

Youth Empowerment, Crime Prevention and Control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between youth empowerment, crime prevention and control in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated which guided the design of two null hypotheses from the independent variable. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were gathered through primary and secondary sources and were analysed using linear regression technique. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance. The result of the statistical analysis reveals that skills acquisition could contribute to the prevention and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area. Economic empowerment could contribute to the prevention and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area. There is a significant relationship between skills acquisition and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state. Economic empowerment has significantly contributed to crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state. The study recommends among others that Government at all levels should endeavour to create enabling environment for small and medium enterprise to grow and expand. This can be achieved through the provision of affordable loans with little or no interest, tax holiday, regular and steady power supply efficient transportation system, readymade market and other incentives should be provided for youths who are industrialists.

Keywords: Crime, Control, Empowerment, Prevention, Ihiala

Introduction

Globally, youth occupy a prominent place in the development of any given human society. They have in numerous ways contributed to sustenance and destruction of societal values and principles. Onyekpe (2007) describe youths as the owners and leaders of tomorrow, because in most societies, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged. Besides numerical dominance, youth have energy and ideas that is a great asset to the society (Onyekpe, 2007). Their energies, inventiveness, character, and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their imaginative, inventive, as well as innovative skills and physical strength, nations across the globe have made giant strides in socio-political cum economic development and attainments (Ukwayi & Okpa, 2017). The

above assertion acknowledges the role of youths not only in the economic development, but also in maintenance peace, tranquility, and security of a nation. As the most active segment of any society, youth are the major determiners of peace and stability of a nation (Sulaiman, 2006). Conversely, the degree of disorderliness and instability in any society is also determined in part by youth. Crime is a critical security challenge, a burning issue that is and continue to confront the Nigeria society on daily basis.

Scholars have unanimously contended that one of the major causes of criminality is the rising or increasing nature of youth unemployment. This perhaps explained why problem of extreme unemployment and its related sister-hunger are number one goal of the MDGs, a global framework to address basic issues that threaten the survival and continue existence of the human society, especially, the youths (Tambari & Imoh-Ita, 2016). The increase and prevalence of criminal activities are explainable from the political, religious, economic, environmental, and psychological paradigms. While all the above schools of thought are considered cogent in sociological and criminological analysis of crime and criminality among youth, Michael, Ojedukun and Chinwokwu (2013) submit that socio-economic paradigm is considered more concrete in the analysis of criminality in developing nations. According to Iwerimie-Jaja (2013) criminality and other social vices like armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killing, arson, assassination, among others in most developing nations are intricately associated with unemployment and poverty. Similarly, Obioha, (2004) posits that as far as making the basic ends meet continued to be cumbersome, the propensity to explore other available means such as indulging in crime will remain high and unpreventable in Nigeria. Accordingly, Egunjobi (2007) posits that many social problems such as prostitution, robbery, alcoholism, domestic violence, social, religious and civil unrest and suicide to mention but few, become more severe in times of high unemployment. He therefore argued that there is a linkage between unemployment, lack of empowerment, and crime. When people cannot earn an income from legal, legitimate and social acceptable work/means; they turn to illegal activities. Acknowledging that youth criminality is triggered by unemployment and lack of skills, Nwokocha (2011) maintains that a sincere approach to crime control requires a pragmatic approach that will supports youth empowerment programmes that would make the poor, unemployed and underemployed to become self-reliant.

Youth empowerment according to Nwokocha (2011) provides youths not only income, but also the opportunity to be productive, to contribute, and become socially valued members of their communities, to develop networks of support, and to build knowledge and self-esteem. For others, youth empowerment can also play the role of informal social control by preventing anti-social behaviour through the natural social conditions of the workplace. Smith (2012) noted that with crime situation becoming worse and majority of those arrested in alleged criminal activities are considered to be the poor, unemployed and underemployed, there is urgent need to empower the masses so that they can embark on diverse socio-economic activities to generate income for their upkeep. In attempt to check the problem of crime in Nigeria, government in recent times have introduced empowerment programmes such as Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE) meant to empower youths. The scheme was designed to provide

10,000 jobs for youths in each of the state of the federation (Abdulai, 2012). Youth empowerment plays a crucial role in crime control. Against this backdrop, the study was designed to examine the relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local government area of Anambra, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Youth Empowerment, Skills Acquisition and Crime Control Conceptualized

Youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people including youths and adults. Youth empowerment is seen as a gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement and democracy building.

Giving more power through skills acquisition and amplify the possibilities to get or create a job or business, through micro-credits, access to ICT networks is one of the best way to fight crime and criminal elements. According to Ajufo (2013), skills acquisition as an empowering tool might help people to change the conditions of their lives by taking action while having knowledge and relevant skills of a trade that will make them competitive in the particular productive field. This to a large extent would keep them away from crime, because their mind is activated towards positive activities. Aremu and Ahmed (2011) posit that empowering people through skills acquisition can help check crime because those who have been empowered become self-reliance and independent. Similarly, Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) noted that skill acquisition programmes could be a strategy to improve the income status at the bottom line by making people aware of their potentials, which if properly harness would keep them away from poverty and criminal behaviour. Empowering people through skills acquisition programmes give them control and ownership of their lives, which consequently, discourages them from engaging in criminal behaviour. When youths are empowered, they see themselves as stakeholders in the development of any society they found themselves (Aremu & Ahmed 2011).

Skill acquisition programmes is one of the non-violent ways of checking crime and deviant behaviour among youths. It is critical for controlling crime in any human society (Okafor, 2011). The fact remains that youths should be made to be aware of the potentials they command, equipped them with skills to make informed choice and negotiate for their rights, and have access to resources for their development, this will help keep them away from crime (Adenikinju, 2005). Empowering youths through skills acquisition according to Akpan (2006) implies the recognition that anyone can make the difference in his/her life and other people's lives. Ekpo, (2006), observed that when people are empowered, they are equipped with skills and knowledge with which they would be able to earn a living and eschew violent crime. In this way, they will both be able to get paid employment or start up a business and earn an income that will make them avoid crime. Earning income is the first step towards a crime free life (Akpan, 2006). Empowered people can help to achieve a sustained economic growth and sustainable development, through investing in income generating activities (Ekpo, 2006). Skill acquisition makes people powerful, able, and active participant in the development of their society. Creating a system where

empowered people also feel the need to empower others will lead to poverty eradication and subsequently help in fighting crime (Ezeani, 2009). Skills acquisition is the best way to eradicate crime and criminals in any society. People with skills are able to achieve their goals in a much better way and that is usually the way in which the poverty cycle can be broken, which reduces the tendency for criminal behaviour (Dele, & Olayinka, 2009).

Empowering individuals and communities through skills empowerment is necessary to attain equal distribution of available resources so that a few do not benefit from the labour of many. Empowering people means engaging all persons in economic activity. Skills empowerment helps provide people with choices and gives them the ability to improve themselves and their surrounding society (Chigunta, 2002; Ugwu, 2012). The empowerment process promotes greater social and economic participation by the disadvantaged and marginalized. People who are empowered are more proficient at identifying and seizing opportunities for self-employment and fuller employment. The seizing of these opportunities creates additional income streams for households. Ultimately, this will help to reduce crime. This increased income flow to households helps persons to meet their basic needs thereby helping to reduce crime in the system (Alanana, 2003). In addition, persons who are empowered make better decisions in the deployment of their individual and collective assets (Dele & Olayinka, 2009, Anas, 2010).

Economic Empowerment and Crime Control Empowerment is a process through which individuals gain control over matters that concern them most. It is also, a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives (Page & Czuba, 1999; as cited in Nabavi, 2009). Economic empowerment refers to economic security of oneself (Irobi, 2008). Ere (2001) in Nkpoyen and Bassey (2012) stressed that the promotion of local cooperative societies and empowerment geared towards crime control in human society is very important. Ere (2001) argued that local cooperative societies could be regarded as voluntary organizations of persons with a common interest, formed and operated along democratic lines for the purpose of supplying services at minimum cost to its members who contribute both capital and business.

Similarly, Girigiri (2000) reported that a significant association exists between provision of credit facilities, poverty alleviation and crime control. The provision of credit facilities helps individuals out of their economic predicaments and makes them responsible citizens. Okaba (2005) noted that provision of credit facilities to youths who possess skill have tremendously reduced poverty and crime, as well as improve their living standard. Access to credit facilities in recent times have become one of the most efficient vehicles for the effective mobilization of young entrepreneur and discouraging youth involvement in crime (Girigiri, 2000).

According to Taga (2013), one effective way of reducing crime is to make members of the society productive by economically empowering them. The empowerment of individuals creates a sense of responsibility and promotes participatory development in the society. Empowerment of people and their participation in the society can be achieved by connecting the individuals with different social institutions (e.g., financial, education, economic, political) (Taga, 2013). This goal can be achieved with the development and promotion of social capital, that is, activation of individual's capacities for empowerment.

Empowerment of an individual may further activate ones hidden capacities and thereby making him/her a productive member of the society (Taga, 2013). Existing literature indicates a correlation between micro-lending and empowerment for crime free life through access to financial capital (Nkpoyen& Bassey, 2012). There is also an association between micro-lending and empowerment (Ndubi, 2008).

According to Vosantakumari and Sharma (2010), empowerment is one of the development purposes to which micro-lending can be put. Through micro-lending programmes, women have become empowered to make choices that have resulted in increased recognition of their productive roles and by extension poverty reduction (Ahmed, et al., 2004; Bayes, 2005; Sosibo, 1999, in Nkpoyen& Bassey, 2012). Empowerment is a process that increases the capacity of the disempowered to act on their own behalf and to analyse and understand their problems, to recognise their ability to act on their own behalf and increase their power and control over the resources necessary for sustainable and dignified life (Muro, 1994; Misana, 1995). Micro-credit is very important in creating access to productive capital for the poor to enable them move out of poverty (Magugui, et al., 2014). The major contribution of micro-credit facilities to a developing economy like that of Nigeria is its role in promoting entrepreneurship development in the nation. One of the successes of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is the reduction of unemployment, poverty alleviation and crime (Osunde& Mayowa, 2012).

The provision of micro-credit has been regarded as an important tool for raising the income of entrepreneur, mainly by mobilizing resources for more productive uses. This uses include the establishment of relationships with individuals and agencies for the purpose of harnessing market information and acquiring business skills (Shane & Cable, 2002; Iheduru, 2002; Bhagavatula, et al., 2010) for the establishment of small/micro enterprises.

´ ***Crime Fighting in Ihiala Local Government Area*** Today, the crime problem has even worsened and become more rampant, with incessant kidnapping, armed robbery and political killings in the south east and other parts of Nigeria, particularly Anambra State. It is truism that there is no crime-free society. But it is possible to reduce the crime rate in the society. The issue of armed robbery and kidnapping has reduced drastically due to the proactive actions we have so far taken in the Command. We took note of major flashpoints in the state, and it is against this backdrop that we have achieved great success in the area of crime-fighting. Anambra State Government has been highly supportive to us and we shall continue to leverage on that. We also work with other security agencies because this is a collective effort aimed at stemming the rate of crime in the state.

It is also important to make public our recent achievements in the area of crime-fighting. In June this year, based on a tip-off to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), one Friday Umunna was arrested in connection with the kidnap of one Mrs. Patricia Ihedigbo at Umuaka village in Uli, Ihiala Local Government Area. Also, Chinedu Nwankwo, Chukwuka Chinedu and Patrick Ifediorah were arrested.

These suspects specialised in armed robbery and snatching of vehicles within the state and environs. We recovered one Toyota Yaris with registration number GBB315AA and a revolver. The suspects have already confessed to the crime and are assisting in the arrest

of their members. About 1400 hours on July 14 this year, one Francis Okechukwu was arrested in connection with car snatching in Anambra and Delta states (Ekeh, 2017). The Command recovered one Lexus Jeep RX330 with registration number AWK 849HM, one Toyota Sienna with the number THE133CQ and a Ford bus with registration number XT247BEN. Also, a kidnap suspect, Ibeabuchukwu Anthony, was arrested at Nkwelle Awkuzu in connection with the kidnap of one Geo Chika Ilozumba, the Personal Assistant to former Commissioner for Works in Anambra. We also recorded success in the area of vandalising of communication installations belonging to Isseke Town in Idemili South Local Government Area. Items recovered included one L300 Mitsubishi bus, two shaft chisels, one big cutter and one bar, and spanners. They also specialise in vandalising other network installations. In August 2019, the command also recorded success in crime-fighting. Through the assistance of Amawbia Central Vigilante, we arrested one Ifeanyi Nwankwo of Umuokpu-Awka, Chinedu Okonkwo from Azia Town and Onyebuchi Nwana of Mbosi We recovered one foreign made Berretta pistol, three rounds of 9mm live ammunition. One of them confessed to the case of armed robbery within Awka and environs. Investigation is ongoing.

We are aware of cult activities in the universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education and we have been taking the matter head-long. One Chichi Ezenwankwo and four others were arrested while initiating a new member into Vikings Confraternity secret cult. One battle axe and a long machete were recovered from them. The suspects have been charged to court and remanded at Aguata Prisons. We also arrested cult members at Eke Nibo during a clash between the Vikings Confraternity and the Black Axe Confraternity. In Ozubulu Town in Ihiala Local Government Area, eight suspected cult members were arrested while initiating a new member into NICO Black Movement of Africa (Black Axe). In Ihiala, Ihiala North council area, the Command arrested two persons in the bush during their initiation into the Vikings Confraternity and others escaped. The suspects have been charged to court. Similar arrests were carried out in Abagana Town in the council area, Amawbia Town in Awka South, Umunze Town in Orumba South, Obosi in Idemili North. We also made arrests in Atani, Ogbaru council area, Amansea and Azia in Ihiala Local

Government Area. So you can agree with me that the Command is not sleeping at all. Accordingly Onwuchekwa (2018) while stressing the point made by the first vice president of Ihiala Progress Union (IPU) in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, Mr. Eloka Igwemezie, said that the security outfit has battled crime and criminality to a standstill in the town. More so Igwemezie (2018) who is also the commander of Ihiala Central Vigilance group, however, admitted that marijuana smokers and hard drug consumers still dare the vigilantes at Ihiala motor parks." The vigilance group commander made this known while briefing journalists, at Ihiala, on the activities of the outfit. He noted that motorcycle theft which was so rampant in the town had reduced to the barest minimum due to activities of his boys who he said had smashed the syndicates responsible for the dastard act.

He recalled with pride that the Ihiala central vigilante was able to recover, recently, a whooping sum of N300,000 that was stolen from a customer of a commercial bank in the town who had gone to make a withdrawal. Igwemezie explained that his boys gave a hot

chase to the hoodlums that perpetrated the dastard act and gave them a good fight until the money was recovered and restored to the owner. He also revealed that child theft had equally reduced after the group had burst twelve syndicates responsible for stealing little children in the town. He, however, noted that the new crime wave in Ihiala had to do with theft of overhead water tanks as criminals would go to people's homes and upturned their water tanks to drain water before carting away the tanks.

Igwemezie revealed that the vigilance group was at present handling about twenty five cases of water tanks theft in the community. He commended the President General of Ihiala Progress Union, Barr. Jude Ngobili and other stakeholders for taking care of the salaries and welfare of members of the security outfit in the town who had not been captured in the State government stipend list. He expressed optimism that the Chief Willie Obiano- led administration would soon start paying twenty of the vigilance group members in Ihiala as done in other communities in Anambra. Igwemezie noted that there is a good working relationship between the members of Ihiala central vigilante and other law enforcement agents, adding that his boys would always arrest and hand over the suspects to the police for investigation and possible prosecution.

He, however, regretted that Indian Hemp smokers had not heeded several warnings to leave the motor parks as he denied any understanding between the vigilance group and the Indian Hemp smokers or dealers. "I must not fail to state that we collaborate with the special police anti-cult unit at Enugukwu, we work with the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad(SARS) and also the Ihiala Divisional Police Officer. We don't detain, once we make arrests, suspects are promptly handed over to the police," he concluded.

Empirical Review Olaleye (2010) opined that youth empowerment as a strategy of reducing crime. This is with a view to establishing the level of socio-economic well-being and how the empowerment of youth can reduce crime in the society. It highlights the factors that motivate youths to participate in organization and community development It also examines the extent to which socio-economic factors determine the outcome of people's lives. A structured survey instrument was used in collecting data from a sample of 450 respondents for the study. Data collected were analyzed using Chi-square and t-test analysis his findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between youth empowerment and attitude to crime involvement. The findings also revealed that there is significant relationship between male and female attitudes to crime involvement. It is, therefore, recommended that government's empowerment programmes should be restructured, if not re-designed, and should be centred on a "participatory approach", There should also be greater investment in the human capital investment of youths. Besides, government should reach out to youths, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, religious, geographical or political affiliation.

Ukwayi, Angioha&Ojong-Ejoh (2017) in a study argued that the relationship between youth empowerment, crime prevention and control in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated which guided the design of two null hypotheses from the independent variable. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed, why three hundred and ninety six were retrieved (396) and used for analysis. The reliability test of the

instrument was conducted using Cronbach alpha reliability method. Data were gathered through primary and secondary sources and were analysed using linear regression technique. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance. The result of the statistical analysis reveals that skills acquisition could contribute to the prevention and crime control in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Economic empowerment could contribute to the prevention and crime control in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The study recommends among others that Government at all levels should endeavour to create enabling environment for small and medium enterprise to grow and expand. This can be achieved through the provision of affordable loans with little or no interest, tax holiday, regular and steady power supply efficient transportation system, readymade market and other incentives should be provided for youths who are industrialists.

Theoretical Framework and Application

Structural functionalism theory would be used in this work. The theory views society as a single interconnected social system, each element of which performs a definite function (Ottong, 2004). The basic characteristic is the integration of its components and functional integration of system occasioned by interdependence of parts. The theory recognizes equilibrium in the social system (Ottong, 2004). Structural functionalism theory appears to be the right framework to adopt for this survey. This is because the framework views human society as a system made up of interdependent and interrelated components which function in unity to make a whole and that the component parts function harmoniously for the benefit of the whole social system.

The harmonious functioning of the entire system helps in the actualisation of the needs of the system; this enables the system not to break down. In this study, the provision of several empowerment programmes such as skill acquisition, access to financial assistance, among others has worked harmoniously to maintain the efficient functioning of the society. This sociological perspective recognizes equilibrium in the social system. However, where the component parts fail to function efficiently, social disequilibrium sets in. Within the context of this study, crime and other social vices are responsible for the disequilibrium occurring in the system. However, with the provision of various empowerment programmes the system can be restored to its equilibrium state. This suggests that the various empowerment programmes used by government or non-governmental agencies in checking crime and criminal behaviour is functional to the maintenance of equilibrium in the social system.

Methodology

The study adopted survey design. The design was adopted for because it allows participants to air out their opinions on the relationship between the variables under investigation. It was opted for because it is used to study people's feelings and attitudes about social events. The design allows for the use of questionnaire thus making it cheaper as compared to other research designs. More so, the design allows for the selection of samples and the generalization of findings.

The study was carried out in Ihiala local government area of Anambra state. Ihiala is located in the southern part of Anambra state. The local government area has a population of about 87,796 (NPC, 2006). Ihiala local government area consists of several cities such as Amorka, Azia, Lilu, Okija, Mbosi, Isseke, Orsumoghu, Ubuluisuzor and Uli. It lies the agricultural belt of Anambra state. Ihiala local government area has nine towns under its polity. The population of the study shall comprise the nine towns in ihiala local government area of Anambra state. All the town in ihiala local government area would be studied.

The local government of Ihiala has a population of 87,796 the sample size would be determined using the Taro Yamane's formula (Yamane 1967) for sample size determination shall be determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= the relevant sample size

N= the total number of employees of the three local governments

E= Sampling error (5% in this case)

I= Constant value

From then study the sample size is computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{87,796}{1 + 87,796 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{87,796}{1 + 87,796 (0.0025)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{87,796}{1 + 2.63}$$

$$n = \frac{87,796}{3.68}$$

$$n = 289.8 = 290.$$

The study relied heavily on both primary and secondary data. In addition to the questionnaire relevant information was obtained from oral interview to supplement questionnaire responses especially where the researcher sought for additional clarifications on important issues. The researcher also made extensive use of documentary sources and observations.

A structured close-ended Likert form questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents who participated in the study. The questions were in form of likert scale ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagree. The value ranking started from 1 through 5. The minimum value is 1 and maximum is 5. Questions were limited to

expression of opinions on legislative oversight and good governance in Anambra State between 2014 and 2020. The questionnaire was the major research instrument to be used in gathering data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A will seek information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B sought information on the subject of study. The questions in the questionnaire were structured questions and very easy to understand.

The questionnaire which is the instrument for data collection was validated by the research supervisor after careful reading and correction. Also, the draft questionnaire was prepared and sent to research experts for modification to suit the purpose of the research. The test-re-test method was used to confirm the consistency of the research instrument. The data generated from the administered and returned questionnaire was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, charts, graph, frequencies and percentages to demonstrate the response that was obtained from the respondents. The hypotheses were put tested at 0.05 levels of significance using inferential statistics. The SPSS software version 20 was extensively used in the analysis of data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In order to properly analyze the response obtained from the participants of this survey, the researcher made use of simple percentages distribution method and the presentation and interpretation of data collected are shown in below. Similarly, the data collected from members of staff of Ihiala local government area of Anambra, Nigeria who returned their completed questionnaire as tabulated in a frequency distribution form and the corresponding percentage equivalent are calculated and recorded respectively.

Table1: PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION AND RETRIEVAL OF QUESTIONNAIRE IN IHIALA LGA

S/N	Communities	Distributed Questionnaire	Retrieved	Percentage %	Non-Retrieved
	Ihiala	5	5	100	Nil
	Okija	4	4	100	Nil
	Uli	3	3	100	Nil
	Isseke	3	3	100	Nil
	Amorka	4	4	100	Nil
	Osumoghu	76	76	100	Nil
	Azia	15	15	100	Nil
	Mbosi	12	12	100	Nil
	Ubuluisizo	11	11	100	Nil
	Police	14	14	100	Nil

Ihiala	6	6	100	Nil
Okija	12	12	100	Nil
Uli	2	2	100	Nil
Total	290	290	100%	Nil

Source: Field Work, 2023

Table2: DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

S/N	Gender	Code	Frequency	%
A				
	Male	1	100	21.6
	Female	2	190	78.3
Total			290	100
B	Age			
	20 -30 years	1	90	39.1
	31 - 40 years	2	50	42.5
	41 – Above	3	50	18.4
Total			290	100
C	Education			
	Bachelors	1	100	79.3
	Masters	2	20	9.2
	Others	3	80	11.5
Total			290	100
D	Position			
	Top management	3	40	5.7
	Supervisory	2	50	24.1
	Lower Cadre	1	200	70.2
Total			290	100
F	Marital Status			
	Single	1	190	59.8
	Married	2	100	40.2
	Separated	3	-	-
	Divorced	4	-	-
Total			290	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

From the analysis of the above, table 3 reveal that 78.3% of the total respondents were female while 21.6% were male. 39.1% of the total respondents fall within the age bracket of 20- 30 years, 42.5% between 31 - 40 years while 18.4% are 79.3% of respondents obtained B.Sc, HND, 11.5% are M. Sc / MBA holders while 9.2% have professional certificate like ICAN, NIMV etc. more so, 5.7% of the respondents are in top management position, 24.1% in supervisory while 70.2% are in lower cadre of the establishment. The population in the table shows that 34,50% of the respondent have spent 5 years in the service, 44.8% have spent between 5 - 10 year in the service and 13.8% have spent 11-15 years while 6.9%, 16 years and above, from the observation also, 40.2% are married while 59.8% are not married.

Table 2: OBSERVED FREQUENCY FOR DETERMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND CRIME REDUCTION IN IHIALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF ANAMBRA STATE

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	UD	TOTAL
Youth empowerment enhances crime reduction in Ihiala	90	54	15	5	0	164
N-Power Programme causes youth engagement	75	65	9	10	5	164
Lack of empowerment for the youths breeds crime	80	64	14	15	11	164
Loans can help alleviate crime in Ihiala Local Government	98	50	12	10	4	164
Corruption is a problem of youth empowerment	78	70	12	10	4	164
Kidnapping is a problem caused by unemployment	85	65	5	16	3	164
Grand Total	506	368	67	66	27	820

Source: Field Work, 2023

From the table above, the researcher made an attempt at answering the hypotheses one of the study which says that Youth empowerment enhances crime reduction in Ihiala, in line with the responses so far it shows that 90 responses representing 80% of the total responses went for strongly agreed, while 54 responses representing 15% of the total responses went for agreed while an insignificant responses as well as percentages went to the categories of disagree, strongly disagree and undecided as the case may be. From table above it shows that N-Power Programme causes youth engagement which is further verified by the responses on the table 2 above, while 70 responses went for Strongly Agreed, 65 responses went for Agreed, this therefore shows that about 91.5% of the responses on this question are in the affirmative upholding the claim N-Power Programme causes youth engagement. Similarly, Lack of empowerment for the youths breeds crime, to answer this question, 80 responses went for strongly agree, 64 responses went for agree giving a total of 144 out of 164 respondents, this goes to show that approximately 93% of the total responses are of the opinion that lack Loans can help alleviate crime in Ihiala Local Government. On the other hand, the Corruption is a problem of youth empowerment, this is truism as 98 and 50 responses respectively went for strongly agree and agree

representing a total of 148 responses with 97%. Kidnapping is a problem caused by unemployment.

Table 3: CONTINGENCY TABLE FOR OBSERVED AND EXPECTED FREQUENCIES

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	UD	TOTAL
Youth empowerment enhances crime reduction in Ihiala	90 (101.2)	54 (73.6)	15 (13.4)	5 (13.2)	0 (5.4)	164
N-Power Programme causes youth engagement	75 (101.2)	65 (73.6)	9 (13.4)	10 (13.2)	5 (5.4)	164
Lack of empowerment for the youths breeds crime	80 (101.2)	64 (73.6)	14 (13.4)	15 (13.2)	11 (5.4)	164
Loans can help alleviate crime in Ihiala Local Government	98 (101.2)	50 (73.6)	12 (13.4)	10 (13.2)	4 (5.4)	164
Corruption is a problem of youth empowerment	78 (101.2)	70 (73.6)	12 (13.4)	10 (13.2)	4 (5.4)	164
Kidnapping is a problem caused by unemployment	85 (101.2)	65 (73.6)	5 (13.4)	16 (13.2)	3 (5.4)	164
Grand Total	506	368	67	66	27	820

Source: Field Work, 2023

Test of Hypothetical assumption

Therefore, in an attempt to test this hypothesis, we shall be making use of the chi-square. The chi square is represented with formula:

$$\frac{X^2 = (f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where x² = chi square calculated

F_o = observed frequency

F_e = expected frequency

Table 4: CONTINGENCY TABLE FOR THE HYPOTHETICAL ASSUMPTION

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
90	101.2	-11.2	-22.4	5.61
75	73.6	1.4	19.6	5.1
80	13.4	66.6	4435.6	55.5
98	101.2	-11.2	-22.4	5.61
78	73.6	1.4	19.6	5.1
85	101.2	-11.2	-22.4	5.61
Total				82.53

Source: Field Work, 2023

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local Government of Anambra state.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local Government of Anambra state.

From the table above, the calculated χ^2 is 82.53. Therefore, to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypotheses, we refer to the chi-square, bearing in mind that our level of significance is set at 0.5 degree of freedom.

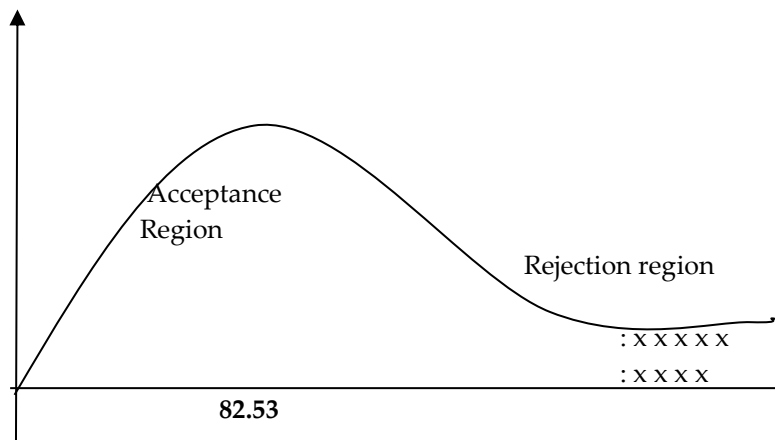
Expected frequency = total responses

$$= \frac{\text{No of categories}}{5} = \frac{164}{5} = 32.8$$

Compute χ^2 using the formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)}{Fe}$$

Since $82.53 > 32.8$ we reject H_0 and accept H_1 and conclude that there is a significant relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local Government of Anambra state. This therefore proves that there is a significant relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local Government of Anambra state. Since $82.53 > 32.8$, we reject H_0 and accept H_1 . We can invariably conclude that there is a significant relationship between youth empowerment and crime reduction in Ihiala local Government of Anambra state



Decision

Since the computed F value 82.53 is greater than the F- table 32.8 tabulated, that is $82.53 > 32.8$, it therefore holds that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative (H_1) is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The result of statistical analysis of hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between skills acquisition and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The study shows that relevant skills, keeps occupied and discourages them from venturing crime. It was revealed that skills such as fashion and designing, GSM repairs, mechanical and electrical skills, computer skills can keep young people away from criminal activities. This finding corroborate with Okafor (2011), Ajufo (2013), Aremu and Ahmed (2011), Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2011). They observe all that, when people are empowered they are equipped with skills and knowledge with which they will be able to earn a living and eschew violent crime. In this way, they will both be able to get paid employment or start up a business and earn an income that will make them avoid crime. Economic empowerment and crime control from the result of hypothesis two, the study shows that economic empowerment has significantly contributed to crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

The study revealed that when youths are given proper economic empowerment to support their business, this makes them financially independent and discourage them from venturing into crime. It shows that the economic empowerment such as access to micro-credit, soft loans, grants and setting up small and medium enterprise critical in keeping youths away from crime. This finding is in accordance with the works of Taga (2013), Gingiri (2001), Okaba (2005). They all observe that, one effective way of reducing crime is to make members of the society especially the youths productive by economically empowering them. The empowerment of individuals creates a sense of responsibility and promotes participatory development in the society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

After careful examination of the relationship between youth empowerment and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state, Nigeria. Emphasis was on the relationship between economic empowerment and crime control. After extensive statistical analysis of each of the formulated hypotheses, the following conclusions were arrived at: There is a significant relationship between skills acquisition and crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state. Economic empowerment has significantly contributed to crime control in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra state. Accordingly, Youths occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged. Besides numerical superiority, youth have energy and ideas that are society's great potentials. This energy and strength if not properly harness can be channel towards negatives activities that would threaten the safety of lives and properties in any society.

Based on this, the study recommends the following; (a) Existing skill acquisition centres established by government and private individuals should be strengthen and encourage. This will improve the quality of skills acquire by youths which can make them self-employed and productive (b) Government at all levels should endeavour to create enabling environment for small and medium enterprise to grow and expand. This can be

achieve through the provision of affordable loans with little or no interest, tax holiday, regular and steady power supply efficient transportation system, readymade market and other incentives should be provided for youths who are industrialists.

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