

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND RESTIVENESS: THE NIGERIAN STORY

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Abstract

In every country or nation especially the developing countries, the major aim of her leadership is to gainfully employ its citizenry especially the youth in order to reduce if not eradicate crime and juveniles. The aim of the research is to determine the effect of youth unemployment to restiveness in the Nigeria context. The research used the survey research design. The research surveyed 100 people from both Federal and State Parastatals. Data collected from the field was processed and presented in form of simple percentage distribution tables. The data was analyzed using z-test from SPSS version 23. The result showed Zcal value of 0.03 against Zcrit value of 1.96. Hence, Zcal is less than the Zcrit therefore hypothesis was accepted. This showed significant relationship between youth unemployment and restiveness in Nigeria. The study concluded that government should provide the basic infrastructures enabling the youths of this nation be busy or learn a skill/vocation. Once, these age bracket youths are busy with one legitimate vocation or the other. The study also recommended that partnerships and networks with privileged individuals, religious groups and private organisations to establish vocational training centres throughout the country to absorb many drop-outs and school leavers idling away in urban and rural areas should be created.

Keywords: Restiveness, Unemployment, Youth, Sustainable Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

“Youth” is classified as the young people between the ages of 15-24 years (ILO, 2010). These also depend on individual country to country on who they call youth. Hence, over 1.2 billion youth globally, that are about 80% dwell in third world countries, with 60% in Asia, and 17% in Africa (14% from sub-Saharan Africa and 3% from North Africa). The NYDP (2001) defines

youth as people aged 18-35. They constitute about 40% of the more than 140 million people of Nigeria. 2006 population census revealed that 45.4 million of Nigeria populace are youth between the ages of 10 – 24 indicating 34% of the entire population.

A well-known fact that the youthful populations are the vital asset for innovation and creativity in the economy, if the peculiar stance of the youth is not harnessed the opposite could be the case (Albert 2000; Gilbert, 2010; Vremudia, 2012). The step in youths' engagement in socio-economic activities in Nigerian has been a thing of concern with majority being unemployed. The youth unemployment crisis is not novel, but the amazing proportional upsurge it has stretched in the recent time is what is novel (Egunjobi, (2007); ILO, 2012).

At the 2005 ILO Conference, it was estimated that 66 million young men and women were unemployed throughout the world. However despite efforts to address the crisis, recent evidence suggests that youth around the world continue to face a deteriorating employment situation (Vremudia, 2008). Globally, it has remained high and has reached unprecedented dimensions, aggravated by the global financial and economic crisis and the prospects of slow and uneven recovery. With global unemployment at very high levels, the need to place employment at the centre of economic and social policies has been realized in Africa. The 2006 national census data showed that 20.18% of the populace were youth aged 15 – 24 years of age (NPC, 2006).

The unemployment rate is a measure of the prevalence of unemployment and it is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labour force. Unemployment in Nigeria can be referred to the labourers who are ready to work but cannot find a work for at least two days.. Official figures from Bureau of Statistics puts the figure of unemployed at 19.70 percent, about 30 million, but this figure still did not include about 40 million other Nigerian youths captured in World Bank Statistics in 2018. By implication, we can say that those who are not able to find a work within two days are half of the population in Nigeria Njoku and Okezie (2018) asserted.

Egunjobi (2007), many social problems such as prostitution, robbery, alcoholism, domestic violence, kidnapping, raping, drug addiction, social, religious and civil unrest and suicide to mention but few, become more severe in times of high unemployment. There is a connecting line between crime and unemployment, this is why most people tend to be criminal minded especially when no legal or legitimate work to do; they turn to doing the available. Once the height of this menace is not checked crime and its likes becomes the order of the day (Alanana, 2003; Oni 2007). Insecurity in Nigeria recently is like a wild fire threatening its very existence. Incidence like armed robbery, prostitution, bomb blasts, assassinations, kidnapping, banditry, killer herdsmen, religious crises and other criminal acts is a gradually becoming a norm in our once peaceful country. These acts are carried out by no other persons than the youth who are considered to reign as future leaders. Okafor (2011); Alabi & Alana (2012) contented that Nigerian youths face the consequences of idleness due to bad governance from our leaders, lack of basic amenities, frustration and hopelessness. A major nightmare of the youth in Nigeria recently has remained unemployment.

Objective of the study

The research aims to determine youth unemployment to restiveness in the Nigeria context.

The specific objective is:

- i. to ascertain that youth unemployment breeds unrest in Nigeria.

Research question

The study seeks answer to the following question:

- i. Does youth unemployment cause restiveness in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between youth unemployment and restiveness in Nigeria

Literature review

Concept of youth importance

Youth conquers a promising place in any environment. Away from being the acclaimed leaders of the future, in population they hold more than the middle aged or aged (Onyekpe, 2007). Besides statistical dominance, youth possess great innovations and invention tendencies (Onyekpe, 2007). The NYDP (2001) asserts that: the bedrock of any society is the youth. Their vitalities, resourcefulness, charisma and coordination define the stride of growth and confidence of a nation. Through their ingenious capacities and labour supremacy, a nation makes bold steps in economic expansion and socio-political achievements. In their visions and optimisms, a nation founds her inspiration; on their vitalities, she builds her strength and determination. And because of their ideas and ambitions, the prospect of a nation is guaranteed.

The assertion above admits the significance of youth in the harmony and protection of a nation (Ozohu-Sulaiman, 2006). Conversely, the point of disruption and insecurity in society is also resolute in part by youth. Peace is an antecedent of growth. Its absence means that no significant development can come to fruition. The National Youth Policy (2001) sustains that the degree of the youth's "accountable conduct and importance in society is positively aligned with the progress of their nationhood".

Youth Employment: Characteristics and Trends

The features of this menace in Nigeria include; general unemployment rate. Also, a cross country comparison of unemployment is presented so as to capture Nigeria's youth unemployment problem. For the purposes of this study, the term youth covers persons aged 18-24 years, while adults refers to persons aged 25 years and above. In figure 1 below shows youth unemployment rates.

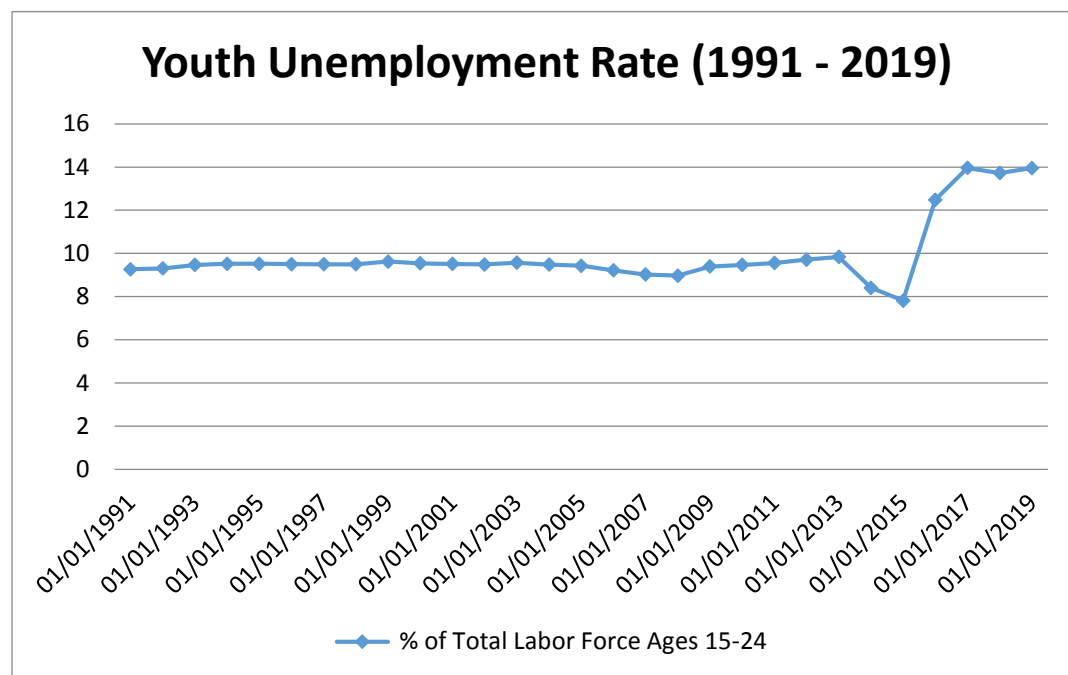


Figure 1: Youth Unemployment Rates, 1991-2019

The figure above shows that the rate has been staggeringly very high in the last ten years. There were decreases in some years, but on average the youth unemployment rate is consistently about three times higher than the national average. Currently, the rate of unemployment as at 2020 stands at 14.17% showing that majority of the youth in Nigeria are without any form of livelihood. Hence, it depicts this fact; there is every tendency that youth will go all out to irk out a living. Just like a Nigerian parlance will say, “man must wack”. In turn nefarious crimes will be perpetrated in other to survive.

Problems of Restiveness among Youths

The happenings globally today indicate that crime and criminal activities appear to be permanent features of our modern society. Although, from creation crime has been with man, there are swelling groups of unruly activities that are really mysterious, ridiculous, often appalling and malicious. In a classical case from the biblical Cain murdered Abel his younger brother in the Garden of Eden, the world has not known peace and has been wavering from one awful crime to another. The task of defense continues to be progressively intricate one at a time when technology is creating new products at explosive rate.

"The spread of knowledge and education had taught mankind little in the way of self-control, and less in the act of living peacefully with other men. Thomas (2007), asserted that" Security problems remain universal phenomena and continue to take frightening dimension. Security weakness in itself could be provocative (Olusegun, 2008; Adejumo, 2011). For many years, man has been pre-occupied with the arduous task of finding the most effective means of countering the menace of crime and criminals. Security implies a stable, relatively predictable environment in which an individual or group may pursue legitimate ends without obstruction or harm and without fear of disturbance or injury. Crime and criminal activities

originated from the desire of human to greedily acquire or enjoy opportunities that are not theirs. (Adeyemi 1987; Olusegun 2008; Adejumo, 2011; Okafor, 2011).

Reasons for the Catastrophic Nature of Government Programmes

By and large, youth unemployment is a result of several factors. Growth in population is one major factor. A high growth rate of 2.8 per annum exists. World Bank (2014) which accompanies an already national population of over 200 million people, Akande (2014) asserted. Nigeria has persistently experienced surge in this aspect. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming rise in the youth population thereby resulting in a surge to the working age people. Related to the rapid population growth is the massive rural-urban migration by the youth. UN Report (1999), the high degree of geographical mobility in Africa is in form of rural to urban this has affected youth unemployment. In Nigeria, youth migrate to the cities more than other migrants; meanwhile job opportunities are very limited in towns and cities.

In addition, absence of skills due to unsuitable school curricula is another factor. Generally, the talents that employees have do not equal the needs and demands of employers in Nigeria (Mcgrath, 1999; Kent and Mushi, 1995). The trio declared that Nigeria's education system has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Most graduates in Nigeria lack innovative skills to enable self-employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011).

Similarly, the sensitivity of guiding principle and the youth about employment is another factor. To the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. It is this insight that constantly impact on ivory towers in Nigeria that provide skills acquisition. Hence, these days educational curricula and programmes are generally designed towards empowering youths for formal sector professions. We end up training job seekers that possess skills that are not really needed for the jobs being sought. Suggestion shows that the nation is devoted to education improvements. Following education deregulation in Nigeria, government has encouraged the opening of private schools and universities.

As at May, 2012, the total of approved universities in Nigeria was 137, comprising of 37 federal government-owned, 50 states' government-owned and 50 privately-owned universities. The aggressive creation of more private and publicly-funded universities and colleges of technology has inadvertently created an adverse disparity in job creation efforts. This is because Nigeria has not pursued a commensurate job absorption strategy for the many graduates from these educational institutions. Whereas universities have grown geometrically, jobs and employers have grown at arithmetic progression. This gap in Nigeria strategic approach to job creation has necessitated stockup of skilled graduates being higher than the demand thus driving down wages and further increasing unemployment.

Related to this, poor governance, absence of sustainable measures and poor coordination, overlapping functions and ineffective pointer of the poor thereby spread the available resources thinly among projects that are competitive (Musari, 2009). Responding to the alarming unemployment situation, Nigerian governments have made several attempts to resolve the nagging issue by establishing various solution agencies. Notable among these agencies are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and National Poverty

Eradication Programme (NAPEP). However, it is on record that the programmes have not yielded a major positive impact (Omorodion, 2010).

Sociological Implications of Restiveness

The nation Nigeria has no doubt seriously underdeveloped the youth populace, the consequence of this abject neglect on national security and economic development is best imagined. A trip to all the crannies and corners of the Nigerian cities will reveal the pathetic condition of the youths as a result of systemic disempowerment. To irk out a leaving therefore, the devil finds useful tools in their hands to unleash their frustration on the general society via hawking vandalized and adulterated petroleum products (South-South), Urchins (area boys) syndrome in Lagos, South-West), while rabbles of Niger Delta militants, Boko Haram in Maiduguri (North-East and, North West), Bandits in Kastina and Benue (North Central), while the female gender result to prostitution (call-girl) activities and other menial duties, a real life statistics which could serve “better than official statistics in unraveling the level to which Nigeria has underdeveloped and or disempowered her youthful population arising from pervasive unemployment and poverty in Nigeria” (Onuoha, 2008).

Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

A number of studies have identified factors responsible for youth restiveness. Elegbeleye (2005) identifies three major factors: the peer motivated excitement of being a student, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Another study carried out in Niger Delta region by Ofem and Ajayi (2008) acknowledged corrupt practices of government officials, absence of humanitarian and social welfare, inadequate recreational facilities, absence of good governance, inadequate training programmes, lack of quality education, as the motives for continuous youth restiveness. This implies that a catalogue of closely-related factors for restiveness is namely:

- Bad Governance
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Inadequate Resources and Educational Opportunities
- Absence of Basic amenities

Theoretical Framework

Economic Theory of Criminal Behavior

This theory propounded by Gary Becker (1968), Ehrlich (1996) and Freeman (1983) contends that the tendency to commit crimes in countries depends on the comparison of the costs and benefits of legal and illegal activities (Becker 1968; Ehrlich1996). Becker argues that unemployed people are deprived of legal income resources (except for unemployment benefits), and, thus, derive income from illegal activities. Similarly, Freeman (1983) argues that criminals are normally driven by economic motives hence economic crime, this is manifested in offenses in which individuals act in an illegal way to gain financial returns such as robbery, drug selling, burglary, theft etc. However, not all crimes are driven by financial returns. According to Becker crimes such as ethnic violence, hatred, revenge, and thrill have multiple motives and economic gain may be a secondary goal. Besides, offenders themselves are not always conscious of their motives and they may be unable to distinguish between the reasons that precipitated their actions and the rationalization that follows them.

Theory of surplus value

This theory propounded by Marx and Engels (1848) and David McLellan (2009). Marx believed that capitalist societies like Nigeria always had and would have high levels of unemployment. He believed such economies went through cycles- periods of expansion in which there was full employment which were followed by periods of crises during which unemployment rose. Recoveries from crises were only temporary. Marx asserted that capitalist economies worked in favouring the few bourgeoisies, capitalist's property class to the detriment of the large proletariat, working non-property class. In Marx's assertion:

"It is in the very nature of the capitalist mode of production to overwork some workers while keeping the rest as a reserve army of unemployed paupers". Marx (1848)

According to Marx, unemployment is inherent within the unstable capitalist system and periodic crises of mass unemployment are to be expected. Proletariat's function in a capitalist setting is the provision a "reserve army of labour" that causes a descending force on wages. In Nigeria context, the Nigerian super-rich politicians together with super-rich capitalists formed a cabal and logically established economic imperialism. A monetary and communal policy formulated does not benefit the common Nigerians. The idea of *"monkey dey work, baboon dey chop"* is well pre-eminent in Nigeria. Workers are living at the mercy of the rich. These have directly and indirectly continue to increase the space between the affluent and the deprived.

Youth with skills, certificates and energies have nothing to offer due to mass unemployment, but dance to the political elite's tune who in turn used them to manipulate, rig and destabilized elections. Overtime, having been used by their politician, they are dumped or left to face their fate whenever the law catches up with. The few available jobs for the battalion of youth job-seekers are politicized. Unless the job seeker is connected to a political god father he may not get the job. Marx postulated that the only means to permanently eradicate unemployment is by abolishing capitalism and migrate to a socialist economic system. For contemporary Marxists, the presence of tenacious unemployment is resilient of the failure of capitalism to guarantee full employment.

Methodology

The research used the survey research design. The research surveyed 100 people from both Federal and State Parastatals. The research used the purposive sampling technique, also referred to as judgmental sampling. The research used both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data collection included visits to Ministries and other offices. Secondary data was obtained from sources that include: the university library, e- journals and other online resources, documentary survey, the World Wide Web, published reports, published theses, and newspapers. Data collected from the field was processed and presented as simple percentage distribution tables. The findings were then analyzed using z-test.

Results

Data collected from the field is decoded in form of tables. The results are then summarized, analyzed and interpreted.

Respondents were asked whether youth unemployment is the main cause of Restiveness in Nigeria. The table below summarizes the opinions of the respondents:

Table 1: Youth unemployment and restiveness

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Youth unemployment is the main cause of restiveness in Nigeria	68(78.1%)	11(12.6%)	8(9.1%)

Table 1 revealed that 68(78.1%) of the respondents agreed that unemployment of the youth is one of the reasons for restiveness in Nigeria. Only 11(12.6%) disagreed, while 8(9.1%) were undecided.

Table 2: Age of offenders

Ratings	Frequency	Percentage
13 and younger	5	5
14 – 16 years	2	2
17 – 19 years	14	14
20 – 23 years	17	17
24 – 39 years	56	56
Diverse ages	6	6
Total	100	100

Table 2 above showed that 56 respondents (56%) were the most offenders, while 17(17%) of the respondents with age bracket 20 – 23 years were the next major offenders.

Hypothesis testing

Table 3: Z-test for youth unemployment and restiveness

Groups	$\bar{x}$	SD	N	df	Zcal	Z. Crit.	Decision
Youth unemployment and restiveness	2.81	0.99	100	242	0.03	1.96	Accept
Age of offenders	2.82	0.99					

Table 3 above revealed that Zcal value of 0.03 against Zcrit value of 1.96. Hence, Zcal is less than the Zcrit therefore hypothesis was accepted. This showed that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and restiveness in Nigeria.

Conclusion

No nation can achieve growth or any form of stability that will boost socio-economic advancement in a heaven of chronic youth unemployment. They say that the idle mind is the devil's workshop, hence, most of the crimes committed in Nigeria today is been perpetrated by youths between the ages of 20-40 years because they are not gainfully employed or gainfully engaged in one vocation or the other. The objective of administration is the provision of basic infrastructures that will enable the youths of this nation be employed or learn a

skill/vocation. Once, these age bracket of youths are busy with one legitimate vocation or the other, crime will automatically leave the streets and villages of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Administrations/ regime/governments should create partnerships and networks with privileged individuals, religious groups and private organisations to establish vocational training centres throughout the country to absorb many drop-outs and school leavers idling away. Accompanied by this should be a comprehensive overhaul of educational curriculum ensuring that vocational training and entrepreneurial skills are incorporated into the programmes of educational institutions to make graduates capable of running cottage industries.

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