

Poverty and Ignorance as Correlates of Youths Social Restiveness Behaviour in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria: Implication for Counselling

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Abstract

This study investigates poverty, ignorance and gender as correlates of youths social restiveness behavior in Bayelsa and Rivers States of Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was used for the study. The population consists of all youths (male and female) from ten local government areas of Bayelsa and Rivers states of Nigeria (5 local government areas from Bayelsa and 5 local government areas from Rivers respectively) estimated to be about 5000 youths. The sample size of 500 youths was used for the study selected through purposive random sampling technique from the selected local government areas. Researcher self made questionnaire titled "Youth Social Restiveness Behaviour Questionnaire (YSRBQ) was used for data collected from the subjects. Regression analysis statistics was used to answer and analyze the two research questions and two hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that poverty and ignorance are significant predictors of youth social restiveness behaviour though, poverty is stronger. Gender was not significant. Conclusions were reached, implication for counselling made and recommendations stated.

Introduction

Poverty is derived from the French word 'pauvre' meaning poor. Poverty simply means the state of lacking material possessions, that is, of having little or no means to support oneself. Anyone lacking the means necessary to remain alive is in poverty. In Nigeria, poverty can be defined in absolute or relative forms for example, the subsistence groups (farmers, fishermen and petty traders) are good example of absolute poverty while the relative group are all persons earning less than 25% of the median income.

Poverty in Nigeria remains significant despite high economic growth. It first, started during the British Empire. Nigeria has one of the world highest economic growth rates, geometrical in nature over the last decades. It has a well-developed economy with plenty of natural resources such as oil. Although it retains a high level of poverty, with 70% of people living on below ₦10 daily, showing a decline in equity. There has been attempts at poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria such as National Accelerated Food Production programme and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank 1972, Operation Feed the Nation 1976, Green Revelation Programme 1979, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) 1988, Family Support programme and Family Economy Advancement Programme 1993 and finally, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPWP) to replace the previously failed Poverty Alleviation Programme. However, these programmes have largely failed to overcome the three reasons for its formation hence persistent poverty, income inequality, ethnic conflict and political instability. Income inequality in Nigeria worsened from 0.43-0.49 between 2004 and 2009. This was correlated with differential access to infrastructure, and amenities. It is worthy to note that there are more rural poor people than urban poor. The results from the composition of Nigeria Economy is based on energy, oil and agricultural sectors. Oil exports contributed significantly to government revenues of about 15% GDP despite employing only a small fraction of the population while agriculture contributes to about 45% of GDP and employs close to 90% of the rural population.

Oil revenue is poorly distributed among the population with higher government spending in urban areas than rural, high unemployment rates renders personal income more divergent. Moreover, the process of oil extraction has resulted in significant pollution which harms the agricultural sector.

With the return to civilian rule in 1999, militants from religious and ethnic groups have become markedly more violent. This unrest has its roots in poverty and economic competition. Its economic and human damage further escalate the problems of poverty.

The depth of ignorance of human beings about personal knowledge of themselves and the possibility of the modern day behavior changes has been enormous.

Ignorance is a state of being uninformed, (lack of knowledge). In Nigeria, ignorance of the citizens is greatly compounded by the level of illiteracy and general poor educational service available in the country. For example, the knowledge of modern computer and how to use its facilities for enhancing behavioural and human interpersonal relationship has been a major problem due to lack of skills and technical know-how, hence resulting to social restiveness of youth behaviour.

Poverty and ignorance in Nigeria socio-cultural environment among its citizens is very clear and wide spread sending signal of insecurity on daily basis. The practice of kidnapping of individual and asking for huge sum of money as ransom for the release of their victim has suddenly added terror to an already fear prone environment through institutionalized incidence of armed robbery, intertribal wars, Boko Haram bombing, Jesse fire disaster of late 1990s, pipeline in a northern suburb of Lagos 2006 vandalization, petrol tanker accident at Okogbe in Ahoada East Local Government Area of East-West Road in Rivers State on 13th July, 2012 and regular conflicts.

Unstable political environment has not really been stable. Although, there is a form of democratic government in practice, yet not really been stable to provide the citizens with the expected level of peaceful and economic stable environment, such as incidence of political assassination, armed robbery, rape and youth disturbances involving male and female (social restiveness behaviour).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation of poverty and ignorance in youth's behaviour towards social restiveness in Bayelsa and Rivers State.
2. Does gender moderate the correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance and their social restiveness behaviour.

Research Hypotheses

The following Research Hypotheses were tested in this study at eh 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁ There is no significant correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance and their behaviour towards social restiveness.

Ho₂ There is no significant correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance, gender and social restiveness behaviour.

Methodology

Design: This study is a correlational research design. A correlational survey research is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group (Ordu, 2006).

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of 5000 youths who are living in 10 Local Government Area of Bayelsa and Rivers State of Nigeria. (Bayelsa 5 L.G.A., Rivers 5 L.G. A.). (Source: Independent Electoral Commission registration Chart).

Sampling Technique

A sample of 500 youth randomly drawn from the 10 local government area of Bayelsa and Rivers states were selected using purposive sampling technique for the study. 50 youths from each of the local government area selected.

Instrumentation

The research instrument for the study is the "Youth Social Restiveness Behaviour Questionnaire" (YSRBQ) developed by the researcher to elicit information from youth in respect of incidence of youth restiveness behavior. It contains three sections A and B. The section A contains information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, religion, either group qualification or socio-economic status. The Section B of the instrument measured youth restiveness variables. The reliability of the instrument - YSRBQ (which is an estimate of its consistency and stability) was determined by the researcher through a Cronbach Alpha reliability technique (a). The coefficient alpha obtained was 0.80 which was found significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, considered reliable for the study.

Administration

The questionnaire was administered personally by the research. The questionnaire were collected from the respondents on the spot and the raw scores were analyzed.

Data Analysis

The multiple correlation and Regression Statistics was used to answer all research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

The various results of the research question and the hypotheses of the study are presented below:

Research Question One: What is the correlation of poverty and ignorance in youth's behaviour towards social restiveness in Bayelsa and Rivers State.

To answer this Research question, a regression of poverty and ignorance on youth's behaviour towards social restiveness was done as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Correlation of Poverty and Ignorance on Youth Attitude Towards Social Restiveness Behaviour.

| Model 1 | B | SEB | Beta | t |
|-----------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| Constant | 33.97 | 1.88 | | 22.82 |
| Poverty | -.026 | .03 | -.041 | -12.56 |
| Ignorance | .20 | .02 | .28 | 9.00 |

- (a) Predictors constant – Poverty, ignorance
 (b) Dependent variable – Social Restiveness Behaviour.
 Significant, $P < 0.05$

Table one above shows that poverty and ignorance were significant predictors of youth's behaviour towards social restiveness (t-value for poverty = -12.56 and ignorance = 9.00, $P < 0.05$).

The Beta weights of -.41, for poverty and .28 for ignorance indicated the degree of change on youth's behaviour towards social restiveness produced by a unit change in poverty and ignorance respectively. This implies that poverty is the stronger predictor of youth behaviour towards social restiveness though in an inverse direction.

Hypothesis I: There is no significant correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance and their behaviour towards social restiveness. The data presented in table 2 was used to test Hypothesis 1 below.

Table 2: Correlation of Poverty, Ignorance and Youth's Behaviour Towards Social Restiveness.

| Model 2 | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std Error of the Estimate |
|--------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| C | .55 ^a | .33 | .33 | 7.11 |
| ANOVA ^b | | | | |
| Mode 2 | Sum of Square | df | Mean Sqaure | F |
| Regression | 52468.01 | 2 | 21789.00 | 381-27 ^a |
| Residual | 37311.44 | 1287 | 54.80 | |
| Total | 126179.45 | 1289 | | |

- (a) Predictors (constant) poverty, ignorance
 (b) Dependent variable: Social restiveness behavior.
 Significant ($P < 0.05$)

Table 2 above shows that $F = 381.27$. $P < 0.05$ is significant. The proportion of variance in the social restiveness behavior attributable to the joint impact of poverty and ignorance was 33% (adjusted $R^2 = .33$). Therefore, the null hypotheses which stated that there is no significant correlation among youths poverty, ignorance and their behaviour towards social restiveness was rejected.

Research Question 2: Does gender moderate the correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance and their social restiveness behaviour. A Regression of poverty, ignorance and gender on social restiveness behaviour was carried out to answer the research question 2 on table 3 below.

| Mode 3 | B | SEB | Beta | t |
|-----------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Constant | 66.683 | 12.375 | | 5.389* |
| Poverty | -.290 | 4.012 | -.003 | -.072 |
| Ignorance | .585 | .756 | .038 | .774 |
| Gender | -.0115 | .778 | .001 | -.015 |

Predictors (constant) Poverty, Ignorance and Gender
 Dependent variable: social restiveness behaviour
 * Significant ($P < 0.05$)

Table 3 above shows that poverty, ignorance and gender are not significant predictors of social restiveness behaviour. t-valued for poverty = -.072, ignorance = .77.4, Gender = -.015 respectively.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance, gender and social restiveness behaviour. The data presented in table 4 were used to test hypothesis 2.

Table 4: Multiple Regression of Poverty, Ignorance, Gender and Social Restiveness Behaviour.

| Mode 4 | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std Error of the Estimate |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 | -.036 ^a | .001 | -.005 | 7.8413 |
| ANOVA ^b | | | | |
| Model | Sum of Square | df | Mean Square | F |
| Regression | 38.913 | 3 | 12.971 | .211 |
| Residual | 30497.199 | 496 | 61.486 | |
| Total | 30536.112 | 499 | | |

Predictors (constant) poverty, ignorance and gender
 Dependent variable: Social Restiveness Behaviour.

Table 4 above shows that $F = .211$, $P > 0.05$ is not significant. The proportion of variance in the social restiveness behaviour attributable to the joint impact of poverty, ignorance and gender was 5%, adjusted $R^2 = -.005$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation among youth's poverty, ignorance, gender and social restiveness behaviour was accepted. There is no significant correlation among poverty, ignorance, gender and youth's social restiveness behavior.

Discussion of the Results

The result of the first research question showed that poverty and ignorance were significant predictors of youth's behaviour toward social restiveness. The result also shows that poverty is the stronger predictor of youth's behaviour towards social restiveness though in an inverse direction. The result of this study has added to the existing knowledge in literature which hitherto considered poverty and ignorance as predictors of youth's social restiveness, corruption, political instability, long-term ethnic conflict and civil unrest in our society (Nigeria). For example, Argbokhan (2000), Ordu (2009), Ossai (2005), Caroline (2010) found that militant from religious and ethnic groups, political instability, corruption and civil unrest has its roots in poverty and ignorance. By extension, the present study has shown that economic and human damages further escalate the problems of poverty (such as increasing the mortality rate). For instance, ethnic unrest and the pipeline fires are common in Nigeria, more than 400 people died in two pipe line explosion in Lagos in 2006 and 2011 respectively, the horror in Rivers State petrol tanker fire (2012) 105 died immediately while 100 sent to the hospital. The Health Commissioner, Dr. Sampson Parker at the scene at Ahoada General Hospital described the incident as cremation, a national disaster and that Nigerian people should understand that the danger they are exposed to because a tanker with fuel is a bomb waiting to explode. Mr. Emeka Nwogu, Commissioner for Special Duty in Rivers State described the incident as very sad and further asked

what level of poverty and ignorance will make people to scoop fuel from a tanker carrying 33000 litres of petrol? Our people will never learn. This is not the first time he said. He further said that vehicle owners especially tanker owners should start using educated drivers and that educated drivers who are well paid will know the traffic signs and slow down if the road is bad. Therefore, people who are rich and knowledgeable enough will never attempt to be involved.

The moderator role of gender on the correlation among poverty, ignorance and youth's social restiveness behavior has generated keen interest among scholars in politics, religion, family, psychology as well as in education.

The results of the present study shows that gender did not significantly moderate the relationship among poverty, ignorance and youth social restiveness behavior. The finding is consistent with Ossai (2005), Ordu (2006), who did not find gender as a significant factor in their studies. In Nigeria, especially in Rivers and Bayelsa states, both male and female youths engage in social restiveness behavior. It was not surprising some other studies found gender difference significant in their studies like Harrison and Rainer (1992) cited in Busch (1995); Unachukwu and Nwankwo (2002); and Akpoechago (2003). In Nigeria especially Rivers and Bayelsa States. However, male and female youth's engage in social restiveness behavior. It was not surprising, therefore, that gender was not a significant moderator of the correlations among poverty, ignorance and social restiveness behavior. Reports of social restiveness behavior in Rivers and Bayelsa States have implicated both male and female youths in large number (Armed robbery incident at Rukpokwu market junction (2012), militancy operation at Bayelsa 2006). The study by Ogunsanya (2005) which focused on students perceived causes and effect of examination malpractices in Ogun State confirmed that both male and female youths engaged in it. The result of the present study therefore, contradicts Darisons (1972) claim as cited in Okorodudu (1999) that men and women tended to behave differently because of variation in their psycho-physiological differences in brain constitution.

Since the present study has shown that both male and female youth had equal tendencies to engage in social restiveness behavior, though the statistical figure are not available to compare the number of male and female in it. It might not be surprise if more men actually engage in social restiveness behavior since search for money to maintain and care for the family is the responsibility of man before and after marriage.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of the research study, counsellors can rely on the measures of poverty and ignorance to predict youth social restiveness behavior. Male and female youths have equal tendencies to engage in social restiveness behavior since gender was found to be an insignificant moderator of the correlation.

Implication for Counselling

The findings and conclusion reached in this study have far-reaching implications for the counselling profession and our education system in Nigeria.

Since social restiveness behavior has become the talk of the day among Rivers and Bayelsa states youths in Nigeria, preventive counselling approach to curbing restive behavior among youths should be applied right from primary school. Poverty alleviation programmes should be encouraged and effectively managed.

If preventive approach to tackling youth restiveness behaviour is to be effective, more professionally trained counsellors should be employed to render effective counselling services to the teeming population of youths in Rivers/Bayelsa States and Nigeria at large.

Individual or group counselling mode should be utilized by counsellor to re-orientate youths who have been identified as likely culprits of restive behavior.

Recommendation

Youths seminar and workshop which could help to minimize social restiveness behavior should be organized and youths of various sort should be encouraged to attend.

The states government should without further delay come out with a policy statement on the employment of the citizenry to stop unemployment of its youths.

Schools should be equipped and youths educated to curb ignorance in the society.

All the poverty alleviation programmes mounted by the government should be revived and adequately organized.

Salaries of workers should be increased and economic activities developed to boost the National economy.

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