



Perception of youths in rivers state on causes and management of insecurity in Nigeria

Dr. Patrick Ikechukwu Echebe ^{1*}, Becky Chima Agbaeze ²

¹ Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

² Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria

* Corresponding Author: **Dr. Patrick Ikechukwu Echebe**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Impact Factor: 5.307 (SJIF)

Volume: 04

Issue: 06

November-December 2023

Received: 11-10-2023;

Accepted: 13-11-2023

Page No: 929-933

Abstract

One major social problems trending in Nigeria today is insecurity. That is why it is an interesting discourse for counsellors. Effective introduction and usage of counselling for peace and security is a veritable tool for national growth, development and transformation. The youths are more vulnerable and mostly affected in time of any unrest and insecurity. The study was conducted to investigate the perception of youths in Rivers State on the causes and ways of managing insecurity challenges in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey type design. The sample for this study comprised of 100 youths in Port Harcourt metropolis who were randomly selected. A self-designed questionnaire "perception of youths on causes and management of insecurity in Nigeria" (PYC&MI) questionnaire was used to obtain data for participants. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistic like percentages and inferential statistics like one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test. The findings of the study showed that youth unemployment, corruption, struggle for political power, greed and religion intolerance were some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. It was also discovered that insecurity in Nigeria can be curbed by promoting family and community stability; promoting counselling for peace and security; and the use of dialogue. The youths in Rivers State irrespective of their place of abode, age and gender agreed on these causes and possible solution to insecurity in the country.

Keywords: Perception, youths, causes, management and insecurity

Introduction

The matter of peace and security of lives and properties are topical issues that transverse the length and breadth of the country today. It seems that life has become unbearable and precarious in some parts of the country due to insecurity. Security could be described as various activities geared toward protecting a country, person, materials or building against external attack or danger. The primary function of any government is the security of lives and properties of her citizens. Therefore, the idea and notion of national peace and security involves both traditional and human security.

However, the concept of national security is now understood as a wholesome security. It includes preservation of societal values, security of lives properties, economy, and economic resources. It also includes security of food, health, environmental and national integrity.

According to Pogson (2021) ^[6], the security of any state embodies a notion of order, or of the conditions necessary to maintain the smooth functioning and reproduction of an existing society. It then means that the general concept of security of a nation is protection and safety. National peace and security is a veritable tool for national, development and transformation.

Any society where safety of lives, properties and institutions cannot be effectively institutions cannot be effectively guaranteed, there is the problem of insecurity there. In order words, a nation is faced with insecurity when there is threat to lives and properties of her citizens; when there is apparent anxiety in the land and when citizens cannot sleep with their two eyes closed.

Insecurity also includes safety risk, danger, deprivation, national or internal attacks, injury, death or loss of valuables in any environment.

Consequently, hardly would you witness a day without media report on one form of violence or the other in different parts of the country. The high rate of violence and crimes being perpetuated in the land has become worrisome. The nation is bedeviled with myriads of problems such as kidnapping, armed robberies, terrorisms, inter and intra-communal violence, ethno-religious violence, extra judicial killings, militancy, banditries just to mention a few. The spate of violence has now assumed a very woeful dimension through suicide bombings of places of worship and government institutions. Religious leaders like priest, pastors etc are kidnapped and killed. Most people in the North east have abandoned their homes and are now living in camps and rehabilitation centres.

In the word of Eme & Anthony (2020) ^[2], today we fear our lives from kidnapers, political and economic related assassination and extra-judicial killings. These have rapidly become familiar features of our landscape. The negative impact of this massive sense of insecurity on both psychic and overall functioning of Nigerians cannot be overemphasized. However, in consideration of the above, one can posit unequivocally that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Furthermore, inter and intra-communal ethnic clashes, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence, kidnapping, banditry and bomb explosion have been on the increase, leading to loss of enormous lives and properties and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the populace (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2021) ^[4].

The problem of insecurity which used to be one of lowest in the hierarchy of social problems facing this country seems to have assumed alarming proportion since the end of the Nigerian civil war which ended in 1970 Nwadiakor (2019) ^[5]. The problem of insecurity is much pronounced today due to social separation and disconnect in many communities. Today we have several dichotomies such as “settlers/indigenes”, “Christians/Muslim”, “Osu (slave) Nwadiakor (freeborn)” issues. All these have inherent destructive tendencies that could threaten national peace and stability.

Other dimension or causes of insecurity is politics of bitterness which usually characterized election years through assassination, violence or destruction of lives and properties. Politics in current dispensation unlike previous republics have displayed politics of bitterness and rancour, anxiety, which has played down dialogue, negotiations and consensus put differently, quest for political powers is among the causes of insecurity in the land Anyanuga (2016).

All economic violence through deprivation resource control and lopsided revenue sharing formula could also lead to insecurity. Furthermore, activities of organized violent groups like ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults and political thugs have also contributed to insecurity. Eme and Anthony (2020) ^[2] identified the urbanization process as another major challenge Nigerian society.

This is because there is a strong and huge connection between security, environment and urbanization. Our society has witnessed considerable urbanization but without commensurate security strength.

Furthermore, insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery and corruption have taken alarming tolls on lives and properties

in Nigeria, and has badly damaged both national and regional economies of our country. There is no noticeable will on the part of the government to fight corruption (Nigerian Bar Association, 2013).

According to Nwabueze (2019) ^[7] it would appear that unemployment is one of the strongest factors that cause insecurity. A situation where an alarming rate of about 40 percent of Nigerians, most of who are youths are not gainfully employed, seems to be a missing link in governance. The emergency of youth militancy in Niger Delta could be traced to this. In his observation Alawiye (2018) ^[1] said that youths constitute a large proportion of Nigeria’s population but despite their critical role in nation building, it is often observed that the country has not invested seriously in youth, thereby making them an army involved in unprofitable activities.

Statement of the Problem

The role of youth in national development including security cannot be overemphasized. Constitute a significant percentage of the world’s population.

Today’s generation of children and youth is the largest in history with nearly half of the world’s population of 7 billion under age of 20, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (2012) ^[3]. The youth are more hit in terms of insecurity in Nigeria. They are the most susceptible and affected. Nigerian youths are in most cases victims of insecurity and some of them are also used as agents of insecurity. Therefore, if there is going to be a reasonable impact of counselling for national peace and security, youth perception on the causes and managing of insecurity in Nigeria is very essential to study. Taking cognizance of the negative consequences of insecurity on the youth, it is imperative to investigate the perception of youth on causes and management of insecurity in Nigeria.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perception of youths in Rivers State on causes and managing of insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, the study will

1. Determine the causes of insecurity in Nigeria
2. Determine whether the place of abode of youths determination their perception of insecurity in Nigeria.
3. Determine whether age affects youths’ perceptions of insecurity problem in Nigeria.
4. Determine whether gender dictates how youth perceive management of insecurity in Nigeria.

This study is meant to answer the following research questions

1. What are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria as perceived by youths in Rivers State.
2. Will there be a difference in the causes of insecurity as perceived by youths in Rivers State on the basis of place of abode.
3. Will there be a difference in the causes of insecurity as perceived by youth in Rivers State on the basis of age.
4. Will there be difference in the management of insecurity in Nigeria as perceived by youth in Rivers State on the basis of gender.

In this study, the following hypotheses were answered

1. There is no significant difference in the youth perception of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of place of abode.

- There is no significant difference in the youth perception of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of age.
- There is no significant difference in youth perception of management of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of gender.

This study will have the following benefits

- Proper understanding of causes of insecurity in Nigeria will be very useful to counsellors, in the area of counselling for peace and security. This will enable them to counsel youths and others on importance of insecurity.
- Government at various levels and insecurity agencies will benefit from this study when they understand best ways of combating national insecurity.
- The findings from this study will greatly benefit teachers and parents, in the sense that it will expose them to the best ways of guiding our youth.
- This study will help religious leaders in order to preach peace to youths and others always.

Methodology

The research designed used in this study was descriptive survey method. This type of design was adopted because it helps to collect data from large number of participants. The population of this study included all youths in Rivers State. The sampel for this study consisted of 100 youths spread across Rivers State. The simple random sampling technique was employed to obtain the sample. The sample for the research was drawn from the 300-level education students of the university of Port Harcourt all of which were youths living in different parts of Rivers State. The main instrument used in data collection for this study was the self-constructed questionnaire titled "Youth Perception of causes and management of insecurity in Nigeria" questionnaire. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was ascertained by experts in test and measurement from faculty of education university of Port Harcourt.

The questionnaire was personally administered and retrieved. This was done in order to reduce the rate of mortality. Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics – simple percentage, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test.

Result

Research question 1: What are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria?

Table 1: Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

S/N	Causes	Total	Percentage
1	Youth un-employment	442	88.4
2	Corruption	416	83
3	Political struggle	408	81.6
4	Greed	391	78.2
5	Religion intolerance	392	78
6	Poverty	389	77.8
7	Ethnicity	378	75.6
8	Loss of value	373	75
9	Lack of quality education	361	72
10	Rural-urban migration	322	64

Asas perceived by the participants, it was discovered from table 1 that youth un-employment rank highest among the various causes of insecurity in Nigeria with total of 442 and correspond to 88.4%, followed by corruption with total of

416 (83%). The third cause of insecurity in the country was political struggle with total of 408 and corresponds to 81.6%.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the youth's perception of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of their place of abode.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of youth perception of insecurity based on place of abode

Place of abode	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Highbrow areas	38	54.97	50.96
Middle class area	34	53.62	4.156
Interior area	28	54.93	3.819
Total	100	54.50	4.455

From the table above, it was discovered that the means of the three places of abode, high brow areas (54.97), middle class areas (53.62) and interior areas (54.93) are not different.

Table 3: One-way analysis of variance showing youth perception of insecurity on the basis of place of abode

Place of abode	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f	Sig.
Between groups	40.140	2	20.070	1.011	.368
Within groups	1924.860	97	19.844		
Total	1965.000	99			

From table 3 above, the result indicated $f(2,97) = 1.011$, $p > 0.001$, hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference between youths' perception of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of place of abode. This implies that regardless of where youth reside does not have impact on their perception of insecurity in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significance in the perception of youth on the causes of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of age.

Table 4: Descriptive analysis of youth perception of insecurity based on age

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Late Youth	21	55.90	3.604
Mid-Youth	61	54.51	4.396
Early Youth	18	52.83	5.171
Total	100	54.50	4.455

It was discovered from the above table that the means of the three classes of youth's age, late-youth (55.90), mid-youth (54.51) and early-youth (52.83) is not different.

Table 5: A one-way analysis of variance showing youth perception of insecurity on the basis of age Score

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between groups	91.445	2	45.72	2.367	.99
Within groups	1873.555	97	19.315		
Total	1965.000	99			

From table 5 above, it was observed that $f(2,97) = 2.367$, $p > 0.001$, hence the null hypothesis is accepted. That is, there is no significant difference in the perception of youth in the causes of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of age.

Research Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference on the perception of youths

in management of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of gender

Table 6: Management of insecurity in Nigeria

S/N	Managing of Insecurity	Total	Percentage
1	Promotion of family & community stability	414	83
2	Effective counselling could promote peace	408	81.6
3	Use of dialogue	282	56.4
4	Use of security forces alone	243	49
5	Govt. alone should tackle security challenges	236	47.2

From table 6, it was discovered that promotion of family and community stability rank highest among the various ways of managing insecurity challenges in Nigeria as perceived by youth with total of 414 (83%), followed closely by effective counselling for peace and security with total of 40 (81.6%). The third way of managing insecurity in the country was through the use of dialogue with total of 282 (56.4%).

Table 7: t-test for youth perception on managing of insecurity on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit
Male	51	15.86	2.227	98.00	.163	1.658
Female	49	15.80	1.837	95.83	.164	

From the above t-table, the calculated t-test was 0.163, while the table t-values stood at 1.658. since the t-calculated is less than the t-table, the null hypothesis is accepted, while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference on the youth perception of managing of insecurity challenges of the basis of gender. Male and female perceives managing of insecurity in Nigeria the same way.

Discussion

From the findings of this study, it was revealed that youth perception of major causes of insecurity in Nigeria are youth unemployment, corruption, struggle for political powers, greed and religion intolerance. These are the principal causes of insecurity in the land. This finding agrees with observations of Nwadiolor (2019) ^[5] that unemployment is one of the strongest push factors. A situation where an alarming rate of about 40 percent of Nigerians, most of who are in the youth bracket are not gainfully employed, smacks of a missing in the government. The Nigeria Bar Association (2013) also agreed to this truism by observing that insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery and corruption have taken alarming tolls on lives and properties in Nigeria, and has badly damaged both national and regional economies of our country.

The first hypothesis which stated there is no significant difference in the youth's perception of insecurity in Nigeria on the basis of their place of abode was accepted because findings from this study revealed that all the youths in Rivers State agreed to these as cause of insecurity in Nigeria irrespective of their place of abode. They all viewed the issue of security challenges from the same perspective. This is so because whenever there is any unrest in the nation, the youth are the most hit. Therefore, they all agree to all the aforementioned as causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

The second hypothesis, which stated there is no significant difference in the perception of youth on the cause of insecurity on the basis of age, was also upheld. Both early, mid and late youth all agreed to the aforementioned as causes of insecurity in the land.

The third hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference on management of insecurity based on gender was also accepted. The study revealed that family and community stability, effective counselling for peace and security and the use of dialogue are some of the best strategies that could be used in combating the monster of instruct. Male and female youth people agreed that if there is stability at home and in the community, and if they are well counselled on the gains of peace and security, the rate of insecurity will dwindle.

Implication for Counselling

In our quest for national transformation, the importance of counselling for promotion of peace and security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The following are some of the importance of counselling in national security.

Counsellor will be able to know and be familiar with various causes of insecurity in the country. This will in turn allow him/her to counsel effectively and provide practicable solutions to some of these problems.

The findings of this study will also allow the counsellor to know that youths play significant role in national security. Concentrating on them through effective counselling will be very rewarding.

The counsellor will also be kept abreast of some practicable ways of managing the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria.

Since insecurity is a social problem, the counsellor will sue all his/her training in influence people to adjust their behaviour. What is very crucial to the survival of any nation is security of lives and properties.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the whole nation should rise to combat the challenges of insecurity by providing good jobs for the youth, engage in politics without bickering and bitterness. Also leadership at all levels must shun corruption in all its ramifications and Nigerians should tolerate one another. There should be urgent inclusion and acceptance of peace and security counselling in schools, government establishment, in both print and non-print media.

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