitedly creative. Their energies and passions can be deployed either positively or negatively. Their presence, impacts, and activities are ubiquitous –at home, school, streets, sporting arenas, dancing halls, market places, factories, etc. (Chidiebere, Iloanya, and Udunze, 2014). No wonder, policing of youths is a very challenging and complex task in Nigeria. While it may be unfair to generalize and demonize our youths as the crime-prone segment of our population, it is an undeniable fact that a significant proportion of crimes committed in our society today are committed by our young people (Omoniyi, Nor, Yusop and Bello, 2019). Based on the findings of this study, the category of crimes prevalent among the Nigerian youth includes but is not limited to armed robbery, car snatching, kidnapping, cybercrime (yahoo), burglary, rape, murder (killing for political gains and money rituals), forgery, kidnapping, prostitution, pipeline vandalism, larceny, shoplifting etcetera.

Having more understanding of the nexus between criminal behaviour and socioeconomic status of the Nigerian youth at large, Weinberg, *et al.* (2002), in a study conducted at Ohio State University, unveiled that “a poor economy has an immense impact on crime rates. Weinberg and colleagues studied national crime rates between 1979 and 1997 and found that the increase in crime during that period was most likely attributable to falling wages and increased unemployment among low-educated men. Weinberg, *et al.* further stressed that crime increases with declining wages because the payoff for criminal activity is

greater; and this instance is synonymous with the current criminal trends in Nigeria.

It should be noted that crimes are relatively linked with behaviour and law, and that crime is not peculiar to a particular society. A lot of crimes are committed and reported daily by people, mass media and police force; of which Bariga Local Council Development Area is not left out of this ugly social trend. A reasonable number of criminals at this study location are youths between the ages of 18 and 40 years. The focus laid on youth involvement as the high-risk clusters is as a result of the negative impact criminal behaviour has on them, which has also called for several efforts, aimed at submerging the national and global scourge. However, this study was designed to examine, among other socio-economic factors, the educational and occupational status of youths that are involved in criminality at Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. This attempt may probably give us a well-established fact regarding the degree at which these two variables have influenced an individual's natural propensity for committing a crime in Nigeria

AN OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL CONSTRUCT AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Education is one of the major transformational instruments for maintaining a stable society; however, education should be recognized as the bedrock, prime-mover, and corner-stone towards improving human and societal development. For Ninalowo (2004), one of the major responsibilities of the State and its functionary or agents is to provide qualitative and quantitative education for the youth and the aged for transformation and reformation of mind towards positive thinking and acting. Any state that fails from providing a sound education for the youth is planning towards warfare society or development while the state that has solid and sound plans for the youth and aged education is moving towards creating a welfare State or development (Ninalowo, 2004).

It should be noted that youth who drop out of school may be influenced by a more negative set of peers, who may exacerbate any tendencies to engage in crime. All of these research inquiries, therefore, suggest that youth will tend to make an early choice between little education and a life of street crime or a good education and largely a crime-free life. More importantly, in every society, including Nigeria, it is only those with good educational qualifications that are

employable in the labour market. However, the labour force of any society depends largely on the youth. The implication of this is that, those who are not eligible for employment in the labour market are likely to indulge in criminal activities in order to make a living, since they are not employable as a result of their low level of education (Ebobo, 2016; Lochner, 2004). Empirically, there is a strong negative correlation between educational attainment and various measures of crime. Freeman (1996) points out that more than two-thirds of all incarcerated men in America in 1993 had not graduated from high school (See also Apel and Ramakers, 2018; Freeman, 1992).

Addressing other factors that can predispose the youth into criminality, Kopaka (2009) states that:

“Another factor that could be held responsible for youth involvement in criminal activities in African continent is attributed to cost sharing policy in educational system. Anticipating that education might help their children progress, many parents including single mothers have gone at great length to send their children to schools. Furthermore, to many of these parents, education meant a well-paid-job, a big house, a car and other life-promoting benefits”.

However, it should be noted that education increases future wage rates. In other words, the higher the education one acquires, the higher the wage rates vice versa. Youth who have attained a higher level of education, will be less likely to engage in crime than otherwise similar youth who have not attained such level of education (Bell, Bindler, and Machin, 2018).

According to Kent and Mushi (2006), schooling is not exogenously determined. Youth will choose to enrol in school if they receive a net benefit from doing so, otherwise, they will not. Not only does an increase in wages for high school graduates or College attendees reduce crime for all youths who would have attained these schooling levels in the first place, but it also causes more youths to complete high school and attend College, lowering their lifetime criminal activity as well. Education socializes individuals to become better citizens and to treat others better, it may also reduce the psychic returns to crime, causing individuals to forgo lucrative criminal opportunities. Education may also teach individuals to be more patient. This will discourage crime, since forward-looking individuals

place greater weight on any expected punishment associated with their criminal activities. Education may also affect preferences towards risk. To the extent that schooling makes individuals more risk-averse, and thus helps in discouraging crime (Lochner, 2004).

However, youths who plan to commit more crime as adults, will tend to benefit less from each year of school for two reasons. First, those who allocate more time to crime and less to work will benefit less from the increased wages associated with schooling (assuming schooling raises legitimate wages more than the returns from crime). Second, those who commit more crime can expect to spend more time in prison, a place which offers little rewards to additional schooling. As a result, educational decisions may depend on factors that affect the returns to or costs of crime. Education may also develop criminal skills; although, this is likely to be important for certain white-collar crimes such as fraud, forgery, and embezzlements. Alternatively, education may socialize individuals such that they prefer not to engage in crimes. (Lochner, 2004). Indeed, the youth, especially the school going ones, see their friends, brothers, sisters and cousins who completed school before them, staying for long periods at home without gainful or productive employment. They lost hopes in acquiring education, most of them turn to negative innovation which is harmful, and threatens human and nation's development.

Kambewa, Phillips and Collins (2001), in a study conducted in Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa, showed that community leaders and the youth complained that the major reasons for increase in criminal activities among the youth is as a result of the educational system, needed to equip youth with adequate skills, to be able to compete in the labour force. Neither does the educational sector prepare students to go into self-employment enterprise activities. The system is largely geared towards providing basic literacy and numeracy skills for eventual expression in the formal labour market. It is, therefore, a type of education that does not adequately prepare the learners to face the practical realities of their environment (Kambewa, *et al.*, 2001).

AN OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATIONAL CONSTRUCT AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

It is generally believed that the two words "occupation" and "income" are like a coin of opposite sides. The occupational status of an individual may

likely determine his or her income in a situation or an organization. However, there is a relatively large literature linking wages and unemployment rates to criminal behaviour. Recent studies by Machin and Meghir (2004) and Gould, Mustard and Weinberg (2002) assert that crime is increasing in local unemployment rates and decreasing in wage rates. To this end, education increases wage rates and reduces the likelihood of unemployment, it also increases the opportunity costs of crime and will tend to reduce post-school criminal activity (Gould *et al.*, 2002).

According to Crutchfield, (1989), the pattern of employment or lack of employment influences the degree of one's criminal involvement; not only because certain marginal employment patterns undermine commitment to legal rules, but also because those same employment patterns create opportunities for participation in the collective processes that underlie most types of criminal activity. The occupational levels of the youths have been observed to be responsible for criminal behaviour. It can, therefore, be described as the conglomerate of youths with a diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any when supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour; thus, it causes "joblessness" and "unemployment". However, the consequences of this are increase in crime rates.

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey and Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted to generate both quantitative and qualitative information for the study. The purpose of the data triangulation approach is to provide a confluence of evidence that can breed credibility to the research (Eisner, 2017; Bowen, 2009). The study was conducted at Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State (BLCDA). The reason for this choice was because criminal activities seem to be on the rise among the youth in the local setting.

The scope of the study was strictly streamlined to socio-economic factors responsible for criminal behaviour among the youth at BLCDA. The study utilized data collected from cross-sectional survey and key informant interviews to discuss the phenomenon in relation to the existing literature. Survey questionnaires were used as research instrument; and were structured in such a way that adequate information was elicited on research questions, objectives, and hypotheses; and the questionnaires were arranged in sections. Questionnaires were randomly administered only to the

youth (both males and females) within the age bracket of 18-40; with a total of one hundred (100) youths selected through simple random technique in the survey. However, in the qualitative research design, focus was placed on the youth within the same age bracket 18-40; and a total of eight (8) key informants were purposively selected across different educational and occupational statuses using a purposive sampling technique. The key informants were purposively selected based on their adequate knowledge of the topic being investigated. One of the basic advantages of the key informants to the study was that it helped establish a rapport between the principal investigator and Bariga local community. This approach was highly appropriate since the method allowed us to probe and delve in-depth into major issues under study. The ultimate essence of the key informant interview section was to complement our findings in the survey.

In the analysis section, since the data generated from the study required a mixed- method approach, data analysis incorporating descriptive and inferential analytical techniques was employed to analyze the collected data. For a quantitative analytical method, SPSS version 25/PC (Computer Software Package, MS Window 12, with univariate and bivariate levels of analysis) was employed to analyze the collected data. In the qualitative section, NVivo software was used for data management. And to facilitate analysis, thematic content analysis was utilized to describe and organize the emerging themes as well as the interpretation of the phenomena identified in collected data.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows that 51 (56.7%) of the respondents interviewed were males, while 39 (43.3%) were females. The outcome of the research inquiry shows that majority of the respondents that took part in the research were males.

Table 2 shows that 40 (44.4%) of the respondents interviewed were in the age bracket of 33years - 37 years, 26 (28.9%) were in the age bracket (23-27), 15(16.7) were between 18 years and 22 years, 8 (8.9%) occupied the ages between 38 and 42 years, while 1 (1.1%) were in the age bracket (28-32). This indicates that the majority of the respondents that took part in the research were in the age bracket (33-37), which is equivalent to 40%.

Table 3 shows that the 40 (44.4%) of the respondents were self-employed, 28 (31.1%) of them were on paid employment, while 22 (24.4%) of them were unemployed. The outcome of the research inquiry shows that the highest percentage of those that took part in the research were self-employed.

On the level of monthly income, 29 (32.2%) of the respondents claimed to be earning 40,000 and above per month, 27 (30%) earned 10,000, 15 (16.7%) both claimed to be earning 20,000 and 30,000 per month, only 4 (4.4%) declared that they earned 15,000 per month. This shows the respondents with 32.2% earned the highest salary per month in the study location.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Sex

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	51	56.7	56.7	56.7
	Female	39	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-22	15	16.7	16.7	16.7
	23-27	26	28.9	28.9	45.6
	28-32	1	1.1	1.1	46.7
	33-37	40	44.4	44.4	91.1
	38-42	8	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Current Occupational Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Paid employment	28	31.1	31.1	31.1
	Self-employed	40	44.4	44.4	75.6
	Unemployed	22	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Level of Monthly Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10000	27	30.0	30.0	30.0
	15000	4	4.4	4.4	34.4
	20000	15	16.7	16.7	51.1
	30000	15	16.7	16.7	67.8
	40000 and above	29	32.2	32.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by do you Think that One's Level of Income or Occupational can Determine his or her Involvement in Criminal Activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	64	71.1	71.1	71.1
	No	26	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 64(71.1%) of the respondents agreed that one's level of income can determine his involvement in criminal behaviour, while 26(28.9%) were of different opinion.

The table shows that 38 (42.2%) were satisfied with their monthly income, while 52 (57.8%) declared that they were not satisfied with their monthly income. Outcome of the study shows that majority of the respondents in the study location were not satisfied with their monthly income. This could suggest that some of the respondents in the study location can involve in criminal activities to better their economic condition if they had the opportunity.

On the question of whether the respondents can do illegal business, 65 (72.2%) disagreed that they could not do any form of illegal business, while 25 (27.8%) agreed that they could do it. The 25 (27.8%) corroborates the outcome in Table 8 that some respondents can do illegal business to better their financial conditions.

On the question about whether it is wrong to do illegal business in order to survive, 72 (80%) of the respondents were in support, while only 18(20%) disagreed to the idea. This suggests that the majority of the respondents in the study location can do illegal

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by are you Satisfied with your Monthly Income?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	42.2	42.2	42.2
	No	52	57.8	57.8	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by if no to Q6, can you do Illegal Business to Earn Income if no One will be Physically Hurt?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	27.8	27.8	27.8
	No	65	72.2	72.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by do you Think it is Wrong to do Illegal Business to Survive?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	72	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	18	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by among these Activities, which One do you Think Unemployed Youth can do to Earn Income?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Robbery	19	21.1	21.1	21.1
	Kidnapping	8	8.9	8.9	30.0
	selling hard drugs	9	10.0	10.0	40.0
	Prostitution	11	12.2	12.2	52.2
	political thuggery	7	7.8	7.8	60.0
	pipeline vandalism	2	2.2	2.2	62.2
	Cyber crime	34	37.8	37.8	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

business to improve their living conditions. This also supports the findings in Table 7.

The table shows that 19 (21.1%) of the respondents said unemployed youth can engage in robbery to earn income, 11 (12.2%) in prostitution, 9 (10%) in selling hard drugs, 8 (8.9%) in kidnapping, 7 (7.8%) in political thuggery, 2 (2.2%) in pipeline vandalism, while 34 (37.8) admitted that they could involve in cybercrime to earn income.

The table below shows that 79 (87.8%) of the participants were of the opinion that socio-economic factors are responsible for youth criminal behaviour, 11 (12.2%) disagreed that socioeconomic factors are responsible for youth criminal behaviour. Outcome of the research inquiry shows that majority of the respondents agreed that socio-economic factors are the major causes of criminal behaviour among youths.

The table reveals that 77 (85.6%) of the respondents are more likely to be involved in criminal

Table 10: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by do you think Socioeconomic Factors are Responsible for Youth Criminal Behaviour?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	87.8	87.8	87.8
	No	11	12.2	12.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 11: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by are Youths more Likely to Indulge in Criminal Activities than Adults?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	77	85.6	85.6	85.6
	No	13	14.4	14.4	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Higher Educational Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	10	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Primary	13	14.4	14.4	25.6
	Secondary	33	36.7	36.7	62.2
	Polytechnic	18	20.0	20.0	82.2
	University	16	17.8	17.8	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

activities than adults, while 13 (14.4%) were not in support of the opinion. 85.6% of the respondents shows that youths in the study location are more likely to be involved in criminal behaviour than adults.

The table shows that 33 (36.75%) of the participants held secondary school education, 18 (20%) of them were of polytechnic level of education, 16 (17.8%) claimed to have a university education, 10 (11.1%) were illiterates. This indicates that majority of the respondents in the research inquiry held a secondary school degree.

On the question of whether educational attainment leads to youth involvement in criminal activities, 33 (36.7%) were of the opinion that educational attainment leads to youth involvement in criminal activities, while 57 (63.3%) did not agree to the position. Given that 63.3% of the respondents did not agree that educational attainment can lead to youth involvement in criminality, there is need to believe that educational status is a weak indicator for criminal tendency among the youth.

The table shows that 68 (75.6%) of the respondents agreed that low educational attainment can increase

Table 13: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by do you Think Educational Attainment Leads to Youth Involvement in Criminal Activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	36.7	36.7	100.0
	No	57	63.3	63.3	63.3
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by if Yes to q13 Above, does Low Educational Qualification Increase Crime Rate among the Youth?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	68	75.6	75.6	75.6
	No	22	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 15: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by does Educational Qualification of Youth Open more Opportunity to be Self-Reliant?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	78	86.7	86.7	86.7
	No	12	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 16: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by are School Drop- Outs Likely to Engage in Criminal Activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	70	77.8	77.8	77.8
	No	20	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

crime rate among the youth, while 22 (24.4%) were of negative opinion. Outcome of the research inquiry shows that majority of the participants agreed that low educational attainment leads to an increase in crime rate.

The table reveals that 78(86.7%) of the respondents are of the opinion that educational qualification of youth open more opportunity to be self-reliant, while 12(13.3%) said 'No' to the opinion.

On the question of whether school drop-outs are likely to engage in criminal activities, 70 (77.8%) were in support of the fact that school drop-outs are likely to engage in criminal activities, while 20 (22.2%) were not in support. Since 77.8% of the respondents were in

support of the opinion, outcome of the research inquiry reveals that school drop-outs are likely to engage in criminal activities.

The table reveals that 75(83.3) of the respondents agreed that lack of education leads to youth involvement in criminal activities, while 15(16.7%) of the respondents were not in support. Outcome of the research inquiry shows that majority of the respondents agreed that lack of education leads to youth involvement in criminal activities.

On the question on whether criminal behaviour among the youth has solutions, 85 (94.4%) of the respondents said that criminal behaviour among the youth has solutions, while only 5 (5.6%) said it did not.

Table 17: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by do you Think Lack of Education Leads to Youth Involvement in Criminal Activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	83.3	83.3	83.3
	No	15	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Table 18: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by if Criminal Behaviour among the Youth has Solutions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	85	94.4	94.4	94.4
	No	5	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Outcome of the research inquiry indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that there are solutions to youth criminal behaviours.

DISCUSSION

Correlation Between Educational Attainment and Youth Involvement in Criminal Activities

Findings from the study have revealed that the level of educational attainment of the youth does not actually influence their involvement in crime. Outcome of the study as shown in Table 19 revealed that there is no significant relationship between educational attainment of youths and their involvement in criminal behaviour at 0.090 level of significance at the study location. Despite that education is one of the major transformational instruments for maintaining a stable society; however, education should be recognized as the bedrock, prime-mover, and corner-stone towards improving human and societal development. Nevertheless, the study revealed

that the level of people's education cannot decide whether they should or they should not involve in criminal activities. Findings from some of the respondents showed that even people who are well educated with good job opportunities are also at the forefront of criminal activities in Nigeria. In the study, there were a number of informants interviewed that claimed never to have involved in any form of criminal acts, despite their poor economic conditions.

According to a key informant:

"The level of one's education does not have anything to do with his or her involvement in criminal act. most of the crimes perpetrated in this part of Lagos as I know were either carried out or influenced by learned people and well-educated people at the peak of their carriers".

Table 19: Higher Educational Level* are Youths more Likely to Indulge in Criminal Activities than Adults Crosstabulation

		Youth involvement in criminal activities		Total	
		Yes	No		
Higher Educational Level	None	Count	9	1	10
		% within the Higher educational level	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	Primary	Count	9	4	13
		% within the Higher educational level	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%
	Secondary	Count	26	7	33
		% within the Higher educational level	78.8%	21.2%	100.0%
	Polytechnic	Count	17	1	18
		% within the Higher educational level	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%
	University	Count	16	0	16
		% within the Higher educational level	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	77	13	90	
	% within the Higher educational level	85.6%	14.4%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.038 ^a	4	.090
Likelihood Ratio	9.951	4	.041
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.375	1	.066
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.44. Since the $\chi^2 = 8.038a$, $df=4$, $Asymp.Sig.(2-sided) = 0.090$. Since the value $Asymp.Sig$ value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, we, therefore, concluded there is no significant relationship between level of education and youth involvement in criminal behaviour. Thus, we accept the H_0 and reject the H_1

Further interview with a-30- year old driver union secretary at Bariga added that:

“As for me anybody can commit crime...it does not have to do with whether you are educated or not. Even in Lagos here, most crimes that we have seen on the television -and other social media- were perpetrated by people who are educated and have political influence. So, what are we saying?”

According to the Head of Bariga Market Vigilante group:

“Crime and education are two different entities. I don’t believe lack of education can cause anyone to go into crime except that you are interested in doing it. Educated people commit crime while uneducated also commit crime. So, it depends on what you choose to do with your life”

Several scholarly inquiries have anchored possibility of youth criminal behaviour on educational attainment vis-à-vis good wages (Bell, Bindler, and Machin, 2018; Kambewa, Phillips and Collins 2001). Inter alia was a study conducted by Kent and Mushi (2006), when they asserted that “not only does an increase in wages for high school graduates or College attendees reduce crime for all youths who would have attained these schooling levels in the first place, but it also causes more youths to complete high school and attend College, lowering their lifetime criminal activity as well”. Contrariwise, this study finds support in the work of Kopaka (2009) asserting that even youths with a very high level of education, coupled with future dependable jobs were also observed to be active in crime perpetration in society. The study also corroborates Lochner’s assumption (2004) that youth with educational capacities may also develop criminal skills in the face of economic hardship or during the course of struggle to acquire more wealth in the materialistic world; although, this is likely to be peculiar to certain white-collar crimes such as fraud, forgery, and embezzlements. However, this study is unique in the sense that it provides a proven deviation from a broad range of global research inquiries that have established a nexus between educational attainment of people and their tendencies for engagement in criminality (See Kent and Mushi, 2006; Lochner, 2004; Ninalowo, 2004; Kambewa, *et al.*, 2001; Freeman, 1992)

Correlation between Youth Occupational Status and their Involvement in Criminal Activities

Findings from the study revealed that the occupational status of youths plays a significant role in their propensity to commit crime. Outcome of the study as expressed in Table 20 shows that there is a significant relationship between occupational status of youths and their involvement in criminal behaviour at 0.007 level of significance at the study location. This shows that youths who are gainfully employed have a lesser tendency to be involved in crime while those with no gainful employment have a probable inclination towards crime.

In furtherance of this assertion, an informant probed that:

“People who are gainfully employed should be more economically stable than those who are not. This means that if one has a good job to survive all the life rigours and expenses, one would never think of getting involved in crime as an alternative means of livelihood. To me as a person, employed people are less involved in criminal acts than the jobless people”.

Furthermore, a-31-year old informant lamented that:

“The rate of criminal activities in Nigeria is positively affected by the increasing levels of unemployment among the youth; and our governments have not found any solution to arrest the situation”.

Further interview with an informant was narrated as follows:

“Unemployment is not good...it can lead anybody to commit crime or do what is not legitimate. Those some do not have a job ooo. Yet they do not go into crime. But some of the youth with criminal activities do not have no a job. So, they find crime as a means to survive in Lagos”.

These informants’ assertions corroborate the findings of Britt (1994) that youth criminal acts are related to their unemployment status. However, this study also supports relatively the large literature linking wages and unemployment rates to criminal behaviour (Machin and Meghir, 2004; Gould, *et al.*, 2002). The

Table 20: Current Occupational Status * Are Youths more Likely to Indulge in Criminal Activities than Adults Crosstabulation

		Count		
		Youth involvement in criminal activities		Total
		Yes	No	
Current Occupational Status	Paid employment	27	1	28
	Self-employed	29	11	40
	Unemployed	21	1	22
Total		77	13	90

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.940 ^a	2	.007
Likelihood Ratio	10.513	2	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	.121	1	.728
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.18.

Since the $\chi^2 = 9.940$, $df=2$, $Asymp.Sig.(2-sided) = 0.007$. Since the value $Asymp.Sig$ value is less than 0.05 level of significance, we, therefore, concluded there is a significant relationship between occupational status and youth involvement in criminal behaviour. Thus, we accept the H_1 and reject the H_0

rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in Nigeria, have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of “provocateurs” as can be seen from the increasing cases of violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom payments, targeted/hired assassinations and other manifestations of organized crimes like drug/human trafficking, that have become unprecedented in our country (See Mela and Ahmad, 2019). Through the inquiry, it was unearthed that youths who are not gainfully employed tend to be idle-minded and thus become more vulnerable to committing crime than those who are gainfully and legitimately employed. This goes on to support the short-witty saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. It was finally reported that an unabated increase in youth crime in Nigeria is more positively related to unemployment, and this relationship is aggravated by a drastic drop in annual levels of youth unemployment and economic opportunities (See Uyang, Nkpoyen and Bassey, 2016; Britt, 1994).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sees that the involvement of youths in criminal activities in Nigeria constitutes a drain on the nation’s human resources – a life situation that renders this population vulnerable to various kinds of life-threatening challenges caused by socio-economic

constraints; some of which have been observed to have predisposed them into criminal activities in Nigeria. Results from the study show that the Nigerian youths are actively involved in a wide range of criminal activities such as prostitution and sexual immoralities, sales of illicit drugs, cybercrime, burglaries, drug and human trafficking, kidnapping, violence, theft, robbery, political thuggery, pipeline vandalism, harbouring of criminals, keeping of weapons for criminals, as well as serving as agents for money rituals. The study, however, found evidence to contend that educational and occupational statuses are important determinants of criminal tendencies, particularly for individuals that live in an unbalanced and socio-economically unstable society. Put differently, it was established that the level of educational attainment of the youth does not actually influence their involvement in criminal activities, whereas the study draws on occupational attainment as a strong factor for youth pervasive involvement in criminality in Nigeria. From this standpoint, there is much evidence to submit that youths who are gainfully employed have a lesser tendency to be involved in crime. Since more than half of the Nigerian population falls under this category, there is need for government and non-governmental institutions to make adequate provision for the needs of this potentially high-risk population group.

In as much as the study still admits that education could be deemed as an influential factor for youth

criminal tendency in some respect, there is need for various societies to embark on a broad range of educative programmes that will reconstruct the mindset of the youth against criminalities. Before this can be accomplished, education (which involves a process of training and administering instructions intended to instil knowledge and develop transferable skills in individuals) should be made available to all interested youths of our contemporary global societies. Thus, for education to be a life-changing instrument against crime, Government should review their educational policies in such a way to restructure the educational sector and equip our youths with culturally acceptable adaptive mechanism to cope with the ever-dynamic global economy. A combination of these efforts should assist in reducing crime among the youth, not only in Nigeria but also across the global spectrum.

Since occupational attainment of the youth is a trigger factor for their criminal tendency in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria should be called to pioneer massive youth development programmes aimed at developing the vocational and entrepreneurial skills of the youth; create more job opportunities and embark on a recruitment exercise for all categories of employable and unemployed youths, who are willing to work, but remain unemployed. If Jobs with appreciable income could be made available to the millions of unemployed and low-income youths, it is hoped that there would be radical reduction in the incidence of crime in Nigeria. There are many more policies that the government should review and put in place to combat youth involvement in crime in Nigeria. These include "Economic Policies" aimed at eliminating poverty and hunger, which are the major causes of crime among the affected population. Other policies that should be put in place encompass "Youth Welfare Policy" aimed at addressing the particular problems of the youth, as well as the "Rehabilitative and Youth Health Policy" that will design rehabilitative programmes and support mechanism for the youth. This will also incorporate counselling with an in-built strategy for behavioural change and cognitive restructuring that would enhance an alternative means of livelihood.

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Received on 22-03-2020

Accepted on 15-04-2020

Published on 20-04-2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.09>

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