

Youth Restiveness and Community Development in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined issues of youth restiveness and community development in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined; causes of youth restiveness in Umuahia LGA, ways youth restiveness influence community development in Umuahia North LGA and ways of curbing youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA. It adopted survey research design. Population was made up of 5,008 members of community-based youth organizations in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for analysis. Findings reveal 14 causes of youth restive activities, including, poverty ($\bar{X} = 2.94$); youth unemployment ($\bar{X} = 3.10$), eight influences of youth restiveness on community development including, media influences ($\bar{X} = 3.07$), abandonment of community projects ($\bar{X} = 2.89$) and 15 ways of curbing youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA. These include: establishment of skill acquisition programmes for youths ($\bar{X} = 3.50$), creation of education opportunities for youths ($\bar{X} = 3.10$) among others. It was recommended among others, that government should establish comprehensive youth empowerment programmes which would provide youth with skills training and vocational opportunities.

Keywords: Youth, Community, Development, Restiveness, Empowerment, Social Amenities, Activities.

Introduction

Youth restiveness refers to disruptive behaviors of youths like protests, cultism, and civil disobedience, often driven by socio-economic and political disenfranchisement (Akpokighe & Ejovi, 2021). These actions reflect frustration, marginalization, and a lack of opportunities for employment and engagement. In Umuahia North, Abia State, restiveness has grown due to

economic hardship, high unemployment, and political exclusion. While these issues are widespread in Nigeria's South East, they are especially severe due to perceived marginalization by the federal government and limited infrastructure (Okpaleke & Uzodike, 2020). Historical grievances, political alienation, and economic neglect have contributed to a volatile environment, where youth resort to disruptive actions as resistance.

The United Nations (2019) defines youth as a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, where social awareness and collaboration are key to societal progress. When properly engaged, youth can contribute meaningfully to development (Eze-Micheal, 2020). However, without appropriate engagement, restiveness emerges, disrupting social order and community growth.

Nigeria recognizes the importance of youth in nation-building through legal frameworks. The 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that the government's primary purpose is the security and welfare of its people (Section 14(2)(b)), highlighting the state's responsibility to create opportunities for youth development. The National Youth Policy (2019) provides strategies to address youth unemployment, promote skill acquisition, and encourage civic participation (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019).

Youth restiveness, a long-standing issue, is often linked to sustained protests against perceived injustices, escalating into violence and unrest. Eze-Micheal (2020) note that it stems from unmet expectations, neglect, and exploitation. Major drivers include economic deprivation, unemployment, and lack of access to quality education. Between 2006 and 2011, rising youth unemployment contributed to widespread disillusionment (Olabisi and Olanrewaju2021). Furthermore, Adeleke and Oloyede (2020) associated restiveness with deprivation and frustration, while Ifeanyi and Uzochukwu (2020) linked it to uneven socio-economic development, leading to ethnic conflicts involving youth. In the

South-South, neglect and ecological degradation from oil exploitation have fueled unrest (Agbiboa, 2015).

Other factors such as peer influence, poverty, and bad governance further contribute (Ajayi and Omotola (2021) argue that generational marginalization and economic hardship are key drivers, while Usoro, Essien and William (2017) highlighted poor infrastructure and environmental degradation. Youth restiveness significantly impacts community development by disrupting economic activity, deterring investment, and creating insecurity. Similarly, Okonkwo and Iheriohanma (2023) linked it to criminal behaviors like violent protests and tribal conflicts, while Ajiboye et al. (2016) identified it as a major security challenge. Nwankwo, Onah and Ugwu (2022) reported significant losses in lives, property, and infrastructure.

Crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and militancy often stem from socio-economic exclusion and lack of empowerment (Amadi and Okeke2022). With limited opportunities, many youths turn to crime as a form of resistance and survival, further destabilizing society.

Efforts to suppress restiveness through military or police intervention have been ineffective (Mohammed and Bala2021). Researchers advocate for solutions focusing on education, skill acquisition, employment, and inclusive governance (Ogundare, 2020; Ogunseye, 2020). Sustainable community development requires a holistic approach that addresses both physical and psychological needs (Kobani & Alozie, 2016). In Umuahia North, addressing youth restiveness requires proactive policies, youth

empowerment, and meaningful involvement in local development.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate influence of youth restiveness on community development in Umuahia North Local Government Area, Abia State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. causes of youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA.
2. ways youth restiveness influence community development in Umuahia North LGA.
3. ways of curbing youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

There is no significant difference in mean responses of male and female youths on:

H0₁: causes of youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA.

H0₂: ways youth restiveness influence community development in Umuahia North LGA.

H0₃: ways of curbing youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA.

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted the survey research design.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State. This area consists of nine communities with a notable prevalence of youth restiveness. The area has several youth organizations, which often engage in vocational training, political education, and community services. The socio-political and economic context of the LGA

makes it a relevant location for this research.

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprises 5,008 youths (individuals aged 15–35 years) from diverse educational, occupational, and social backgrounds who belong to registered youth organization. They include students, unemployed graduates, artisans, traders, young professionals (Umuahia North LGA Youth Affairs Department, 2025).

Sample for the Study: The study sample comprised 500 respondents, including 276 males and 224 females. A multistage sampling technique was used. Stratified proportionate sampling determined the sample size from the nine communities using a sampling fraction of 0.1. Purposive sampling technique was used to select youth leaders, based on their roles in community development and decision-making. Male and female youths from each community were then randomly selected using simple random sampling.

Instrument for Data Collection: Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by three university experts in Education. The instrument was tried out with 20 respondents outside the area of the study. Internal consistency of the instrument of reliability coefficients of 0.89, 0.79, and 0.76 for each cluster, and an overall reliability index of 0.82. these were established using Cronbach Alpha technique.

Method of Data Collection: A total of 500 copies (276 for males and 224 for females) of the questionnaire were distributed by hand. Only 410 copies (227 from males and 183 from females) were collected representing 90 percent return rate.

Method of Data Analysis: Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation, and t-test at a 0.05 significance level. A benchmark mean of 2.50 was used for decision-making: items with a mean of 2.50 and above were considered "causes/influence/way," and those below

2.50 were considered "not causes"/influence/way". The null hypotheses were upheld if the p-value was greater than 0.05 alpha level and rejected if otherwise.

Findings of the Study

Table 1: Mean Responses, Standard Deviation and t Values of Male and Female Youths on the Causes of Youth Restiveness (YR) in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State

S/ N	Causes of YR	\bar{X}_1	SD_1	\bar{X}_2	SD_2	\bar{X}_g	t	p-value	R
1.	Poverty.	2.85	1.03	2.98	0.96	2.92	-1.45	0.15	C
2	Youth Unemployment	3.13	0.89	3.08	0.95	3.10	0.61	0.55	C
3	Peer motivated incitement	2.72	0.93	2.74	0.98	2.73	-0.23	0.82	C
4	Limited economic opportunities	2.67	1.01	2.62	1.10	2.65	0.53	0.60	C
5	Neglect of youth-focused development programmes by the government	2.84	1.04	2.78	1.06	2.81	0.64	0.53	C
6	Inadequate educational opportunity and resources for youths	2.23	1.01	2.09	0.94	2.16	1.59	0.13	NC
7	Lack of basic infrastructures	2.82	0.93	2.95	0.87	2.89	-1.6	0.11	C
8	Inadequate communication and information between government authorities and the youth population	2.22	0.96	2.50	0.96	2.36	-3.4	0.001	NC
9	Marginalization of the less privilege	2.83	0.97	2.96	0.89	2.89	-2.4	0.81	C
10	Role of politicians in employing youth against their perceived enemies.	2.96	0.92	2.98	0.90	2.97	-1.55	0.12	C
11	Inadequate training (skilled) programmes	2.99	0.89	2.96	0.97	2.98	0.36	0.72	C
12	Lack of recreational facilities for youths	1.98	0.90	2.04	0.89	2.01	-7.5	0.46	NC
13	Religious Extremism	2.83	0.94	2.88	0.91	2.86	0.60	0.55	C
14	Breakdown of Family values	2.27	1.05	2.41	1.02	2.34	-1.5	0.13	NC

N_1 (Number of Males) = 227; N_2 (Number of Females) = 183; \bar{X}_1 = Mean of Male; SD_1 = Standard Deviation of Male; \bar{X}_2 = Mean of Females; SD_2 = Standard Deviation of Female; \bar{X}_g = Grand Mean; t = t-test values; R = Remark; P = Degree of Freedom; C = Causes of youth restiveness; NC = Not causes of youth restiveness

Table 1 shows that 12 items had grand mean scores (\bar{X}_g) equal to or greater than 2.50 ($\bar{X}_g \geq 2.50$). This implies that there are 12 causes of youth restiveness as identified by

the study. The p-values for most items were above 0.05, indicating no significant difference in responses between male and female youths, thus upholding the null hypothesis.

Table 2: Mean Responses, Standard Deviation and t Values of Male and Female Youths on Ways Youth Restiveness (YR) Influence Community Development in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State

S/ N	Ways YR Influence CD	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_g	t	p- value	R
1.	Media Influence	3.08	0.89	3.05	0.88	3.07	0.38	0.71	INF
2	Abandonment community projects	2.89	0.81	2.88	0.96	2.89	0.13	0.90	INF
3	Rural-urban migration by the youths	3.08	0.81	2.75	0.89	2.92	4.03	0.001	INF
4	Distortion of economic activities	3.00	0.80	3.04	0.87	3.02	0.53	0.60	INF
5	Discouragement of investors from investing in the area	3.08	0.80	2.72	0.92	2.90	4.68	0.001	INF
6	Poverty	3.12	0.74	3.16	0.81	3.14	-0.58	0.56	INF
7	Hunger	3.02	0.83	2.93	0.89	2.98	-1.17	0.24	INF
8	Lack of respect for authority by the youths	2.89	0.82	3.00	0.81	2.95	-1.50	0.13	INF
9.	Vulnerability to crime	3.00	0.80	3.04	0.84	3.02	0.37	0.71	INF
10	Financial hardship	3.04	0.89	3.01	0.92	3.03	0.37	0.72	INF

N_1 (Number of Males) = 227; N_2 (Number of Females) = 183; \bar{X}_1 = Mean of Male; SD_1 = Standard Deviation of Male; \bar{X}_2 = Mean of Females; SD_2 = Standard Deviation of Female; \bar{X}_g = Grand Mean; t = t-test values; R = Remark; P = Degree of Freedom; INF= Influence of Community Development.

Table 2 shows that all 10 items had grand mean (\bar{X}_g) values ranging from 2.89 to 3.14, ($\bar{X}_g \geq 2.50$). This implies that respondents agreed that all the 10 factors are ways youth restiveness influences community development in Umuahia

North LGA, Abia State. Although some items had p-values less than 0.05 (Items 3 and 5), which indicates a significant difference in responses between male and female youths, the remarks are based solely on the grand mean and not the p-values.

Table 3: Mean Responses, Standard Deviation and t Values of Male and Female Youths on Ways of Curbing Youth Restiveness (YR) in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State

S/N	Ways of Curbing YR	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_g	t	p-value	R
1.	Establishment of skill acquisition programmes for the youths	3.45	0.83	3.54	0.75	3.50	1.26	0.21	W
2	Creation of educational opportunities for the youths	3.06	0.82	3.14	0.76	3.10	-1.12	0.06	W

Table 3 continues

3	Election should be free and fair	3.07	0.93	3.00	0.89	3.04	0.86	0.39	W
4	Provision of basic infrastructure which encourages youth engagement	2.99	0.89	3.00	0.97	3.00	-0.12	0.91	W
5	Provision of basic social amenities that enhances quality of life	3.22	0.82	3.18	0.86	3.20	0.53	0.60	W
6	Good governance	2.99	0.83	3.02	0.88	3.01	-0.39	0.70	W
7	Religious tolerance	3.08	0.90	3.01	0.96	3.05	0.84	0.40	W
8	Punishment of perpetrators of crime by the communities	3.07	0.01	3.02	0.95	3.05	0.71	0.58	W
9	Educating the youths on the dangers of engaging in restive activities	2.82	0.97	2.98	0.87	2.90	-1.92	0.06	W
10	Equal distribution of dividends of democracy which reduces the feelings of marginalization	2.79	1.06	2.87	1.00	2.83	0.86	0.39	W
11	Creation of employment for the youths	2.90	1.02	2.96	0.96	2.93	-0.67	0.50	W
12	Giving stipends to unemployed youths by government	2.87	0.95	2.97	0.90	2.92	0.83	0.71	W
13	Parents inculcating moral values to their children	2.97	0.92	2.95	0.90	2.96	-0.46	0.56	W
14	Implementation of guidance and counselling in schools	2.95	0.93	2.86	0.99	2.91	-0.39	0.28	W
15	Involving community members in development projects/programmes	3.07	0.90	3.01	0.91	3.04	0.41	0.36	W

N_1 (Number of Males) = 227; N_2 (Number of Females) = 183; \bar{X}_1 = Mean of Male; SD_1 = Standard Deviation of Male; \bar{X}_2 = Mean of Females; SD_2 = Standard Deviation of Female; \bar{X}_g = Grand Mean; t = t -test values; R = Remark; P = Degree of Freedom; W = Way of Curbing.

Table 3 shows that all 15 items had grand mean (\bar{X}_g) values between 2.83 and 3.50 ($\bar{X}_g \geq 2.50$). This indicates agreement among respondents that each strategy is effective in curbing youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA. Despite p -values ranging from 0.06 to 0.91, which exceed the 0.05 significance level, there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of male and female youths.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld.

Discussion of Findings

The results in Table 1 indicate that both male and female respondents identified key causes of youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA, including poverty, unemployment, peer influence, economic exploitation, bad governance,

infrastructure deficits, marginalization, political manipulation, inadequate training, and unequal socio-economic development. These factors reflect broader systemic failures, aligning with Ogundare (2020) who linked restiveness to marginalization, and Ogunseye (2020), who highlighted economic hardship and unemployment. Olabisi and Olanrewaju (2021) noted that the disconnect between the state and youth fosters unrest, while Nwankwo *et al.* (2022) found that poor governance and injustice contribute to restiveness. Similarly, Adeleke and Oloyede (2020) and Eбенуwa-Okoh *et al.* (2014) stressed that political exclusion and lack of access to basic services worsen youth discontent. These findings suggest that youth restiveness stems from systemic socio-political and economic issues, requiring comprehensive solutions for sustainable development.

The findings in Table 2 reveal that both male and female respondents agreed on the negative impact of youth restiveness on community development, including discouraging investment, disrupting economic activities, and increasing crime and rural-urban migration. This supports Nwankwo *et al.* (2022), who linked youth antisocial behavior, driven by unemployment and poverty, to socio-economic stagnation. Agbiboa (2015) emphasized how joblessness fuels militancy and instability. Okonkwo and Iheriohanma (2023) highlighted the erosion of community safety and infrastructure, while Ifeanyi and Uzochukwu (2020) noted that restiveness diverts resources from development to security. Ezeani and Onyishi (2021) pointed out that restiveness deters NGOs and development partners, while Agbiboa

(2015) observed a loss of social capital due to youth migration. These findings underscore the need for inclusive governance and socio-economic engagement to address restiveness.

Finally, the findings related to Table 3 show that both male and female respondents agreed on key strategies for curbing youth restiveness, including skill acquisition programs, improved education, good governance, moral upbringing, job creation, counseling in schools, and equitable resource distribution. This aligns with Ogundare (2020) and Ogunseye (2020), who highlighted the role of functional education and resource equity in reducing youth violence. Ezeani and Onyishi (2021) emphasized the importance of information dissemination in reducing youth manipulation. Ajayi and Omotola (2021) emphasized skill-building initiatives to combat unemployment, while Amadi and Okeke (2022) noted that mentorship and civic education foster belonging and reduce violence. Mohammed and Bala (2021) argued that involving youth in governance builds trust, and World Bank (2020) reports emphasized the importance of addressing inequality and giving youth a voice in decision-making. These findings suggest a holistic approach involving education, employment, governance reform, and moral guidance for long-term peace, youth inclusion, and community development.

Conclusion

The study concludes that youth restiveness in Umuahia North LGA, Abia State, is driven by socio-economic and political factors, including poverty, unemployment, peer influence, economic

exploitation, marginalization, and poor infrastructure. These issues lead to frustration, resulting in disruptive behaviors such as kidnapping, protests, cultism, and harassment, which threaten community development through insecurity. This instability leads to abandoned projects, migration, reduced investment, and worsened poverty. The study recommends implementing skill acquisition programs, increasing educational opportunities, ensuring fair elections, improving access to infrastructure, and promoting transparency. Additionally, community involvement, enforcement of penalties for offenders, and the promotion of moral values are essential for curbing restiveness and fostering long-term peace and development.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Government should establish comprehensive youth empowerment programmes which will provide youths with skills training and vocational opportunities.
2. Families should focus on instilling strong moral values, discipline, and emotional support in their children.
3. Families should encourage open communication and positive role models within family and members.
4. Communities should create platforms for youth participation in local development projects, sports, and cultural activities.
5. Youths should leverage their youth organizations to advocate for their needs, engage in community

development initiatives, and organize peer-led empowerment programs such as skills training, civic education, and entrepreneurship workshops.

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