

Influence of Poverty on Crime among Youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the influence of poverty on crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Three objectives were raised to guide the study. Three research questions were answered. The study adopted a survey research design. One-hundred and fifty youths were randomly sampled. A self-developed questionnaire with a reliability coefficient 0.88 was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and simple percentages and graphs). Findings of the study revealed that poverty has influence in youths engaging in crime in the study area and also there was significant relationship between family structure and the tendency to commit crime. The study recommended that government and other relevant stakeholders should come up with youth empowerment programs such as vocational training and skill acquisition programs in order to engage youths and reduce crime rate in the society.

Keywords: Poverty, Crime, Youths

Introduction

Nigeria is currently passing through social problems including corruption, unemployment, crime and other crisis that produce the unsteadiness and infirmity among youths and adults of the country. Thus, they resort to criminal acts and developing criminal behavior among these individuals of society. However, criminal behavior is a disliked and unwanted attitude which is highly hatred to the other members of the community. There are specific factors that lead these youths to adopt such type of behavior in society due to lack of resources including money and other social matters. Besides this, parental and societal negligence push to commit the crime in a society (Shah, Soomro & Mirjat, 2019).

Thus, criminal behavior is generally acquired due to insufficient requirement and resources for individuals of the poor class as compared to rich class people. In this way, they gain whatever they intend to have in their social lives. Irrespective to this, Poverty and unemployment as such the factors reason the youths to adopt criminal behavior in the societies. How, these components bring out disparities among the youths (Kawachi *et al.*, 1999). As the presence of the elements that tend the youths towards isolation and disintegration within social bond and cohesion and commit the criminal acts on the basis of criminal behavior (Crutchfield and Wadsworth, 2005). Poverty and unemployment interrelated with criminal behavior. Poverty stated such the slots among the individuals and reasons the lack of survival resources, other social assets (Shah, Soomro & Mirjat, 2019).

Explanations for crime have taken various dimensions according to different theorists and scholars. Some blame it on defective family structure or arrested personality adjustment. Others emphasize factors such as inequality, environmental influence, poor socialization process (Henslin, 2006). In this regards, criminal acts may be induced by many unforeseen factors and circumstances. Crime, according to Taylor (2006), it could be seen as a fault of the social system whose institutions do not work equally for all its members.

Sociologists look at the social in which individuals find themselves. Could it be that the problem lay not with the individual but in the social condition under which the individual live? The concern here is why people should exhibit behavior that is in violation of established norms, violations that may ultimately result in their being labeled as criminal behavior in terms of social processes (Shah, Soomro & Mirjat, 2019).

Mostly, persons known to commit street crimes as reported in the crime index are poor, uneducated, often unemployed and residents of low income neighborhoods (Anasi, 2010). Would a socially and economically sound person turn out to be criminal? In this research work, there is need to understand the socio-economic background of most juvenile and criminals in order to draw correlations or otherwise between low socio-economic status (poverty) and criminal behavior (Effiong, Takin & Archibong, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The rate of crime is rapidly increasing in Maiduguri Borno State. Some of the reasons include lack of sources of income/insufficient income, family structure and lack of social support

among others. Poverty results in deprivation, frustration, and weakness among the youths. In the other hand, the rate of unemployment also gives birth to criminal activities among youths in the study area. Thus, poverty is interconnected with crime which in turn increases criminal activities among youths. It is against this background that this study was designed to investigate the Influence of Poverty on Crime among the youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to determine the influence of poverty on crime among the youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria and the specific objectives are to investigate:

- i. Whether poverty causes crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.
- ii. The relationship between employment and crime among youths in Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State.
- iii. The relationship between the family structure and crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

- i. Does poverty causes crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?
- ii. What is the relationship between employment and crime among youths in Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State?
- iii. What is the relationship between the family structure and crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?

Materials and Methods

The research design adopted in this study was a survey research design. This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyse and interpret the variables that were found in the study. It is also useful because of the relatively large population from which the information was collected. The target population of this study was the youths living within Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State while the sample consists of 150 respondents in the selected areas. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire adapted from Ngutu (2014). The instrument consists of fifteen (15) items. The

instrument was pilot tested and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.88 which shows that the instrument was reliable to carry out the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 4.2.1 Influence of poverty on crime among youths

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				Mean
		SA	A	DA	SD	
1.	People with low financial standing are more into stealing other people's property	42 (30.66%)	61 (44.53%)	2 (16.79%)	11 (8.03%)	3.21
2.	Rich people are Not likely to steal other people's property	27 (19.71%)	84 (61.31%)	20 (14.60%)	6 (4.38%)	3.22
3.	Low income earners engage in criminal offences in the community	19 (13.87%)	93 (67.88%)	18 (13.14%)	7 (5.11%)	3.18
4.	Youths from poor families result to crime to earn their daily bread	21 (15.33%)	89 (64.96%)	18 (13.14%)	9 (6.57%)	3.26
5.	Poor people commit criminal activities by engaging in selling of drugs in your community	41 (29.93%)	53 (38.69%)	27 (19.71%)	16 (11.68%)	3.15
GRAND MEAN						3.14

Results from table 4.2.1 revealed that 42(30.66%) and 61(44.53%) of the respondents agree that people with low financial standing are more into stealing other people's property. 27(19.71%) and 84(61.13%) of the respondents agree that rich people are not likely to steal other people's property. 19(13.87%) and 93(67.88%) of the respondents agree that low income earners engage in criminal offences in the community. 21(15.33% and 89(64.96%) of the respondents agree that youths from poor families result to crime to earn their daily bread. While 41(29.93%) and 53(38.69%) of the respondents agree that poor people commit criminal activities by engaging in selling of drugs in their community. The grand mean of 3.14 indicated that the said factor has influence on youth in committing crime in the study area.

Table 4.2.2: Relationship Between Employment and Crime Among Youths

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				Mean
		SA	A	DA	SD	

6.	People engage in crime to nurse their frustration	23 (16.79%)	96 (70.07%)	12 (8.76%)	6 (4.38%)	3.65
7.	Many youths in your community engage in criminal activities	21 (15.33%)	89 (64.96%)	18 (13.14%)	9 (6.57%)	3.18
8.	Farmers, casual workers, unemployed likely engage in criminal activities	40 (29.20%)	58 (42.34%)	25 (18.25%)	14 (10.22%)	3.24
9.	Unemployed youths have the propensity to engage in criminal activities	23 (16.79%)	78 (56.93%)	26 (18.98%)	10 (7.30%)	3.31
10.	Employment in our community is through criminal means	21 (15.33%)	83 (60.58%)	28 (20.44%)	5 (3.65%)	3.09
GRAND MEAN						3.29

Results from table 4.2.2 revealed that 23(16.79%) and 96(70.07%) of the respondents agree that people engage in crime to nurse their frustration. 21(15.33%) and 89(64.96%) of the respondents agree that many youths in their community engage in criminal activities, 40(29.20%) and 58(42.34%) of the respondents agree that farmers, casual workers, unemployed likely engage in criminal activities, 23(16.79%) and 78(56.93%) of the respondents agree that unemployed youths have the propensity to engage in criminal activities and also 21(15.33%) and 83(60.58%) of the respondents agree that employment in their community is through criminal means.

Table 4.2.3: Relationship between the family structure and crime among youths in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				Mean
		SA	A	DA	SD	
11.	Rich households don't involve selling illegal substances leading to criminal offences	19 (13.87%)	63 (45.99%)	31 (22.63%)	24 (17.52%)	3.25
12.	Extended homes are prone basic needs leading to criminal activities	42 (30.66%)	61 (44.53%)	23 (16.79%)	11 (8.03%)	3.61
13.	Domestic strife is experienced criminal activities in my areas	21 (15.33%)	79 (57.66%)	26 (18.98%)	11 (8.03%)	3.18
14.	Children headed engage in criminal activities	23 (16.79%)	96 (70.07%)	12 (8.76%)	6 (4.38%)	3.42
15.	Families where husbands do not provide basic needs are involved in crime	21 (15.33%)	89 (64.96%)	18 (13.14%)	9 (6.57%)	3.31
GRAND MEAN						3.35

Results from table 4.2.3 revealed that 19(13.87%) and 63(45.99%) of the respondents agree that rich households don't involve selling illegal substances leading to criminal offences,

42(30.66%) and 61(44.53%) of the respondents agree that extended homes are prone basic needs leading to criminal activities, 21(15.33%) and 79(57.66%) of the respondents agree that domestic strife is experienced criminal activities in their areas, 23(16.79%) and 96(70.07%) of the respondents agree that children headed engage in criminal activities and finally 21(15.33%) and 89(64.96%) of the respondents agree that families where husbands do not provide basic needs are involved in crime. The grand mean of 3.35 indicated that the said factor has influence on youths engaging in criminal activities in the study area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that poverty causes crime among youths, there is relationship between employment and crime among youths and also there is relationship between family structure and crime among youths. The study recommended that government and other relevant stakeholders should come up with youth empowerment programs such as vocational training and skill acquisition programs in order to engage youths and reduce crime rate in the society. Government and Non-governmental organizations should create awareness to the youths on the danger involve in committing crimes and finally parents and other family members should also monitor the activities of the youths to reduce the rate of crime in the society.

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