



# A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT CRIMES IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The curvilinear relationship between age and crime has been one of the most consistent findings in criminological literature to the extent that some authors called it extra ordinary, 'one of the brute facts of criminology.' Having been groomed in society that could not provide adequate necessities of life like good education, employment opportunities, young adults oftentimes find themselves at the wrong sides of the law as perpetrators and sometimes victims. Independent studies on violent crimes showed that inequality, low education, broken homes, unemployment, age [e.g. youth], marital status [e.g. unmarried], residential areas [e.g. slums] and indecent housing units are factors for violent crime. Many policies and programs designed to mitigate factors for crime above, are yet to bring the desired result as there appears to be rise in crime rate and convicts. Against this background, a study was conducted on the convicted prisoners in four prisons in Niger State with the aim of interrogating socio- economic factors with a view to ascertain any bearing with involvement in violent crimes. While using social disorganization theory as a guide, some 291 convicted prisoners were sampled using multi- stage sampling technique, from four prisons and the result indicates unemployment and low income could not produce significant relationship with violent crimes unless redolent with other factors such as disorganized neighbourhood and associating criminal peers. It became clear that what pushes youths into violent crimes remain multi-caustic. Youth Empowerment program tailored toward better education and employment as measures to reduce their involvement in violent crimes in Nigeria, and formation neighbourhood associations to provide social capital for the youths are suggested.

**Key words: Age, crime, youths, violent crimes.**

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## Introduction

The curvilinear relationship between age and crime has been one of the most consistent findings in criminological literature to the extent that some authors called it extra ordinary, 'one of the brute facts of criminology' (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983 p.552) and 'resilient empirical regularity'(BrameandPiquero, 2003, p. 107). The central ideas on this age- crime relation was that as individuals begin to grow up, involvement in anti social activities such as delinquency start and increase with age before such delinquent acts wane again for more acceptable social activities. Put differently, Bouffard argues that in aggregate studies, the age–crime curve is unimodal, with official crime rates rising in adolescence to a peak in the late teenage years and then declining rapidly through adulthood (Bouffard, 2009 p. 28). Some authors were so overwhelmed by the

consistency of age-crime curve, because of little disagreement in the literature, to the point of emphasizing that age-crime curve invariant over time, space and social-cultural factors (Hirschiand Gottfredson, 1983). What might have informed the conclusion has to do with maturity and understanding implications of criminal actions? Advancement in age makes individuals to weigh involvement in delinquency or crime and attendant consequences, especially when there is probability of reduction in the benefit of crime and an increased cost of punishment conditional upon being caught (Oliver, 2002) However, our focus on this paper is not crime and age curve per se, the focus is on the youths who happens to be not only on the right side of age but remained energetic for the positive development of society, when such energy is channeled into productive ventures. It is the youth whose age



category falls within the era taken into account by the age- crime curve proposition. Even though aside from age category, youth' definition also encompasses social dimension. That set of people seen as trouble makers in society (Box, 1983). People who possess certain distinct psychological and socio- cultural characteristics (Christopher, n.d.) are the youths. Youths serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country according to the National Youth Policy (NYP) document. The document however cautions that youths “should not be seen as a problem but rather as a force for change” (NYP, 2009 p. 1). How valid is the claim of National Youth Policy document? The irony is that those blessed with energy go into crime with it. It is the youths that age-crime curve represents seemingly that are disproportionately represented in all facets of crime in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2013a, Ehinomen and Babatunde, 2015). The reasons for youth pervasive involvement in violent crime has a lot to do with poverty (Igwe, 2012, Adebayo, 2013a, Christopher, n.d), unemployment (Salaam, 2011) breakdown in family structure and values (Osuji, Obubu, and Obiora-illouno (2015, Emeh, Nwanguma and Aboroh, (2012); unemployment and frustration; among others.

Against this premise, this paper focuses on unemployment and low income status of some certified criminals in four prisons in Niger State with a view to ascertain bearing with involvement in violent crimes and their subsequent incarceration.

### **Overview of Violent Crime in Society**

Crime, even though is a non- palatable phenomenon, remains an issue every society has to live with. Existence of crime in human society is a social reality. One can then ask: what actually are the factors that make crime endure overtime and space through human history? Who are the beneficiaries of crime; the individual criminal as perpetrator or victim or just the entire society? As noted by Durkheim (1997), the identification of social fact (such as crime) alone is not enough to

comprehend the complexities of society, the functions of such social orders to the maintenance of social order needs to be understood and highlighted as well. If the phenomenon can last this long, though disturbing, it requires scholarly explanations, in order to effectively curb it. Researchers, (for instance, Johnson, Giordano, Longmore and Manning, (2016); Lofstrom and Rapheal, (2016); Kelly(2000); Verbruggen, Geest and Blokland, (2016) have put several explanations which range from biological basis, psychological, political, social, economic and even physical environmental issues as factors that explain the existence of crime and why it has not been eliminated completely. Since, crime is a complex phenomenon the explanation of which cannot be done by one factor, combination of two should be in order; hence, socio-economic determinants. However, before we highlight these explanations by scholars on the inevitability of crime in society, it is proper for the purpose of clarity and easy comprehension, to state here that crime itself is of types and dimensions.

According to Clark and Marshall (1967) crime represents a breach and violation of the public rights and duties due to the whole community, considered as a community, its social aggregate capacity. By this view, crime represents what contravenes not only the interest of the individual victim in the case of say murder, assault or rape, but the interest of the larger society. That explains why Clark and Marshall (1967 p. 103) argued that punishment is imposed for the protection of the public, and not solely because of the injury to an individual.

One type of crime that remains as old as humanity which also doubles as the focus of this paper is violent crime. Violent crime is an extreme form of social behaviour which violates the mores (laws) of society. Defaulters are then liable to stiffer penalties. These forms of social deviation can be exemplified by murder, aggravated assault, rape, armed robbery, among several others.

However, violent crime could be defined as physical attack with weapon or threat of it, which results in injury, death or not, by an individual on



another, leaving a lasting scar and fear on the body and mind of the victim (Usman, 2019).

The high rate of violent crime has created an atmosphere of fear, anxiety and tension – a state of insecurity Okechukwu (2012:317), argued that “violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism are the most inhumane crimes that continue to plague Nigeria..... Lately, kidnappings for ransom and terrorism have taken the centre stage leading to bloodshed and economic set-backs..... The causes are not farfetched as studies have associated rising youth unemployment to the increase in violent crimes” Violent forms of crime threaten humanity and efforts geared toward societal developments.

While violent crime is not peculiar to one country but has become a global challenge. Only that some parts of the globe record more than others. For example, a United Nations Global Study on Homicide in 2010, reports that out of estimated 468,000 homicide globally, more than a third of the figure (36%) occurred in Africa; 31% in Americas, 27% in Asia, 5% in Europe and 1% in the tropical pacific region (UNODC2011). In today's world, argued Miller et. al. (2009), violent crime has exacts a high cost on global development. It has hampered poverty reduction efforts and limited progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the United Nations and World Bank, “containment cost” (that is annual cost of maintaining government agencies to deal with crime and violent victimization) alone stood at US\$2 trillion in 2014 (Gramckow. et. al. 2016:8); in 2007 violent crime cost Guatemala an estimated \$2.4 billion or 7.3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); the Mexican government estimated the cost of violent crime in 2007 at \$9.6 billion, primarily from lose of investment, local business and jobs.

In Nigeria, a report by Nigeria Watch on violence that occurred in the country between 2006 and 2011, released in June 2011, revealed that violent crime accounted for near half of the 30,373 deaths recorded within the period, with annual average deaths of 2,730, (Nigeria Watch, 2011:7). The

same Nigeria Watch report quoted Robert Rotberg as commenting on criminal violence in Nigeria that: “crime against persons, including murder, rape and robbery, has grown in scale and viciousness”(P 7).

Nigeria as a country which has an estimated population of close to 170 million people has over 50 percent of the said population as persons whose age ranged from 15 and 25 years (Williams, 2014). Consequently, Nigeria has a population of energetic and curious persons. It is often stated that poverty in Nigeria is prevalent among this category of people. Though young and energetic, most youth are said to lack requisite qualification to be engaged in meaningful jobs or where such qualifications are there, working experience required for some jobs are not easy to come by as most of them are just fresh school leavers (Ajunfo, 2013, Kale, 2015). Philips (1991) argues that the pressure of poverty can create individual irresponsibility, correspondingly deviance, especially when they suffer stress from powerlessness or when they are unable to control their own lives.

Since Becker's (1968) study on criminal decision weighing the cost-benefit effects of engagement in criminal activities, avoidance of arrest or possible conviction, other empirical studies aimed at verifying the socioeconomic variables that determine criminal decisions and behaviours have continue to followed. The socio-economic backgrounds of criminal also created situations which impeded them from behaviours in terms of moral uprightness, law abidingness and privileges like access to education and jobs.

Two scholars made a follow up of an earlier similar review by LaFree, (1999) on the effect of unemployment on violent crime, who submitted to the effect that the effect of unemployment on homicide in most of the cross national homicide studies was unsupported in the literature. The LaFree's 1999 review set the stage for Trent and Pridemore whose review produced a similar result on unemployment. For instance, from among the 70 empirical studies reviewed, only two papers had unemployment as an indicator for



violent crime. Only one reported a significant relation between unemployment and involvement in violent crime in countries where the studies took place (Trent and Pridemore, 2012).

In a national case control study of serious property, crimes of robbery and burglary in U.S., two university of Florida scholars Kleck and Jackson (2016) focused on four categories of unemployment or joblessness. The first was being unemployed means not having a full time job but actively seeking one. An individual considered to be underemployed work part-time but want or need to work full-time, was the second type. The third type of joblessness involve being out of the workforce for reasons that are generally considered socially acceptable- for instance being retired or disable or caring for small children. The fourth category of jobless represents individuals who are not looking for work and do not meet the characteristics of the other three categories.

The authors who used convicted prisoners as their units of analysis reported that: those who are out of the labour force for reasons not generally socially acceptable and who are not looking for work- is more likely to commit robbery and burglary. They emphasized that there was something besides joblessness that increases a person's chances of being involve in violent crimes such as robbery. The link between unemployment and violent crime was more complex than previously assumed. It could be deduce from the argument of these authors that definition of unemployment remains a potent factor in determining the relationship between unemployment and violent crimes. The authors contend that not all situation of joblessness was violent crime inducing, stressing that only individuals who are jobless and fail to seek for job for reasons outside socially acceptable ones are more likely to engage in violent crimes. The wisdom behind the finding was that those jobless ones with the hope of securing jobs by seeking them would not engage in criminal violence to jeopardize their chances of being employed in line with the cost benefit analysis stressed by champions of the economics of crime thesis.

In Niegria, Olufolabo, Akintunde and Ekun, (2015) in a study of crime distribution in Oyo state reported that armed robbery, kidnapping, murder, rape and house breaking as leading crimes recorded in the state, while unemployment was among leading causes of crimes recorded in the state. Also, Osuji, Obubu, and Obiora-illouno (2015 p.2) in a study of crime rate in South Eastern Nigeria revealed that “the highest and most committed crime in the study region are armed robbery, murder and grievous harm and wounding”. The major causes of crime in the region, according to them were poverty, unemployment, lost of family values and inadequate police personnel. Similarly, Usman, Yakubu and Bello, (2012) assert that youth unemployment, poverty, peer influence and drug abuse as factors responsible for crime in Sokoto State. The authors stressed that though Sokoto State record low crime rate, “we found that the highest and commonly committed crimes in Sokoto State among crime against person are Assault and grievous harm and wounding (GHW), while Store breaking is the highest committed crime against property” (p.158). Adebayo, (2013) sum it up when he assert that most violent crimes recorded in Nigeria was attributed to pervasive youth unemployment in the country.

### **Income and violent crime**

Criminologists and other sociologists often make us believe that low income earners are disproportionately represented as either perpetrators or victims of violent crimes. This argument hinges on the fact that economics condition of the low income makes them deprived of basic necessities of life and as a result become frustrated and by extension violent.

Latzer, (2017), failed to subscribe to the thesis of economics condition and violent crime. According to him violent crime is different which makes it difficult to be explained by economics.

If people become desperate for life's necessities they will resort to stealing them. But violent crimes, murder, manslaughter, rape, sexual assault, robbery are not usually motivated by





money. Murder, manslaughter and assault are mainly quarrel-based. anger and disputes, abetted alcohol and guns, fuel these crimes.

Rape, obviously has no economic motive either; it is driven by a craving for sexual satisfaction through force and violence. Arguing along the same line, (Bjerk 2010; Messey, 1995) submit that crime, particularly violent crime within a neighbourhood or society whose not necessarily caused by monetary factor; rather violent crime was motivated by defensive factor.

It could hereby be hypothesized that individuals who experienced low socio-economic status would likely be involved in violent crimes than those whose statuses are high. The fact that certain socio-economic conditions experienced by individuals on low socio-economic status would triggered their inner impulse for them to take actions that lead to criminal violence. Such conditions includes reduced parental influence and support, increased peer influence, absence of social capital required to equip individuals with quality education that will usher in associated income that would makes them less prone to crime and other antisocial behaviours. These conditions were referred to as 'storylines' by Agnew (2007). Further, these factors become sources of frustration. This has translated into headlines on our national dailies that portray violent crimes of murder, assault, armed robbery, rape, and other related criminal activities (Amzat et al, 2007, Odumosu, 1999, Ajaegbu, 2012, Effiom, Archibong and Ojua, 2014).

## **Methods**

The research plan proceeded in two phases. The first being the gathering of relevant materials from government agencies and ministries which are saddled with the responsibility of taking care of improving the living conditions of people within the state. In doing so, secondary data were obtained from Niger State Ministry of Youth Development; Human Resources unit of the Office of Head of Service (HOS); the Police and the Prisons in the state. The second phase involves the collection of primary data from the field and

subsequent analysis of same. This second phase of the research centered on one method-quantitative. The quantitative section employed the use of survey method, which involves the use of questionnaire for the convicts in prisons.

The prison inmates were chosen for this research, partly because, they are readily available and chiefly because, they constituted a group which had been processed through the criminal justice system and have been convicted for various violent crimes. They are thus certified by law as violent criminals. The choice of custodian research subjects gave the researcher the opportunity to further explore the characteristics of these inmates to be able to give informed explanation on what actually pushed them into violent form of crime and finally prison. Views from these crops of inmates represent views of the real criminals. The sampling technique which is the next sub-heading would assist in throwing more light on how this was carried out.

This research was designed to study convicted inmates of violent crimes in prisons located in Niger State. The state has 9 prisons located at Minna (New and Old), Bida, Kontagora, Agaie, Kagara, New Bussa, Lapai and Suleja. These prisons have capacity of accommodating 1692 inmates. As at November, 2015, however, there were 2018 inmates in prisons across Niger State. Of this figure, 873 were convicts while the remaining 1145 were awaiting trials or non convicts. Out of these 9 prisons in the state, four (4) prisons were selected. The prisons were selected based on the capacity, convict enrolment, and the security capabilities of these institutions. For instance, convicted violent criminals are kept only in prisons that are of 'medium security' standard. Consequently, the prisons selected were the medium security types which were equally situated in towns with documented history of criminal violence in Niger State (Newsline, 2008; Daily Trust, 2013).

The selected prisons include those situated in Minna (old and new), Kontagora and Suleja. Those selected prisons for example, housed 510 or 58.4 percent of the 873 convicted persons in all



the prisons in the state. The sampling method here placed emphasis on the areas where information regarding violent criminal convicts could be obtained. These were the urban centres and the identified volatile areas in the state. Going by this figure of 873, one third of the convicted gave a total of 291. This researcher then took the one third as the sample size for the research. The selected four prisons are adequate for a fair representation of the population which is one key element of sampling as argued by Mohammed (2006).

A multi stage cluster sampling method was used in the selection of individual respondents. The first step was the selection of the required number of respondents representing each selected prisons. From the available statistics there were 316 convicted prisoners in Suleja prison, 107, 79 and 124 in Minna new, and Minna old and Kontagora prisons respectively. One third of each of the figures for the four prisons selected gave the sum of 209 which is 82 less of the sample size of 291. Since there are 4 prisons selected, 82 were then divided by 4 to give 20.5. Three of the four prisons take 20 each while Suleja take 22 because it is the prison that has the highest number of convicted prisoners among the selected prisons and in the state. This is in addition to the fact that human beings are involved and the issues of fraction cannot be considered. As a result, the sum of 126, 57, 47, and 61 convicted prisoners were randomly selected from Suleja, Minna New, Minna Old and Kontagora prisons respectively. The total sample size was 291.

The data generated from the research was analysed using descriptive statistics and frequency counts in the description of relationships between observed variables. The test of research hypothesis was done through the use of multiple linear regression models which assisted in establishing relationships between variables, with aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Regression analysis was also employed because “linear regression is a versatile and powerful statistical method that can be used to model the

effects of one or more independent variables (IVs) on a dependent variable (DV) and it allows us to explain or to predict a dependent variable,” (Orme and Cormbs-Orme, 2009:3). The method was very useful in the analysis of effects of socioeconomic variables on individuals' involvement in violent crimes

The general regression model is given as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + E \quad (1)$$

Where Y = dependent variable

$X_1, X_2 \dots X_n$  are the independent variables  
(predictor variables)

$\beta_0$  = is the intercept of the model

$\beta_1, \beta_2 \dots \beta_n$  are the slopes or parameters of the predictor variables in the model

E = is the random error term

N = signifies the end term of the predictor variables

One vital feature of the respondents of the research was that they were predominantly males (86.3%) while females were only 13.7 percent. Similarly, respondents who fall within the age brackets 25 to 29 years were the majority. The prisoners who fall within this age brackets, represent 39.3 percent. A substantial percentage precisely 43.5 percent of the respondents were married, whereas, 21.7 percent had at least a child, with 37.9 percent of them without children at all. On the educational level of the respondents, the data shows that majority of them had low level of education as only 7.2 percent cumulatively went beyond secondary level of education. This explains why 80.1 percent were unemployed.

Majority of the convicted prisoners for violent types of crimes within the four prisons studied, are young. This is so because; 86 percent of respondents fall within the age bracket 20 through 34 years. It can be clearly stated here that majority of those who engaged in violent crimes are youths.

Most respondents came from neighbourhoods with ineffective collective efficacy as 39.9 percent of them attributed offences committed to activities



and social interactions within their neighbourhoods.

Assault was the highest violent crime committed by the respondents as 49.8 percent of them were convicted of assault. Armed robbery was second while murder and rape paired in the third position with 16.2 percent each.

The outcome of youths being the leading perpetrators of violent crimes is in consonant with findings of Murray,( 2011),Moffitt *et al*(2000),Ucha, (2010) Baskin and Sommers, (1993),Emeh, Nwanguma and Aboroh, (2012),Efiom, Archibong and Ojua(2014) and Wikstrom and Treiber,(2016).

Furthermore, the study also revealed that 80.1 percent of these convicted prisoners were unemployed when they committed offences for which they were incarcerated.

### Result of Hypothesis testing Unemployment and Violent Crimes

This study sets out to answer the following basic research questions: What is the relationship between unemployment and involvement in violent crimes? To what extent is the level of income related to involvement in violent crimes? For the purpose of this paper, two key variables chosen as part of socioeconomic status factors; unemployment and level of income are examined. On unemployment, it was hypothesised that individuals that were unemployed are more likely to engage in violent crimes than those employed.

The result is hereby presented thus:

**H<sub>1</sub>** There is a significant relationship between unemployment and involvement in violent crimes.

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant relationship between unemployment and involvement in violent crimes.

**Table 1:** Regression analysis testing of hypothesis between unemployment and violent crimes

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.333	1	30.333	2.652	.105 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2710.497	237	11.437		
Total	2740.830	238			

a. Dependent Variable: Violence crime  
b. Predictors: (Constant), unemployment

Table 1 shows the result of regression analysis testing the influence of unemployment and involvement in violent crimes from the table; the P-value is 0.105 which infers that there is no significant influence of unemployment on violent crimes. With this result the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis accepted, since P-value of 0.105 is greater than 0.05 level of significance set before hand.

Also a bi-variate table which combined unemployment with other four socio-economic variables against assault as a representative of violent crime produced similar result even though some variables show some level of significance.

**Table 2:** Regression Analysis Assault versus Income, Social capital, Neighborhood, Level of education, and Unemployment

Source	Coef	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value	R-Squ
Regression	0.2774	5	0.10528	0.021056	2.39	<b>0.039</b>	4.54%
Income	0.00599	1	0.01164	0.011639	1.32	0.252	
Social capital	-0.0152	1	0.01041	0.010408	1.18	0.278	
Neighborhood	0.0347	1	0.06594	0.065944	7.48	<b>0.007</b>	
Level of Edu	-0.0042	1	0.01063	0.010628	1.20	0.273	
Unemployment	-0.0238	1	0.02028	0.020281	2.30	0.131	
Error		251	2.21422	0.008822			
Total		256	2.31950				

The result from table 2 shows the analysis of variance table and the coefficients of the regression model. From the table it shows that the regression model was significant since the p-value = 0.039 is less than 0.05 level of significance set before hand. Thus it infers that there was a significant relationship between some of the variables tested for impact relationship with the dependent variable assault. From the table it shown that the variable Neighborhood influence only, have a significant relationship with the dependent variable assault since the p-value = 0.007 is less than 0.05. The model for the



regression equation is given below.

$$\text{Assault} = 0.2774 + 0.00599 \text{ Income} - 0.0152 \text{ Social capital} + 0.0347 \text{ Neighborhood} - 0.00422 \text{ Level of education} - 0.0238 \text{ Unemployment}$$

Table two above also indicate that unemployment could not individually make any significant impact in the regression model even though it was related with assault as violent crime example, since its p-value 0.131 which was greater than 0.05 level of significance set for the paper.

The following are the discussions of results obtained from the field, and we start with unemployment and violent crimes. Majority (80.1%) of respondents were unemployed prior to their incarceration. This result is in accord with Ajaegbu (2012) who found unemployed majority among his research subjects.

One fundamental discovery of this research is that unemployment as a sole variable does not make respondents involve in violent crimes. This is because the result of test of hypothesis one above indicates that the calculated P-value of 0.105 is greater than the P-value 0.05 level of significance set. This result is at variance with that of Edward (2011), Ajaegbu (2012), Raphael and Winter Ebmer (2001) and BOCSAR, (2012), who all in effect concluded that unemployment causes high violent crime in society. One reason advanced by these studies was that an unemployed person has unlimited time committed to crime and other antisocial activities. However, unemployment can only cause violent crime when it is redolent with other factors as our result here shows. For this paper, living in and being influenced by a given neighbourhood makes the unemployed indulge in violent crimes. It could be stated clearly that social environment remained a potent factor in crime causation particularly for the unemployed.

Meanwhile, this research finding is in accord with Hollis (2011), Melick (2013), Cramer (2011). All these studies did not find any statistical significance between unemployment and participation in violent crimes. A closer look at the data with the effects of unemployment on violent

crime, this researcher decides to pair unemployment with one control variable: disorganized neighbourhood, and it produced a significant statistical relationship. Since the calculated P-value 0.020 was less than 0.05 p-value level of significance. It therefore, infers here that, the unemployed research subjects who live within a disorganized neighbourhood, were more likely to engage in violent crime than their counterparts who come from a more organized neighbourhoods. The finding challenged studies that see unemployment to solely have significant relationship with violent crimes. It should be noted that unemployment only has a strong relationship with involvement in violent crimes not as an individual variable but when it is added with another variable like neighbourhood environment for this study.

### Income and Violent Crimes

Meanwhile, the next hypothesis tested was the second hypothesis which related level of income with involvement in violent crimes. The hypothesis reads as follows:

**H<sub>2</sub>** There is a significant relationship between low level of income and involvement in violent crimes.

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant relationship between low level of income and involvement in violent crimes.

The second hypothesis proposed that individuals with low income are more likely to engage in violent crimes than those with high income and table 2 below presents the result obtained.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis testing of hypothesis between low income and violent crimes

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Regression	38.027	1	38.027	3.339	.069 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2687.358	236	11.387		
Total	2725.385	237			

a. Dependent Variable: Violence crime

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income

Table 3 above, shows a P-value of 0.069 which is greater than the 0.05 set as level of significance from onset. On this basis, the research hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship



between lower level of income and involvement in violent crimes is hereby rejected and the null hypothesis which states no significant relationship between low level of income and involvement in violent crimes is accepted.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis: Assault versus Income, Social capital, Neighborhood, Level of education, Employment

Source	Coef	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value	R-Squ
Regression	1.839	5	27.787	5.5575	2.10	0.066	4.10%
Income	-0.0183	1	0.109	0.1085	0.04	0.840	
Social capital	0.676	1	21.949	21.9485	8.31	0.004	
Neighborhood	0.001	1	0.000	0.0000	0.00	0.998	
Level of Edu	0.0817	1	3.937	3.9372	1.49	0.223	
Employment	0.032	1	0.037	0.0365	0.01	0.907	
Error		246	649.959	2.6421			
Total		251	2.31950				

The result from table 4 above shows the analysis of variance table and the coefficients of the regression model. From the table it shown that the variable Social capital influence only, have a significant relationship with the dependent variable murder since the p-value = 0.007 is less than 0.05. Thus it infers that the less the Social capital impact from parents and guardians to their children or loved once the higher the involvement into the violent crime murder. The model for the regression equation is given below.

Murder = 1.839 - 0.0183 Income + 0.676 Social capital + 0.001 Neighborhood + 0.0817 Level of education + 0.032 Employment

The table 4 above also shows that low level of income could not make any significant impact as it has a p-value of 0.840 which was far greater than the 0.05 level of significance set for the paper.

It was found that respondents with low income did not participate in violent crimes. Since the calculated P-value of 0.069 was greater than 0.05 set earlier as level of significance. It was an indication that low level of income does not independently push individuals into committing violent crimes. This finding is in agreement with earlier finding by Sharkey, Besbris and Friedson (2017) which saw no significant relationship between low income and violent crime. Gittner

and Gentzler, (2016) however, argued for a robust relationship between low income and involvement in violent crimes. So when the research question which stated: what is the relation between low income and violent crimes involvement, was considered, this finding presents no significant relationship.

However, the data revealed that respondents who have low income but have criminal peers are more likely to engage in violent crimes that those who do not, because the P-value of 0.013 obtained was less than 0.05 level of significance. The point been made was that low income could not solely explains involvement in violent crimes among respondents unless it is associated with another factor-peer group influence.

Furthermore, Wilkstrom and Treiber (2016), Ajaegbu (2015) and Veling Susser, Selten and Hoek (2014) in different studies, all submitted to the effect that "people from disadvantaged backgrounds have a higher crime propensity and greater criminogenic exposure (more crime prone peers and exposure to criminogenic settings  $r = 27$ ", Wilkstrom and Treiber (2016:15). Also, Poulton et al (2002), Ruiz, Mc Mahon and Jason (2018) all submitted to the effect that low socio-economic status paves way for poor health, involvement in violent crime and lower academic achievement.

## Conclusion

Overall, the empirical results of this study failed to support the proposition that unemployment and low level of perpetrators contribute significantly to their involvement in violent forms of crime. Tables 2 and 4 above corroborated this assertion. While factors like low level income and unemployment could not independently present statistically significant relationship until when they are combined with factors like living in a disorganized neighbourhood and associating with criminal peers. It therefore follow that combination of variables can explain better complex phenomenon like involvement in violent crimes. This is especially true when young males whose age ranges from 18 through 34 years, are involved. Youths in Nigeria are predominant in



prisons not because of unemployment and low income capabilities as widely believed, other factors like peer pressure and being nurtured in an disorganized social environments are more responsible for their involvement in violent crimes and subsequent incarceration.

### Recommendations

Policies and programs designed to prevent crime, particularly violent crimes in Nigeria should be tailored toward enhancing the socioeconomic statuses of citizens within the country. Emphasis should be on the provision of employment with adequate reward system. Premiums should also be placed on youths, both males and females, as females are beginning to also be involved in violent crimes. People should be encouraged to form cooperative societies and neighbourhood associations to facilitates organized form of living which would brings about adequate social capital needed to prevents youths from forming and joining criminal peers.

Intervention programs should be directed toward empowering parents as well for them to be able to discharge their parental responsibilities to their children/wards.

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