
SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND LEVEL OF YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the level and some predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised all the youths in Southwest, Nigeria. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 1166 sample across three States out of the six States that make up the Southwest, Nigeria. "Questionnaire on Socio-Economic Factors and Level of Youth Restiveness" (QSEFLYR) was used to collect data for this study. Experts in Social Studies, Tests, Measurement and Evaluation determined the face and content validity of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha reliability testing method was used to test the reliability of the instrument while overall reliability co-efficient of 0.96 was obtained and this was considered appropriate for this study. The research questions were tested using mean, percentages and standard deviation. The study showed that the level of restiveness among the youths was high in Southwest Nigeria and that the predominant socio-economic factor responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria was economic policies. Consequently, it was recommended that public office holders and other relevant institutions should be more sensitive to the

genuine concern of the youth by prioritising their welfare to reduce high level of youth restiveness.

Keywords: Socio-economic factors, Youth restiveness, Economic policies

Introduction

Peace cannot be compromised in any human society for mutual coexistence and even development to take place, and for government to be able to discharge its duties to the citizens. Therefore, for meaningful development to be achieved in any human society there should be little or no element of violence among the people. Hence, violence can make lives and properties to be at greater risk. According to Williams et al. (2024), violence can trigger killings, destruction of lives and properties, robbery and any other act that can cause retardation to the society. However, in some parts of Nigeria, especially in the Southwest zone, the peace and calmness which the zone is noted for appears to have been faced with series of violent actions and demonstrations from the youths in the recent time. Some of the communities in the zone seem to have witnessed various types of youth violent demonstrations that tend to have led to social instability and disorderliness at one point or the other. The youths in the Southwest zone have shown some displeasures and dissatisfactions through some protests or unrest. According to Aliyu (2023), Sodeinde (2023), Jones (2021), there were protests in Lagos, Ekiti and other Southwest communities by the youths against police brutality tagged '#endsars', new naira redesign, scarcity of fuel and economic hardship. These actions are referred to as restiveness.

Restiveness is the showing of lack of endurance or demonstration of displeasure over a certain difficulty that tends to be overburden. Restiveness means kicking against unwanted situation of life. It is also a lack of ability to endure delay and prolonged disappointment. Therefore, restiveness involves showing of grievance against unwanted or unexpected life's situation. According to Ojobah et al. (2020), restiveness is the showing of lack of endurance and perseverance on some conditions that create obstacles to one's expectation. This means that, failure to meet some set goals, as a result

of disappointments and some unfavourable factors can lead to impatience and consequently, restiveness.

Therefore, youth restiveness can be described as common violent demonstrations by the youths in a bid to submit or channel grievances on the relevant institutions. Ibiteye and Awomoyi (2023) described youth restiveness as a protest which the youths embark upon to enforce constituted authority to grant their desires. By these authors' submission, youths carry out restiveness to demand relevant institution to grant their desires. According to Mba et al. (2021), youth restiveness is an agitation carried out by some youths in various communities in Nigeria. The authors described youth restiveness as those positive and negative reactions or actions taken by the youths to kick against those factors that attempt to function against their interests or goals. Notably, economic, political and religious factors seem to have become motivation for youth restiveness. It is observed that even though that, there were some cases of youth restiveness in Nigeria in the time past, where for instance; the Niger Delta militants in the South-South region used to strike and as well in the North Central and the North East where religious extremists usually perpetrated violence, the Southwest zone appeared to have enjoyed relative peace. Unfortunately, the level at which youths now restive in Southwest Nigeria, has become more worrisome judging from year 2020 youth endsars protests, youth agitation for Yoruba nation in year 2021, youth #endsars memorial protest of 2021, June 12 memorial protest of year 2021, youth protest against new naira redesign and scarcity of year 2023 protest, among others. According to Daramola (2023), Shehu (2023), youths in Southwest zone demonstrated heavily against high electricity tariffs, fuel subsidy removal, school fees, and cashless policies.

Youth restiveness seems to have achieved few positive changes in spite of its huge negative consequences in Nigeria. According to Tino et al. (2022), youths have actualised some of their desires in Nigeria through restiveness. It is noted that youths relatively force leaders in Nigeria to listen to them and act on their demands through restiveness. Conversely, youth restiveness seems to have led to some unpalatable circumstances in Nigeria. It has led to arrest and punishment of some

innocent citizens by security operatives in Nigeria. According to Agbaji et al. (2018), youth restiveness has led to citizens' arrest in Nigeria.

Again, Sodeinde (2023), Ogbonnaiye (2023), submitted that youth restiveness has sometimes crippled commercial activities and paralysed movement in some communities in Nigeria. Also, Adewale and Adedigbe (2022) reported that youth restiveness led to road blockage in Lagos State, Nigeria. Furthermore, Olugbenro (2020) gave a report that public and private engagements in Abeokuta, Ogun State were been disrupted due to youth restiveness. It was further stated that the action had negative effects on citizens' movement and businesses. Hence, some of the assumed factors which could have predominantly heightened youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria include some socio-economic factors which affect or contribute to social and economic wellness of citizens in the society. The assumed socio-economic factors include leadership, peer influence, social media, drug abuse, religion, state of security, availability of social amenities, unemployment and corruption. Considering the dimension at which incidents of youth restiveness have been devastating in Southwest, Nigeria, this study therefore tries to investigate some of the socio-economic factors and youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

Calmness is essential in human society for peace and development to be achieved. Every community and individual in Nigeria is expected to embrace peace or calmness through mutual understanding to avoid chaos, agitation and restiveness in the society. However, in the recent times, it appears that violent demonstration, protest or restiveness among the youths has threatened the expected calmness in Southwest, Nigeria counting from the time of violent demonstrations and protests that took place across the six States in the geo-political zone during the #endsars protest in year 2020.

In a bid to arrest the problem of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria, some States Governments across the zone have engaged the youths to acquire some entrepreneurial skills which can make them to be self-employed and reliant to boost their prospect and avoid

idleness. In spite of this, youth restiveness still seems to be prevalent in the Southwest geo-political zone. Some innocent citizens have been arrested, detained and punished due to youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. However, it is felt that the level of youth restiveness may become more devastating if some of the factors associated with it are not identified and lasting solutions found. Some of the socio-economic factors assumed to have association with youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria include the problem of leadership, peer influence, indiscriminate use of social media, drug abuse, religion, state of security, economic policies, availability of social amenities, unemployment, corruption and host of others. This study therefore sought to examine the socio-economic factors associated with youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

- i. determined the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria; and
- ii. identified the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study:

1. What is the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria?
2. What are the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria?

Methods

This study was carried out using descriptive survey research design. The population for this study consisted all youths in Southwest zone, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1166 youths in Southwest, Nigeria, while multistage sampling procedures was used to select the respondents. A questionnaire titled 'Socio-Economic Factors and Level of Youth Restiveness' (SEFLYR) was used to collect data for this study. The face validity was subjected to thorough screening by the experts in Social Studies Education, and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability testing method. The overall reliability co-efficient of 0.96 was obtained and this was considered high enough for this study. The instrument was

administered on selected respondent in Southwest, Nigeria by the researchers with the help of six research assistants who assisted in the distribution and retriever of the instrument from the respondents. The research questions were answered using frequency counts, means, percentages and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequency count and Mean rating on the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>SD</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Remark</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>		
I feel anxious because of the current situation	498	42.8	450	38.7	111	9.5	104	8.9	3.15	High
I think the future is uncertain because of the present situation	431	37.0	342	29.3	288	24.7	105	9.0	2.94	High
I feel frustrated by the state of affairs in the country	794	68.4	303	26.1	45	3.9	18	1.6	3.61	High
I am not satisfied with present situation of life	585	50.2	333	28.6	149	12.8	99	8.5	3.20	High
I often get angry due to lack of opportunities	579	49.9	452	39.0	123	10.6	6	0.5	3.38	High
I think of supporting demonstration to show grievance	315	27.1	630	54.2	113	9.7	105	9.0	2.99	High
I believe youth restiveness is justified in my community	341	31.7	531	49.3	201	18.7	3	0.3	3.12	High
I am dissatisfied with the way youths well-being is being handled in my community	651	56.0	338	29.1	60	5.2	114	9.8	3.31	High
I believe protesting is the only way to make my voice heard	347	29.8	360	30.9	285	24.4	174	14.9	2.75	High
I believe that destroying public/private properties during protest is a way to express dissatisfaction towards present condition	302	26.4	123	10.8	48	4.2	669	58.6	2.05	Low

Items	SA		A		D		SD		Mean	Remark
	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%		
I often feel agitated when I am cheated	411	35.2	440	37.7	87	7.5	228	19.6	2.89	High
I feel worried whenever I am unable to achieve goals	594	52.0	303	26.5	122	10.7	123	10.8	3.20	High
I believe youths are not actively involved in the development of the country	483	41.4	405	34.7	96	8.2	182	15.6	3.02	High
I am under pressure to cope with current economic situation	318	28.1	506	44.7	201	17.7	108	9.5	2.91	High
I believe many young persons are disrespectful nowadays	510	43.9	420	36.1	161	13.8	72	6.2	3.18	High
I like participating in street fight due to the current situation	135	11.6	233	20.0	279	24.0	516	44.4	1.99	Low
I often feel some pressure due to some basic responsibilities	546	48.2	345	30.5	134	11.8	108	9.5	3.17	High
Inadequate attention to the welfare of the youths will always result in disorderliness in the society	603	52.7	311	27.2	120	10.3	111	9.7	3.23	High
I feel disappointed about personal life	363	31.1	413	35.4	255	21.9	135	11.6	2.86	High
I often feel dejected by the current situation	570	48.9	261	22.4	275	23.6	60	5.1	3.15	High
I believe youths must protest to achieve their goals	480	43.4	455	41.1	99	9.0	72	6.5	3.21	High
I believe restiveness is a means to reject unfavourable condition	422	36.2	471	40.4	222	19.0	51	4.4	3.08	High
I support restiveness because youth are sidelined in the scheme of things	468	40.2	561	47.4	78	6.7	66	5.7	3.22	High
Grand Mean = 3.03										

Key: f = frequency; % = percentage of respondents; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

The information contained in Table 1 shows the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Considering the mean cut off point of 2.50, level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria was considered high in 21 out of the 23 items in the table above, while only two items were considered low. Considering the grand mean of 3.03 that fall within the mean cut off point of 2.50-4.00, the overall level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria was considered high.

Research Question 2: What are the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean rating on the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria (N= 1166)

Socio-economic Factors	Mean	Rank
Economic Policies	30.14	1st
Social Media	17.26	2nd
Leadership	15.88	3rd
State of Security	15.04	4th
Corruption	14.78	5th
Availability of Social Amenities	14.71	6th
Unemployment	14.51	7th
Religion	13.63	8th
Peer Influence	11.39	9th
Drug Abuse	9.97	10th

The results contained in Table 2 showed the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Considering the mean score of 30.14, economic policies was considered the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. This is closely followed by social media with the mean score of 17.26, leadership (15.88), state of security (15.04), corruption (14.78), availability of social amenities (14.71), unemployment (14.51), religion (13.63) and peer influence (11.39). While the mean score of 9.97 indicated that drug abuse was considered the least predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Discussions

The findings of this study show that the level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria was high. This implies that the rate at which youths are being restive from time to time is of grave measure. The reason for the high level of restiveness among the youths in Southwest, Nigeria might not be unlinked with some unmet basic needs such as feeding, clothing and shelter. In addition, inability to achieve projected aspirations like education and better standard of

living may contribute to the high level of youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. The result is in consonance with Ojobah et al. (2020) who submitted that youth restiveness has become a behaviour globally. The authors gathered that restiveness has become a behaviour developed by individual to actualise desires.

This study further found that economic policies are predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Thereafter, social media, leadership, state of security, corruption, availability of social amenities, unemployment, religion and peer influence take precedence accordingly. However, it was shown from the findings that drug abuse was the least predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. This implies that economic policies in Nigeria took the lead among the identified socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. This could be that some of the economic policies put in place by the relevant authorities were not favourable for youths to actualise goals in Southwest, Nigeria. Hence the need to achieve desirable objectives could make the youths become restive in kicking against unbearable economic policies. Harsh economic policies which tend to bring hardship in meeting basic needs such as payment of tariffs, payment for goods and services, housing, transport, feeding and the like could be the reason why economic policies was found to be the predominant socio-economic factors responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. In line with this, Daramola (2023), Shehu (2023) reported that youths at various instances protested against electricity tariffs, school fees, fuel subsidy removal and cashless policies in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it is concluded that majority of youth in Southwest, Nigeria are highly restive. It was concluded that economic policies was the predominant socio-economic factor responsible for youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. Finally, it was also concluded that leadership, peer influence, social media, drug abuse, state of security, economic policies, availability of social

amenities, unemployment and corruption contributed to youth restiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Governments at all levels are encouraged to formulate and implement favourable economic policies that can tackle unemployment, poverty, inflation and economic hardship so as to improve the living standard of youths and reduce restiveness. The government and the society at large are also encouraged to improve on socio-economic situations in Nigeria to reduce youth restiveness

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