

Factors Facilitating Youth Restiveness In Lafia Metropolis of Nasarawa State of Nigeria. Implications for Counselling Youths for National Stability and Integration.

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Abstract

The paper investigated the factors that aid youth restiveness in Lafia metropolis of Nasarawa State. The population consisted of all the youths who are within the ages of 19-35 years. A sample size of 500 was through the multi stage random sampling technique selected from the population of youths living in Lafia in Nasarawa State. A questionnaire titled “Factors of Youth Restiveness” was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was validated for face, content and construct. The reliability was ascertained by the test-retest method .Three research hypotheses were raised to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis I was tested by students’ t-test, hypothesis two by Pearson Product Moment Correlation and hypothesis iii by multiple regression analysis. Findings from the study indicated a significant difference between male and female youths and their restiveness, and no significant difference in youths’ restiveness and their religious background. Unemployment, poverty and lack of infrastructural facilities are predictors of youths’ restlessness. Unemployment was the highest predictor. This study has implications for counselling youths for national stability and integration. Recommendations were made to curb youth restiveness.

Introduction

Background to the study

Youth restiveness is a common phenomenon in present Nigerian society. There has been an increase in the occurrence of acts of violence and lawlessness such as oil bunkering, arms insurgency, cultism and kidnapping which often lead

to taking hostage prominent citizens and even expatriates, especially oil workers. Elegbeleye (2005) defined youth restiveness as a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome from constituted authorities by an organized body of youths, marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities. Chikuezi (2009) explained youth restiveness as a combination of actions or conduct that constitutes or runs contrary to accepted societal norms and standard. Youth violence has spread itself throughout the fabric of the Nigerian community. There are various youth vanguards, most of which have ethnic background such as the Odua People Congress (OPC) in the South West, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People in the oil rich South-South, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Emancipation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South East, the Bakassi Boys of the Niger-Delta Region, the dreadful Boko-Haram religious group terrorizing the North-East, and Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) . The researcher observed that the elites that constitute a small segment of the Nigerian society and who more often than not are aspirants to and competitors for power and privileges are the primary users of sub-ethnic sentiments as a mask to defend vested class interests. The process associated with democratization such as the party system and elections provide a congenial atmosphere for the negative manipulation and mobilization of the youths and clannish identities.

The National Youth Development Policy defined youths as people aged between 18-35 years. Youths occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged. Onyekpe (2007), also found that besides numerical superiority, youths have energy and ideas that are society's great potential. The National Youth Development Policy (FRN, 2001) asserted that:

*“Youths are foundation of a society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation. On their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose and because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured.”*Page1

Ozolu-Sulaiman (2006) opined that youths are the major determiners of peace and stability in a nation. Conversely, the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined by them.

Unemployment as observed by the researcher, may be a major facilitator of youth restiveness. An adage says the devil finds work for the idle hand. Unemployment, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) is a number of the economically active population who are without but available for and seeking work. Adebayo (1999) defined an unemployed person as a member of the labour force who wishes to work but cannot find any or cannot find the type of job he is trained to do. Ozohu-Suleiman (2006) believed that unemployment is a hydra-headed monster which exists among youths in all developing countries. He also noted that the Nigerian youths are particularly trapped by it. Zakara (2006) believed that the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youths in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents provocateurs. He went further to state that the lack of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) quoted from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics that Nigeria has a youth population of 64 million; many are unemployed and 1.6million are under-employed. According to Abdullahi (2011), the current youth restiveness is as a result of youthful exuberance, imitation of activities in video films, a vicious poverty cycle and unemployment. Ofem and Ajayi (2008) identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, and lack of good governance as major sources of youth restiveness.

High fecundity among couples has resulted to an increase in population. The 2006 National Population Census put the Nigerian population at 140 million and by 2020, it will be over 180 million with annual growth rate of 3.2% (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009). The high population has resulted to a rapid growth of labour force coupled with the high rate of graduate production by the country's tertiary institutions. Akinwumi Adesina, the former minister for agriculture, as reported in the October edition of 6th 2014 of the Vanguard daily paper said *"that youth unemployment rate is spirally upwards, growing at 11% yearly and concluded that over 4million young people entering the workforce every year with only a small fraction able to find formal employment. He concluded that the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents provocateurs"*.

The youths in Nigeria are involved and in most cases are in the vanguard of violent conflicts that have occurred in different parts of the country. The

intermittent violent crises in different parts of Nigeria in which the youths are largely involved have brought to the fore their level of moral depravity.

Statement of Problem

Youth restiveness threatens the fabric of the Nigerian community. Unrest is everywhere in the country. Every day in the dailies and in the other media one hears of nefarious activities like suicide bombing, robbery, kidnapping, killing, arson, rioting and burning of houses and property. There is no part of the country that is devoid of criminal activities. There are cases of kidnapping of people in high places such as former public office holders, traditional rulers, and religious leaders with demands for millions of naira from their relations before they would be released. Observations by the researcher and comments from the general public reveal that most of these devilish activities are carried out by the youths.

This study therefore sought to find out the causes of youth restiveness which often lead to the manifestation of these criminal activities.

Purpose of Study

This study is to investigate factors that are responsible for youth restiveness such as unemployment among the youths, school curriculum, government policy, lack of infrastructural facilities and poverty. The study will investigate whether religion and sex have any effect on their restiveness.

Research Hypotheses

Three research hypotheses are raised at 0.05 level of significance as:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their perception of factors facilitating youth restiveness.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between youth restiveness and their religious background.

Ho₃: Unemployment, poverty, lack of basic infrastructural facilities and a high rate of corruption among government functionaries will not significantly predict youth restiveness.

Methodology

The design for the study is the descriptive survey type. This is considered appropriate because it focused on the observation and perception of the existing situation. It involved the use of questionnaires and generalizing the results of the sample to population from which inferences were drawn. The population for the study was every individual within 19-35 age bracket with a minimum educational

qualification of Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Lafia (Nasarawa State). The sample consisted of 500 youths selected by the multi-stage random technique. Research Instrument: The instrument is made of a questionnaire titled “Factors that determine youth restiveness”. It consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A contained demographic information such as: sex, religion, educational qualification, marital status, year of graduation from the tertiary institution and age. Section B was made of items on factors that foster restiveness among youths such as unemployment, family background, lack of basic infrastructural facilities, present political terrain, bad government policies and corruption. The respondents were required to indicate their responses to each item as applicable to them based on a 4-point response format of the Likert type ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The responses were scored as follows:

Strongly agree	4 points
Agree	3 points
Disagree	2 points

The instrument was validated for face, content and constructs validities. Coefficient of 0.8 was obtained for the construct validity which was high enough to give credence to the validity.

The reliability was ascertained through a test-retest reliability test by administering the instrument to 20 youths that were not part of the sample for the study on two different occasions at an interval of two weeks using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A coefficient of 0.72 was obtained which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were means, frequency counts and simple percentages for the general question.

Hypothesis one was analysed by students’ t-test, hypothesis two by Pearson Product Moment Correlation and hypothesis three by multiple regression. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Causes of Youth Restiveness

S/No	ITEM	Agree		Disagree	
		F	%		%
1	Lack of unemployment is a major cause of youth restiveness	450	90	50	10
2	Corruption by government functionaries	400	80	100	20
3	High rate of turn -out of graduates	250	50	250	50
4	Dependence on white collar jobs	300	60	200	40
5	Lack of entrepreneurial skills of youths	280	56	180	36
6	Mass poverty of the citizenry	320	64	220	44
7	Lack of infrastructural facilities	260	52	240	48
8	High birth rate	230	46	270	54
9	Entrepreneurial skills not included in the nation's secondary school curriculum	190	38	310	62
10	Government not interested in the welfare of the governed	290	58	210	42

Table 2: Ranking of Causes of Youth Restiveness by Percentages

S/No	Item	Percentage	Rank
1	Unemployment	90	1 ST
2	Corruption	80	2 ND
3	High rate of turn- out of graduates	50	8 TH
4	Dependence on white collar jobs	60	4 TH
5	Lack of entrepreneurial skills	56	6 TH
6	Mass poverty	64	3 RD
7	Lack or basic infrastructure	52	7 TH
8	High birth rate	46	9 TH
9	Government not interested in the welfare of the governed	58	5 TH

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their perception of factors facilitating youth restiveness.

The students' t-test statistic was used to analyse this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal.	t-table
Male	300	59.8	11.23	498	1.419	1.960
Female	200	57.20	9.71			

P< 0.05

Table 3 above indicated that t-table 1.960 was greater than t-calculated 1.419 at 0.05 level of significance hence; there was significant difference between males and females in their perception of factors facilitating youth restiveness. The hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between youth restiveness and religion.

The hypothesis was done by Pearson Moment Product correlation analysis.

Table 4

Variable	N	MEAN	SD	DF	r-cal	r-table
Youth restiveness	500	79.308	13.328	498	0.389	0.461
Religion		24.81	13.420			

The result from table 4 showed a significant difference between youth restiveness and religion since r table 0.461 was greater than r calculated 0.389 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: Unemployment, poverty, lack of infrastructural facilities and corruption will not significantly predict youth restiveness.

Predictors (constant): Unemployment, corruption, poverty and lack of infrastructural facilities.

Dependent variable: Youth restiveness

Table 5 (a)

ANOVA

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	Significant
Regression	39025.073	3	13008.38	000
Residual	76081.343	496	76.387	
Total	1151106.4	499		

Anova table showed that there was a significant difference in the contributions of the predictors on the dependent variable. Unemployment, poverty, lack of infrastructural facilities and corruption contributed significantly to youth restiveness.

Table 5(b) Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	B	Standard error	Beta cot	T	Sig-t
Constant	33.823	1.765	0.i9	19.14	0.000
Unemployment	0.404	0.081	0.412	6.531	0.000
Corruption	0.201	0.057	0.095	3.503	0.000
Poverty	0.303	0.053	0.453	8.721	0.000
Lack of infrastructural facilities	0.092	0.081	0.412	.531	0.000

Regression equation: $(Y_r = U_n + C_o + P_o + L_o)$ while U_n = Unemployment; C_o = corruption; P_o = poverty; L_o =lack of infrastructural facilities; Y_r = youth restiveness). U_n , C_o , P_o , L_o made contributions of 0.404, 0.201, 0.303, 0.092 respectively to youth restiveness. 33.8% (33.8) was the contribution of all the factors to youth restiveness. Other factors such as using youths as political thugs during election periods when they are provided with guns and other weapons accounted for 66.2%. After elections, the weapons could be used for criminal activities since they would already had been abandoned by their political masters. From the findings, it can be concluded that 33.8% of youth restiveness is as a result of unemployment, corruption, poverty and lack of basic infrastructural facilities.

Results and Discussion

What are the causes of youth restiveness?

The responses to items in tables one and two were used to answer this question. Data on strongly agree and agree were calculated under agree while strongly disagree and disagree were calculated under disagree. The percentages of respondents under agree indicated causes of youth restiveness, while responses under disagree indicated the factors that were not responsible for youth restiveness. Table 2 indicated the ranking of the factors. Unemployment, corruption and poverty were ranked first, second and third respectively by the respondents. High birth rate and high rate of turn -out of graduates by tertiary institutions were ranked low at 9th and 8th positions respectively.

Discussion

From the general question on the causes of youth restiveness, unemployment was ranked first with 90% of the respondents agreeing that it was the major factor. This was followed by corruption, poverty and lack of infrastructural facilities. The findings agreed with Ozohu-Suleiman (2011) who opined that Nigerian youths are trapped by unemployment.

Findings from hypothesis two showed no significant relationship between perception of youth restiveness based on gender. These supported the findings of Zachariah (2011) and Ali (2009) that both male and female youths engaged in restiveness due to lack of basic infrastructural facilities in their environment.

Result of hypothesis "0" revealed no significant difference in youth restiveness and religion. This is contrary to the findings of Mahdi (2011), Jega (2009), Ali (2008), Orchard and Ferry (2009) and Kuka (2001) who all identified religious intolerance as one of the causes of youth restiveness.

Findings from hypothesis three revealed that unemployment, corruption, poverty and lack of infrastructural facilities contributed 33.8% to youth restiveness but unemployment was the best predictor because of its greatest contribution of 0.404.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Residential short-term camps for youths should be made available where they will be trained on citizenship, conflict resolution and peaceful living.
2. Peace education should be introduced in all strata of educational curriculum and also be made compulsory.
3. Religious organisations should teach their adherents to be peace ambassadors where ever they find themselves.
4. Skill acquisition training centres should be established in every local government area.
5. Youth economic empowerment must become a priority of government to enable them to be job creators.

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