



## Youth Unemployment, Rising Criminality and the Challenge of Sustainable Security in Nigeria's South West Region

Janet Monisola Oluwaleye

---

Department of Political Science,  
Faculty of the Social Sciences Ekiti  
State University, Ado, Nigeria.  
Email: [jmoluwaleye@gmail.com](mailto:jmoluwaleye@gmail.com)

### Licensed:

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

### Keywords:

Kidnapping  
Robbery  
Security  
Sustainable Security  
Unemployment  
Youth.

**Received:** 13 August 2020

**Revised:** 15 February 2021

**Accepted:** 19 March 2021

**Published:** 22 April 2021

### Abstract

Crimes have become more rampant than ever in Nigeria. Robbery, pilfering, kidnapping, internet scam, and other social media crimes have risen to high pedigrees of recent. In most cases, perpetrators of these crimes are youths. The questions are: what is the nature and causes of crime being perpetrated among Nigerian youths? What is its implication on sustainable security for Nigeria? Using South-Western Nigeria as a case study, this study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods, to interrogates the challenge of sustainable security for Nigeria with youth unemployment and crimes. A total of 200 questionnaire were used to elicit information from the residents. It discovered that unemployment and lack of meaningful empowerment by government, among others, are responsible for high crime rates among youths. It recommends urgent efforts on the part of government to gainfully engage unemployed youths for decent means of livelihood. Also, commensurate penalties should be meted out to crime perpetrators including any accomplice security officers to serve as deterrent to others.

**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Competing Interests:** The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

## 1. Introduction

The heightened rate of crime in Nigeria in recent times is worrisome and disturbing. This is evident in daily news report of various crime such as robbery, pilfering, burglary, car theft, rape, kidnapping, internet scam and other social media crimes (Ibrahim, 2019; The Punch, 2019). South Western Nigeria, in the yesteryear, was known for peaceful and tranquil atmosphere with adequate protection of lives and properties but in recent times, the spate of insecurity has taken another dimension (Ibrahim, 2019). For instance, Aramoko-Erio-Efon, Akure-Ikere and Ado-Ijan routes have become endangered routes for travelers as many have fallen victims of kidnap or robbery along these routes (Ibrahim, 2019). Also, a Professor of a private university was kidnapped in Ondo State and his dead body was later found (The Punch, 2019). Unfortunately, youths who are more than half of Nigeria's population as at 2016 census (Mbachu & Alake, 2016) and the energetic class, who should diversify their strengths to the development of the country are often found culpable in the challenge of crimes confronting the country. To Adebayo (2013) crime is a threat to the fabric of society. It instils fear into the populace and causes unnecessary pain, agony, loss of lives and properties. It's also a threat to the security and stability of society. Crimes must be reduced drastically for any country to enjoy sustainable security. Many scholars have attributed the heightened crime rate among youths in Nigeria to unemployment. Indeed, chronic youth unemployment is evident in thousands of graduate youths produce ever year with no jobs for majority of them (Adebayo, 2013; Ajaegbu, 2012; Kostadis, 2017). Inability to be gainfully engaged has turned many youths to devil's workshop. Adebayo (2013) observed further that most Nigerian youths are either underemployed or unemployed. As a result, some of them opt to perpetrate various crime.

Unemployment is one of the major challenges in Nigeria today. In spite of thousands of graduates produced every year and an abundance of natural and human resources, the rate of unemployment is increasing at an alarming rate daily. Kazeem (2016) revealed that Nigerian tertiary education institutions produce up to 500,000 graduates every year besides Nigerian graduates who study abroad and return home to compete for jobs (Kazeem, 2016). The federal tax agency in November, 2016 received 700,000 applications for 500 advertised positions. In May, nearly a million people applied for 10,000 listed positions in the Nigerian

Police Force (Kazeem, 2017). Voice of America (2018) reported Nigeria's unemployment official figure to be 16 million with additional 2 million expected to join by the end of the year 2018. Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recorded 14.2% level of unemployment in the last quarter of 2016 compare to 13.9% in the preceding quarter (Kazeem, 2017). According to Trading Economics (2019) unemployment rate increased to 23.10 per cent in the third quarter from 22.70 percent in the second quarter of 2018. The unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 12.31 percent between 2006 and 2018, reaching an all high time of 23.10 percent in the third quarter of 2018. The lowest record was 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010 (Akwagyiram, 2018; Trading Economics, 2019). The growing rate unemployment in Nigeria, especially among the youths is a major challenge to national security.

The high unemployment rate among youths in Nigeria has been attributed to many factors including rapid rural urban migration, rapid population growth, inappropriate school curricula, corruption, decline of the manufacturing sector, perception of policy makers and the youths themselves on employment and poor governance (Adebayo, 2013; Ekeji, 2019). There is a consensus among scholars that joblessness is connected to criminality. Ehrlich cited in Jelilov and Ndanitsa (2015) noted that joblessness is connected with offence because the time spent for genuine work decreases the chance of illegal work. Decrease in unemployment, according to Fadaei-Tehrani and Green in Jelilov and Ndanitsa (2015) leads to decrease in crime and vice versa. UN-Habitat discovered that socio-economic inequality and lack of opportunities for social advancement and employment are some of the root causes of crime and violence (Ajaegbu, 2012). On the other hand, most of the crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, thuggery and others are characterised with violence and endanger the security of the victims and the society. What is the nature and causes of crime being perpetrated among Nigerian youths? What is its implication on sustainable security for Nigeria The study, therefore, employs both primary and secondary sources using South-Western Nigeria as a case study, to answer the above questions.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The study employs Relative Deprivation Theory as its theoretical frame of reference. Relative deprivation was first used by Robert K. Merton in his study in 1950 on The American Soldier on the response of groups to promotion (Cherkaoui, 2015). Relative deprivation suggests that crime happens when individuals or groups see themselves as being unfairly disadvantaged compared to other individuals or groups who they see as being similar (or inferior) to themselves (The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, 2016). According to Cherkaoui (2015) deprivation occurs mainly under specific conditions:

- i. The individual retains some knowledge of the system of social promotion, mobility or retributions.
- ii. He/she does not get an expected good, for example promotion, employment.
- iii. This expectation is based on an evaluation and a comparison that the individual conducts between his/her position, contributions, and retribution on the one hand; and those of his/her peers, who make up his/her reference group on the other; and
- iv. He/she has a feeling of inequity, which translates into criticism of the mobility system.

The theory of relative deprivation, therefore connotes that the feelings by individuals of a number of feelings of relative deprivation due to economic comparisons can be an important motivator to criminality (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). Such individuals would have compared themselves with others based on some valued dimension (such as income) and found they are worse off than the other. The recognition of their deprivation (the cognitive component of relative deprivation) can be powerful motivators for accompanying feelings such as anger (the affective component of relative deprivation) to reduce one's deprivation (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). The affective components of deprivation may include attempt to gain legally or illegally depending on how the deprivation is perceived. Another thrust of relative deprivation theory is that individuals may compare themselves to others (egoistic relative deprivation) or their group to other reference groups fraternal or collective relative deprivation). In that vein, egoistic relative deprivation may motivate individual action, while fraternal deprivation may motivate collective action (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). Ajaegbu (2012) attributed the rise in crimes such as robbery, kidnapping thuggery and terrorism to "gap" in the society. Summarily, relative deprivation is a feeling that you are generally "worse off" than the people you associate with and compare yourself to Longely (2018).

Relative deprivation theory has been criticized for failure to explain why some people, though deprived of rights and resources, fail to take part in social movements meant to attain those things (Longely, 2018). It is a clear fact that not all unemployed youths are involved in crime. However, the theory is relevant to explain unemployment as a major underline cause of crime among youths in Nigeria. The inability of most youths to be gainfully employed is a major motivating factor for various crime activities perpetrated by the youths.

## **3. Review of Relevant Literature**

Many studies have been conducted on the relationship between unemployment, crime and security. According to ILO (2003 ) the unemployed comprise all persons above a specific age who during the reference period were: without work, that is, were not in paid employment or self-employment during the reference

period; currently available for work, that is, were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and seeking work, that is, had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment. Unemployment refers to the inability of persons above specific age, who are currently available for work and seeking for paid employment or self-employment to secure one. [Levernier and Yang \(2011\)](#) categorized unemployment into structural, frictional and cyclical. To them, structural unemployment occurs when there is job shortage caused by structural changes in the economy, such as technological change or international competition while frictional unemployment occurs when job seekers are not able to find job that match their skills and tastes. They described cyclical unemployment as the deviation of the actual unemployment rate from the natural rate. On the other hand, [Hori, Fujii, Sakaguchi, Nakamura, and Sakura \(2003\)](#) posited that it is difficult to separate structural and frictional unemployment when calculating unemployment rates on the basis of its causes, as a result they merge the two as structural-frictional unemployment to indicate mismatched in technology, skills and location as well as frictional unemployment during one's job search.

[Chris \(2019\)](#) revealed the causes of unemployment to include technological advancement, reducing the number of employees due to new innovation. He noted that difficult economic times can make companies to eliminate jobs to reduce labour costs in an effort to remain profitable or viable. The implication of this is that thousands of workers may be laid off with a short time, if a large number of industries are affected, thereby causing a spike in the unemployment rate. He further noted that the failure or inability of employers to create new jobs, even in stable economic conditions can lead to a rise unemployment.

[Osawe \(2015\)](#) described crime as an "illegal act (prohibited by law or failure to act as required by law); illegal activity that involves breaking the law; immoral activity that is considered unacceptable, act that is shameful, unwise and regrettable". Crime is an act that is contrary to the law and unacceptable immoral act. To [Adebayo \(2013\)](#) crime is a violation of the rules to be respected by all members of the society, and upon which the rest members of the society mete sanction upon those guilty of the violation. When crime is committed, the society bears the consequences. He describes the nature of such crimes to include armed robbery, murder, rape, car theft, burglary, fraud, bribery and corruption, food and drug adulteration, gambling, smuggling, human trafficking, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundering, internet scam, advanced fee fraud (419) and other illegal activities. This is the picture of the nature of crime in Nigeria. Similarly, [Sheriff Deputies \(2016\)](#) in *The Anatomy of Crimes in Nigeria: A Statistical Study*, revealed that 7 out of 10 Nigerians are afraid of becoming the victim of crime. It also revealed that security in the home remained a key challenge as 36% of the robberies occurred in the homes, according to respondents, and another 26% occurred near the home. In addition, the report showed increase in rape, kidnapping, physical assaults, attempted murder, mobile phone theft, and car theft.

In his own view, [Mohammad \(2008\)](#) identified the causes of crime to include bad economic situation, social environment and family structures. The economic situation, to him, include poverty and inequality which may hinder a father from sending his children to school, thereby creating an avenue for such children to spend most of their time in the street and to think criminally. Street children in most cases mix up with criminals and they end up learning their ways. Unemployment is another economic situation identified as cause of poverty due to failure to provide for families. Political situation of hopelessness and insecurity was also noted as responsible for crime as people try to find unfair means to earn a living. The environmental factors to him, among others, include inequality lack of support from families and neighbours, low value placed on children, disorganization and neglect of youths, availability of drugs, high population (large number of children, corruption and lawlessness and weakness of law enforcement agencies. He identified the characteristic of families that are likely to involve in crime to include where parents are involved in crime, poor parental supervision, parental neglect, lack of discipline or where they are too harsh, income is low, family conflict and lack of communication between parents and children, abuse and neglect of children and family break up ([Mohammad, 2008](#)).

[Torruam and Abur \(2014\)](#) considered the relationship between unemployment, Inflation and Crime: An Application of Co-integration and Causality Analysis in Nigeria. They revealed that unemployment is a major factor for crime. They posited that unemployment rate is a complementary indicator of income opportunities in the legal labour market. They submitted that increase in unemployment rate decrease the opportunities to earn income which consequently instigate the individual to commit crime. [Kostadis \(2017\)](#) examined the relationship between poverty and crime posited that individuals are more likely to become involved on criminal activity when they experienced a negative income shock. He revealed that deteriorating economic conditions may favour criminal activity and more people are likely to engage in crime as an alternative source of income. The submission of [Kastadis](#) showed that poverty is a major motivator for crime. Similarly, [Jelilov and Ndanitsa \(2015\)](#) investigated "the Relationship between Unemployment and Property Crime rate in Nigeria" and discovered that those who earn little or no income have a greater incentive to commit crimes than those with a steady income who have more to lose when caught. They submitted that individuals who are unemployed are more prone to commit crime than those who are employed. To [Ajaegbu \(2012\)](#) the rise in violent crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, thuggery and terrorism committed by youths is a sign of a "gap" in the society. He opined that kidnapping is on the increase because unemployed youths view it as a lucrative

business. The consensus among scholars showed that unemployment and its consequent inability to make ends meet serve as major motivating factor for crime and insecurity in Nigeria.

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. Also, Osawe (2015) described security as “freedom from danger, fear, anxiety and uncertainty”. Jore (2019) referred to security as “the feeling of being safe and secure, the lack of threats and the management of future risks”. He identified security threats to include theft, vandalism, organized crime, sabotage, kidnappings, hackings, terrorism, espionage, and political crises. Security, to Wolfers (Baldwin, 1997) refers to “the absence of threats to acquire values”. Degaut (2015) and 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.

Moller (2000) identifies dimensions of security to include political, economic, societal and environmental dimensions. Political dimension of security, according to him, refers to the relationship between the state and its citizen and the political aspects of international relations. He describes the economic dimension of security in terms of money and invulnerability to economic hazards. He further describes societal security as the survival and well-being of the people. To him, environmental security refers to addressing the problem of environmental decay which may serve as threats to human survival and well-being, resulting in shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality and a deteriorating general health situation. All the dimensions of security identified above are important for the safety and preservation of people.

Olonisakin (2020) identified the factors contending the security in Nigeria to include; diversion of the use of arms from formal armed forces to other paramilitary groups, warlords, ethnic militias and private security groups; widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons; massive trafficking, abduction and recruitment of children and young people for use in armed conflict, whose total disarmament and demobilisation is often a challenge; and complex humanitarian crisis, including displacement and influx of refugees into neighbouring states. She recommended the return of the use of force to the state, in the hands of formally recognized establishments guided by democratic leadership. Similarly, an independent UNs expert, Agnes Callamard, at the end of 12-day fact-finding mission, submitted that Nigeria is a pressure cooker of internal conflicts and generalized violence that must be addressed urgently. She identified the pressure to include “population explosion, an increase in the number of people living in absolute poverty, climate change and desertification, and increasing proliferation of arms” (UN News, 2019). Ngwube (2020) in the same vein, identified the security threats in Nigeria to include poverty, election violence, book haram, kidnapping, illegal arms importation, power generation, oil bunkering, and corruption.

#### **4. Contribution of the Study**

This study presents an empirical assessment of youth unemployment, rising criminality and the challenge of sustainable peace in South West, Nigeria. It attempts to an in-depth and empirical analysis of youth unemployment as a major factor in rising rate of criminality in Nigeria. The study offers to knowledge valuable contribution from both theoretical and practical points of view about the correlation between unemployment and crime. It will also be of immense benefits to policy makers to find solution to the challenge of youth unemployment to foster sustainable security.

#### **5. Methodology**

The study employs quantitative and qualitative analysis to consider the relationship between youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria. A total of 200 questionnaire were administered to elicit information from the residents. The population for the study is from South West region, Nigeria. Specifically, Ekiti and Ondo States were purposively chosen. The choice was informed by the increased rate of crime in the two states recently. Ado Ekiti and Ikole were chosen in Ekiti State while Akure and Ondo town were chosen in Ondo State. While Ado Ekiti and Akure are the headquarters of Ekiti and Ondo State respectively, Ondo and Ikole are also major cities in Ekiti and Ondo States respectively. A total size of 210 questionnaires were administered as follows to elicit information on the link between youth unemployment and rising criminality in Nigeria: Ado Ekiti- 70; Ikole Ekiti -30; Akure – 50 and Ondo town – 50. Variations in the number of chosen samples was based on population their differences. Respondents are residents of the sampled areas, both male and female who are 18 years and above, accepted to be adults according to the Nigerian Constitution. Questionnaire was used to get the primary data while textbooks, Journals, newspapers, Magazines and the internet were used for the secondary data. Data obtained were analysed with the use of frequencies and simple percentages. Secondary data were analysed descriptively.

#### **6. Presentation of Data and Results**

**Question 1.** Are you aware of the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria?



**Table-1.** Awareness of youth high rate of unemployment.

Responses	Yes	No	I don't Know	Total
Awareness	205(97.6%)	5(2.4%)	-	210(100%)

Source: Field Work, 2019.

Table 1 shows the response to awareness of high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria, 205 representing 97.6% of the respondents were affirmative in their response while 5 representing 2.4% opined "No". None of the respondents claim ignorance of the situation of unemployment in Nigeria (Field Survey 2019). It clearly revealed that unemployment is a major unhidden challenge to Nigerian economy and urgent attention is needed to address the problem. There is consensus among scholars that unemployment constitutes a major challenge in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2013; Ajufo, 2013; Wayas, Selvadurai, & Awang, 2019). Ajufo (2013) revealed unemployment as one of the most serious socio-economic problem confronting Nigeria causing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restiveness and socially delinquent behavior.

**Table-2.** Common crimes among Nigerian youths.

Crimes Among Youths	Respondents			Total
	Yes	No	Undecided	
Robbery	196 (93%)	12 (6%)	2 (1%)	210(100%)
Kidnapping	187 (89%)	15 (7%)	8 (4%)	210(100%)
Pilfering	162 (77%)	15 (7%)	33 (16%)	210(100%)
Thuggery	197 (94%)	3 (1%)	10 (3%)	210(100%)
Social media crime	206 (98.1%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.4%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Work, 2019.

Table 2 above shows the responses of people about the nature of crimes among Nigerian youths. Robbery, according to major respondents, 196 representing 93% is a common crime associated with youths in Nigeria. Only 12 representing 6% of the respondents had contrary opinion while 2 representing 1% responded "I don't know". Robbery, daily light or night robbery, highway robbery and Bank robbery have become rampant in Nigeria of which most perpetrators are youths. Also, kidnapping, according to most respondents, 187 representing 89%, is a well know crime common to Nigerian youths of recent. Just 15 representing 7% said "No" while 8 representing 4% did not know. Pilfering is also known among the crimes perpetrated by youths. Most respondents, 162 representing 77% supported the perpetration of this crime by youths while 15 representing 7% were of contrary opinion and just 33 representing 16% did not know. Pilfering is unnoticed pocket-picking or stealing from people's bags and pockets as such people are busy with their businesses. This is common in public places like markets, schools, banks, ceremonies and supermarkets. Thuggery is also common to many Nigerian youths, especially during election periods. Most of the respondents, 197 representing 94% supported thuggery as one of the crimes common to Nigerian youths while 3 representing 1% did not support the assertion and 10 representing 3% did not know. Social media crime is another dimension of youth crime identified. On internet fraud, most respondents, 206 representing 98% affirmed internet fraud activities of youths, while 1 representing 1% opined no such activities and 3 representing 1% claimed ignorance opted "I don't know". Majority of the respondents, 203 representing 97%, opined that among the social media crimes common to youths in Nigeria are yahoo, yahoo+, sending false bank statement to defraud people of their hard-earned income, internet scam etc. None of the respondents said "No" while 7 representing 3% indicated that they did not know whether youths are involved in social media crime such as yahoo and other such crimes.

**Table-3.** Causes of high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Causes of High Rate of Youth Unemployment	Respondents			Total
	Yes	No	Undecided	
Lack of requisite education	116 (55%)	86 (41%)	8 (4%)	210(100%)
Non-availability of employment opportunity	181 (86%)	20 (10%)	9 (4%)	210(100%)
Preference for white collar job	142 (68%)	57 (27%)	11 (5%)	210(100%)
Placement of embargo on government employment	146 (69.5%)	43 (20.5%)	20 (10%)	210(100%)
Nonchalant attitude of the governing class	158 (75%)	25(12%)	27 (13%)	210(100%)
Failure of political office seekers	112 (53.3%)	49 (23.3%)	49 (23.3%)	210(100%)
Poor economic policy	164 (78%)	10 (5%)	36 (17%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Work, 2019.

This was corroborated by Adebayo (2013) who revealed the nature of crimes among Nigeria youths to include "armed robbery, murder, rape, car theft, burglary, fraud, bribery and corruption, food and drug

adulteration, gambling, smuggling, human trafficking, kidnapping, drug activities". Similarly, Eke (2014) noted the rising in the incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping. He further revealed a worse scenario in which armed robbers, unlike in the past, now operate in the daylight "attacking homes, offices, banks, shops, restaurants and churches to rob, rape, maim, and kill". In most cases, major perpetrators of these various crime are youths who are not gainfully employed.

As revealed in Table 3, the reasons for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria were identified as follows: Among others, lack of requisite education has been identified as one of the causes of unemployment in Nigeria. Most of the respondents, 116 representing 55% supported that many youths lack the necessary education to get them the desired employment while many 86 representing 41% of the respondents still opined that high rate of unemployment is not as a result of lack of requisite education. The indication of this position is that many Nigerian graduates still roam the streets in search of jobs. Only 8 representing 4% of the respondents opted for "I don't know" (Field Survey, 2019). A similar study by Onwuka, Ugwu, Chukwuma, and Chijioke (2015) on Implication of Youth Unemployment and Violent Crime on the National Growth, A Case Study of Anambra State also discovered that lack of right curriculum for schools contributed to unemployment in Nigeria. Okafor (2011) in the same vein, pointed to outdated school curriculum as a contributing factor to unemployment in Nigeria. It has been discovered that many Nigerian graduates lack the requisite skills needed for the job market. As a result, many certificate holders are unable to secure meaningful employment and they end up in joining the unemployed market.

Non-availability of employment opportunities was also identified as another reason for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. 181 representing 86% of the respondents affirmed this position while 20 representing 10% of the respondents were of contrary opinion and 9 representing 4% did not know whether unemployment is caused by no-availability of employment opportunities (Field Survey, 2019). Lack of industries to supplement government efforts has been identified by scholars as contributing factors to unemployment in Nigeria. Okafor (2011) noted the availability of few manufacturing industries as a reason for high unemployment rate in Nigeria. In line with the above is the reference for white collar job. Any of the unemployed youths prefer doing nothing than to get job in private organisations or be gainfully self-employed. Unfortunately, many of the available manufacturing industries have folded up due to patronage of imported goods at the expense of home-made goods. Most of the respondents, 155 representing 74% supported this assertion while 44 representing 21% were of contrary opinion and just 9 representing 4% said they did not know whether unemployment can be attributed to reference for white collar job. It was also revealed that lack of readiness to learn a skill and gainfully self-employed contributed to high rate of unemployment among Nigerian youths. Most of the respondents, 142 representing 68% supported this position while 57 representing 27% said "No" and 11 representing 5% opted for "I don't know". Placement of embargo on employment by government has been noted as another critical reason for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Most of the respondents, 146 representing 69.5% opined that the policy of embargo on employment has been a major factor for increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Forty-three (43) of the respondents representing 20.5% had contrary opinion while 20 respondents representing 10% indicated that they did not know whether placement of embargo causes unemployment (Field Survey, 2019). Billi, the President of the Church of the brethren in Nigeria, cited in Uba (2020) observed that embargo on employment at all level as a factor to be addressed to curb the security threats in the country. In line with the above, nonchalant attitude of the governing class to the plight of the unemployed youths has been identified as another contributing factor to the upsurge of unemployment rate in Nigeria. 158 representing 75% of the respondents were of this opinion while 25 representing 12% did not support this assertion and 27 representing 13% opted for "I don't know" (Field Survey, 2019). Besides, the failure of political office seekers to have sincere and meaningful manifestoes that towards youths' engagement or their mirage manifestoes has been revealed as another cause of increased unemployment rate. On hundred and twelve (112) representing 53.3% of the respondents supported this position while 49 representing 23.3 were of contrary opinion and 49 representing 23.3 indicated "I don't know" (Field Survey, 2019). To corroborate the above position, Akande (2014) and Voice of Africa News (2018) revealed that flawed, clueless and inconsistent public polices has aggravated the challenge of unemployment in Nigeria. Poor economic policy by policy makers has also been noted as a contributing factor to high unemployment rate in Nigeria. Most of the respondents, 164 representing 78% opined that poor economic policy contributed to the upsurge of unemployment rate in Nigeria while just 10 of the respondents representing 5% indicated "No" and 36 representing 17% said they did not know whether poor economic policy contributed to increased unemployment rate (Field Survey, 2019). In the same vein, Osinubi (2005) in his study of a 31-year period economic policy in Nigeria (1970-2000), submitted that economic growth has always been accomplished with decline in unemployment and poverty. Poor implementation of policies that were meant to reduce unemployment have remained a major challenge to reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Table-4. Relationship between unemployment and crime.

Relationship between Unemployment and Crime	Respondents			Total
	Yes	No	Undecided	
Unemployed are prone to crime	193 (92%)	11 (5%)	6 (3%)	210(100%)
They see crime as a way out	158 (75%)	42 (20%)	10 (3%)	210(100%)
Unemployed youth see crime as a last means of survival	175 (83%)	23 (11%)	12 (6%)	210(100%)
They see it as a quick means to wealth	194 (92.4%)	11 (5.2%)	5 (2.4%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The above Table 4 reveals the relationship between unemployment and crime in Nigeria. Majority of the respondent, 193 representing 92% posited that an idle hand is the workshop of the devil. They were of the opinion that the unemployed are prone to crime than those who are gainfully employed. Only 11 respondents representing 5% did not support this assertion while just 6 respondents representing 3% indicated that they did not know whether an idle hand can be the workshop of the devil. Most of the respondents, 158 representing 75%, also opined that the unemployed youths because of the situation of jobless they found themselves saw crime as a way out. On the contrary, 42 representing 20% of the respondents opined that it was not because they saw crime as a way out of their joblessness while 10 respondents representing 3% indicated "I don't know" (Field Survey, 2019). This was corroborated by Agbiboa (2015) who revealed that exclusionary politics, poverty, unemployment and under-employment frequently expose youths to criminal ways surviving. In the same vein, Alabi (2014) submitted that youth unemployment promotes gangsterism leading many youths to engage in "violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, car snatching, illegal bunkering and fuel sales, and illegal importation of arms". There is a relationship between unemployment of youths and crime in Nigeria. Many youths who are not gainfully employed have resulted into social vices such as pilfering, armed robbery, kidnapping, and internet fraud.

Similarly, most of the respondents, 175 representing 83% revealed that the unemployed engage in crimes because they see it as a last means of resort while 23 respondents representing 11% had contrary opinion and 12 respondents representing 6% indicated that they did not know whether the engagement of youths in crime was because they saw it as a means of last resort (Field Survey, 2019). Majority of the respondents posited that the unemployed youths involve in crime as a quick means to wealth while only 11 respondents representing 5.2% did not support this assertion and just 5 respondents representing 2.4% indicated that they did not know whether the involvement of youths in crime was because they saw it as a quick means to wealth (Field Survey, 2019). Researchers and scholars in similar studies have discovered there is a link between unemployment and crime. Tambari and Imoh-Ita (2016) in their study on Youth Unemployment and Crime Rate in the Niger Delta: A Comparative Analysis of its intensity in Akwa Ibom, Bayesla and River State, revealed that the level of unemployment and presence of job seekers, skill labour with large population of unskilled youths and the urge for quick money created high rate of crime in Bayelsa and River than Akwa Ibom state. According to the Youth National Policy cited in Adebayo (2013) the youths are the foundations of a society, their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development and security in a nation. He noted that a nation can achieve great feats through the creative talents and labour power of youths because they are sensitive, energetic, active and at the most productive phase of human life. It is a dangerous signal for a country if the energy of youths is directed into wrong activities. The current wave of rising insecurity in Nigeria is not unconnected to the consequences of high rate of youth unemployment in the country. The study discovers that youth involvement in crime is majorly as a result of the difficulty to be gainfully employed. Youths who have daily means of livelihood would be occupied with such activities and have no time to perpetrate crime. On the other hand, their counterparts who have nothing doing but have needs to be met and seeing their peers having achievements, are more likely to yield to crime as the alternative way out of joblessness.

## 7. The Implications of Crimes among the Youths for Sustainable Security in Nigeria

The effects of crime on individuals and the country at large are enormous. At individual level, people are made to live in fear, anxiety and distrust in their own land. According to Ajaegbu (2012) "neither homes, nor markets are safe in Nigeria because of frequent occurrences of armed robbery incidents". Private homes, churches, establishments and public places are not left behind by buglers and robbers. The negative psychological effects of being abducted include depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress (PTSD) may last for life (Uzochukwu, 2019).

Very often, crimes lead to loss of lives and properties. Many lives have been lost and precious goods carted away as a result of various crime perpetrated by unemployed youths. Some victims of kidnap did not return home to tell their stories. Many have died from gunshots of armed bandits in daylight robbery. Bello (2011) submitted that "the fear of crime and crime itself has created insecurity to lives and property among individuals".

At the national level, various crimes such as terrorism, militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping and other such atrocities, perpetrated by youths has painted the country as unsafe. As a result, investment and business

would suffer as investors are scared to invest in an unsafe economy (Onwuka et al., 2015). Onwuka et al. (2015) opined that businesses would be relocated to safer environments while the ones that cannot relocate would try to invest more in security thereby increasing the cost of production. For instance, the United States Department of State Travel Advisory based on Nigeria security report as at 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 indicated that travelers should reconsider travel to Nigeria due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, marine crime such as kidnapping, hijacking, boarding, and theft (Country Security Report, 2020). Unemployment has been a major factor for most of these crimes. Crime scare foreigners and investors who would have contributed to the development of the country.

Developmental policies that might enhance well-being and peace such as free health, free education and provision of social amenities would be undermined in an effort to fight insecurity. In order to ensure security, budgetary allocation for other developmental areas such as health, education and infrastructure will be negatively affected, as more allocation would be assigned to security. Adebayo (2013) revealed the situation where the budget allocated for security alone, in Nigeria, is almost equal to funds allocated to education, health and infrastructure combined in a fiscal year. For instance, the upper House of Parliament increased the 2019 budget from N80 billion, up from N8.83 trillion after boosting its expenditure on security to help the government combat rising militancy and kidnapping across the country (Eboh, 2019).

The position of youth in society, according to Ozerdem (2016) has a bearing on their leadership potentials and possible role in ensuring peace. Youth who grew up with the mindset of cutting corners and dubious means to make ends meet would grow up to become a corrupt leader of tomorrow, this situation portends danger for sustainable peace. According to Agbiboa (2015) there cannot be peace without development and there can be no development without peace. Youths should be gainfully employed to drastically reduce insecurity and underdevelopment in the country.

## **8. Conclusion/Recommendations**

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative method to consider the relationship between youth unemployment, criminality and sustainable security in Nigeria. It investigated various causes of youth unemployment such as lack of requisite educational requirement of some of the youths and on the other hand, lack of employment opportunities for those who have the requisites, preferences of some youths for white collar jobs, non-readiness of youths to learn skills, embargo on employment by government coupled with the nonchalant attitude of the governing class to the plight of unemployed youths, insincere manifestoes of political office seekers and poor economic policy that has little or no place for industrialization. The study discovered a close link between unemployment and crime. It posited that the youths who are at the active stage to use their talents and strength, in absence of profitable engagement, divert it to various crimes. Consequently, the security of the citizenry and development of the country is at stake. People continue to live in fear while investors are scared from the country and the rate of crime is increasing with alarming rate. The study recommends urgent interventions by government and non-governmental organizations to make youths gainfully employed. From the foregoing, the following are recommended to alleviate the challenge of youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria and to create an avenue for sustainable security:

Government should urgently remove embargo on employment. In a country that is producing about 500,000 graduates yearly, it is pertinent for government to make concrete effort to make job available through industrialization, youth empowerment and self-employed acquisition skills. Existing empowerment programmes should be monitored to ensure proper implementation.

Government at all levels and non-governmental organizations should make fund available to youths who are willing to set up businesses of their own. Some of the looted money recovered should be diverted for this purpose. Government should come up with policies that will reduce the excess money accruing to political office holders to cater for the unemployed in the country. This will benefit the country than to distribute money during election alone and leave the energetic youths to temptations of how to make ends meet.

Education policy of 9-3-4 should be made practicable, especially at the JSS 3 level such that students who are technically oriented should be encouraged to learn and development in technical field of their interest. This would help those who can acquire a skill or the other to be self-employed instead of being drop outs and menace to the society. Also, entrepreneurship skill acquisition programmes introduced to tertiary education level should be made effective by proper funding and workable curriculum. Furthermore, graduates who desire to be self-employed should be encouraged through granting of non-refundable loans for the initial take-off of such businesses or enterprises.

Government should create a conducive environment to attract investors to establish industries in Nigeria. Power sectors should be improved on while various insecurity such as terrorism, kidnapping and armed robbery should be eradicated to make Nigeria a haven for investors.

Nigerian government should adopt a National Youth Strategy to address youth entrepreneurship and youth unemployment as its main pillars. The strategy should also seek to increase the level of social, economic, cultural and political participation of youths (UNS, 2014).



## References

- Adebayo, A. A. (2013). Youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria: A nexus and implications for national development. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5(8), 350-357. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5897/USA2013.0452>.
- Afolabi, M. (2015). Concept of security. *Readings in Intelligence and Security Studies*, 1-11.
- Agbibo, D. E. (2015). Youth as tactical agents of peacebuilding and development in the sahel. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 10(3), 30-45. Available at: [10.1080/15423166.2015.1082927](https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2015.1082927).
- Ajaegbu, O. (2012). Rising youth unemployment and violent crime in Nigeria. *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 2(5), 315-321. Available at: [10.1.1.684.5857&rep=rep1&type=pdf](https://doi.org/10.1.1.684.5857&rep=rep1&type=pdf).
- Ajufo, B. I. (2013). Challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria: Effective career guidance as a Panacea. *African Research Review*, 7(1), 307-321. Available at: [10.4314/afrr.v7i1.21](https://doi.org/10.4314/afrr.v7i1.21).
- Akande, T. (2014). Youth unemployment in Nigeria: A situation analysis. Africa in Focus, Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa/2014/09/23/youth-unemployment-in-Nigeria-a-situation-analysis/>.
- Akwagyiram, A. (2018). Nigeria unemployment rises to 23.1 pct in Q3 from 18.1 pct year earlier – Stats Office. Retrieved from; <https://af.reuters.com/article/africaTech/idADKBN101106>
- Alabi, T. (2014). Youths' unemployment and crime control: An analysis of Nigerian experience *European Scientific Journal*, 10(2), 301 - 312.
- Baldwin, D. A. (1997). The concept of security. *Review of International Studies*, 23(1), 5-23.
- Ball, J. (2019). What is security? Everthing. Global Security Review. Retrieved from: <https://globalsecurityreview.com/what-is-security-everything/>.
- Bello, V. A. (2011). *The impact of urban crime on property values in Akure, Nigeria*. Marrackech, Morocco: FIG Working Week.
- Cherkaoui, M. (2015). Deprivation: Relative. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*.
- Chris, J. (2019). What factors can cause unemployment to rise. BizFluent, Retrieved from: <https://bizfluent.com/info-8649189-factors-can-cause-unemployment-rise.html>.
- Country Security Report. (2020). Nigeria 2020 crime and safety report. Lagos: OSAC.
- Degaut, M. (2015). What is security? Retrieved from: [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/310495076\\_What-is-Security](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/310495076_What-is-Security).
- Eboh, C. (2019). Nigeria's senate Hike 2019 budget with focus on security. Reuters, Retrieved from: <https://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKCN1S61LM-OZABS>.
- Eke, C. C. (2014). Trends and patterns of violent crimes in Nigeria: An analysis of Boko Haram Terrorist Outrage. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, 3, 8-16.
- Ekeji, C. C. (2019). Poverty and crime among youths in Nigeria. Retrieved from: [https://www.academia.edu/4819129/poverty\\_and\\_crime\\_among\\_youths\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.academia.edu/4819129/poverty_and_crime_among_youths_in_Nigeria).
- Hori, H., Fujii, H., Sakaguchi, N., Nakamura, J., & Sakura, T. (2003). Research on the increase in structural-frictional unemployment (Interim Report) (Summary). *The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training*, 1-9.
- Ibrahim, R. (2019). Insecurity: Saving Ekiti from Kidnappers, robbers.
- ILO. (2003). Unemployed - ILO. Glossary of statistical terms.
- Jelilov, C., & Ndanitsa, A. Y. (2015). The relationship between unemployment and property crime rate in Nigeria (1994-2014). *Sacha Journal of Environmental Studies*, 5(1), 88-93.
- Jore, S. H. (2019). The conceptual and scientific demarcation of security in contrast to safety. *European Journal for Security Research*, 4, 157-174. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41125-017-0021-9>.
- Kazeem, Y. (2016). About half of the University graduates in Nigeria cannot Find Jobs. Quartz Africa. Retrieved from: <https://qz.com/africa/603967/about-half-of-the-university-graduates-in-nigeria-cannot-find-jobs/>.
- Kazeem, Y. (2017). Nigeria's unemployment problem is showing no signs of slowing down. *Quartz Africa*.
- Kostadis, J. P. (2017). Hunger makes a Thief of any Man": Poverty and Crime in British Colonial Asia. *European Review of Economic History*, 21(1), 1-28.
- Levernier, W., & Yang, B. Z. (2011). A note on the categories of unemployment in a macroeconomics course. *Perspectives on Economic Education Research*, 7(1), 58-73.
- Longely, R. (2018). All about relative deprivation and deprivation theory. Retrieved from: <https://www.thoughtco.com/relative-deprivation-theory-4177591>
- Mbachu, D., & Alake, T. (2016). *Nigeria population at 182 million, with widening youth bulge*. Bloomberg.
- Mohammad, A. S. (2008). Youth crime: Causes and remedies. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA)*.
- Moller, B. (2000). *The concept of security: The pros and cons of expansion and contraction*. Paper presented at the Paper for Joint Sessions of the Peace Theories Commission and the Security and Disarmament Commission at the 18th General Conference of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) Tampere, Finland.
- Ngwube, A. (2020). Threats to security in Nigeria.
- Okafor, E. E. (2011). Youth unemployment and implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(1), 358-373.
- Olonisakin, F. (2020). Security and sustainable development: African Perspective. Retrieved from: [www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/Olonisakin.pdf](https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/Olonisakin.pdf).
- Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services. (2016). Review of the roots of youth violence. *Literature Reviews*, 5(5), 1-253.
- Onwuka, E. M., Ugwu, K. E., Chukwuma, E. D., & Chijioko, D. E. (2015). Implication of youth unemployment and violent crime on the national growth, a case study of Anambra State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 8(8), 387- 403.
- Osawe, C. O. (2015). Increase wave of violent crime and insecurity: A threat to socio-economic development in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 20(1), 123-133.

- Osinubi, T. S. (2005). Macroeconometric analysis of growth, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 43(2), 249-269.
- Ozerdem, A. (2016). The role of youths in peacebuilding: Challenges and opportunities.
- Sheriff Deputies. (2016). The anatomy of crimes in Nigeria: A statistical study. Retrieved from: <https://www.sheriffdeputiesltd.com/crimes-in-nigeria/>.
- Stone, M. (2020). Security according to Buzan: A comprehensive security analysis. *Security Discussion Paper Series*, 1(9), 1-11.
- Tambari, W., & Imoh-Ita, I. (2016). Youth unemployment and crime rate in the niger delta: A comparative analysis of its intensity in Akwa Ibom, Bayesla and River State. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 21(2), 07-11.
- The Punch. (2019). Ondo security situation worrisome – UPN. Retrieved from: <https://punchng.com/ondo-security-situation-worrisome-upn/>.
- The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research. (2016). Theories and causes of crime. Retrieved from: <http://www.scrijr.ac.uk/wo-content/uploads/2016/02/SCCJR-Causes-of-Crime.pdf>
- Torruam, J. T., & Abur, C. C. (2014). The relationship between unemployment, inflation and crime: An application of cointegration and causality analysis in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 5(4), 131-137.
- Trading Economics. (2019). Nigeria unemployment rate. Retrieved from: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate>
- Uba, Y. (2020). Clergyman urges government to lift Embargo on employment. NNN News Nigeria. Retrieved from: <https://nnn.com.ng/clergyman--urges-government-to-lift-embargo-on-employment/>.
- UN News. (2019). Insecurity and violence turn Nigeria into a 'Pressure Cooker' that must be addressed. *Global Perspective Human Stories*.
- UNS. (2014). *Young people must be at centre of sustainable development Agenda, Speakers Say, as General Assembly Marks Anniversary of World Programme of Action for Youth*. Paper presented at the Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.
- Uzochukwu, M. (2019). Kidnapping: Overview, causes, effects and solutions, Retrieved from: <https://owlcation.com/social-sciences/Kidnapping-Overview-Causes-Effects-and-Solutions>
- Wayas, G. G., Selvadurai, S., & Awang, A. H. (2019). An examination of the causes of unemployment among the Youths in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJITEE)*, 8(12S2), 567-573.