

Modernity and Crime among Youth in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Globally, the rate of crime is alarming but more worrisome is the involvement of youth that constitute a large percentage of the world population and generally, the leaders of tomorrow. Before colonization, communal practice in Africa made it possible for members of the communities to be their brothers' keepers and the duty of upbringing of children based on societal acceptable values was seen as a collective responsibility. However, colonization led to cultural fusion which altered traditional settings in many African countries, Nigeria inclusive. As a result of globalisation, happenings in one country are easily observed and imitated by people in other parts of the world. This is facilitated by information and communication technology. It has influenced youth behaviour. The study, therefore, examined the nexus between modernity and involvement of youth in crime in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State of Nigeria. Bandura's social learning theory guided the investigation. Relying on both primary and secondary sources, relevant data collected were content analysed. Based on the findings, the study argued that modernity has negative impacts on youth behaviour in Ibadan metropolis, including participation in criminalities. However, collapse of family values as well as unemployment and poverty among youth are contributing factors. The study recommended, among others, that concerted efforts by critical stakeholders in upbringing of children and youth, and good governance in the State, and throughout Nigeria, are capable of stemming the menace.

Keywords: Culture; modernity; crime; youth; Ibadan

Introduction

The pre-colonial communities in Africa were closely knitted to the extent that the duty of taking care and adequate upbringing of a child was a communal responsibility. However, colonialism altered most traditions in Africa, including Nigeria (Anyacho & Ugal, 2010; Oluwafunmiyi, 2012). The interaction of African cultures with those of the Western has affected the behaviours of youth, especially as globalization has brought new dimensions to the manifestations of different behaviours worldwide.

Moreover, Nigeria is not exempted from armed conflicts which many nations are experiencing. The country is battling the Niger Delta militancy, secessionist groups, Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, herders-farmers' clash, armed robbery, kidnapping, and pockets of communal conflicts.

Unfortunately, youth are the vanguards and perpetrators of many of these crimes which heighten insecurity in the country (Danjibo, 2010; Ogah, 2014), and creating a situation of making Nigeria a fragile state.

The breakdown of family values owing to constant interactions with other cultures has effect on youth participating in crime in Nigeria (Ugboajah, 2009). This is because the forces of globalization affect the way youth perceive situations. Also, the acceptance of information and communication technology (ICT) influences youth behaviour as the images of culture associated with the media, especially the new media, lead youth to rethink their culture in the light of innovation.

Youth are important in the development of every society but they become problems to themselves

and the society when they are involved in social vices and disobey societal laws (Olarinmoye, 2012). Involvement of youth in such acts is attributable to social change in the society due to foreign influences which have affected the indigenous ways of life. Accordingly, Oruwari (2006) argues that persistent involvement of youth in violent behaviour in cities is as a result of colonial intrusion. This is because of loss of traditional structures that kept people together which Mugo (2011) identified as the root of violence among youth.

Ibadan was the capital of former Western Region of Nigeria, and now, the capital of Oyo State. It is one of the largest cities in Nigeria and indeed Africa. The economic and commercial activities in Ibadan have attracted several people from far and near to the city. At present, without education coupled with relevant skills, many youth are vulnerable to violent acts. Therefore, the life of the youth can be described as dangerous, where only the fittest survive. Against this backdrop, this study examined the influence of modernity on crime among youth in Ibadan metropolis because existing studies (Adebusuyi, 2008; Onwumah, 2011; Jegede, Olowookere & Elegbeleye, 2016; James, 2018) on youth pay little or no specific attention on effects of modernity on youth's criminality. The challenge posed by the quest for modernity among African youth has been recognized (Mugo, 2011) but adequate attention has not been given to its specific impacts on youth in Nigeria. Therefore, this study is aimed at having a better knowledge of modernity and its influences on youth's involvement in crime in Ibadan metropolis. Accordingly, it examined the relationship between modernity and crime among youth in Ibadan metropolis; the prevailing crime among youth in the area; and identified means of curbing such criminality in order to promote decent behaviours among youth. Also, the study addressed the following questions: Is there any relationship between modernity and youth behaviour in Ibadan metropolis, with particular focus on crime? Why do youth in the area

participate in crime? How can this menace among youth be reduced in order to make them useful to the society?

Conceptual clarification

Culture

Culture has no universally accepted definition but one definition that seems to be generally acceptable is that of Tylor (1958 cited in Onwumah, 2011, p. 34) who defines culture as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by (a human) as a member of society” This definition emphasises that culture is knowledge, behaviour, learned, shared, not a personal item, and it is generally used with reference to a society or a group of societies. Similarly, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognises culture as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, tradition and beliefs” (UNESCO, 2002 in Williams, 2007, p. 16). It is also “the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which give order and meaning to their social, political, economic and religious norms and modes of organization thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours” (The Cultural Policy of Nigeria, 1988, p. 1). Therefore, culture is a process that does not die with the death of an individual or a group of individuals but continues from one generation to another. It is how human beings interact with their environment. It is peoples' way of life. However, culture changes overtime as such it is not static because people learn new ideas of how to survive in the society.

On the process of learning, people are capable of creating, remembering, and dealing with ideas. They grasp and apply specific systems of symbolic meaning. Indeed, culture transmission occurs by

observation of things that are happening around one's environment but it cannot be observed directly rather we can only observe the behaviour of people and their techniques of constructing material artefacts. Similarly, human behaviours, speeches, dances, and songs are important in the understanding of culture because they aid the understanding of the way people are trained and brought up to live in a particular society. Thus, Otite&Ogionwo (1990) posited “that no man can be human except as a member of a society, a unit in a network of relationship”. They further argued that “no society can exist without a culture” (p. 48). Therefore, culture is essential in regulating the behaviour of people in every society.

Modernity

Modernity entails contemporary behaviours and practices which affect lifestyles and relationships of people. In Nigeria, the influence of modernity is evident in social, politics, economy, agriculture, science and technology. Its importance in science cannot be over-emphasised. Likewise, its contributions in arts are glaringly in ICT.

At present, there is a great departure from the traditional means of communication which has led to advancements in global human interactions (James, 2018). One of the greatest impacts of the advancements in ICT is that Nigerians have the opportunity of using Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) and people are connected globally through the use of cellular phones, tablets, and internet. Essentially, accessibility of the youth to these facilities has exposed the youth to foreign cultures, which make them to exhibit behaviours that are contrary to theirs.

Also, it has led to a situation whereby the youth are neither Western nor African (Oni, 2011) instead they are alienated and culturally disoriented (Onwumah, 2011). Yes, modernity has facilitated Nigerians' access to knowledge and integration with other nations of the world but it has led to manifestations of “radical new ideas” (James, 2018, p. 3) and involvements of youth in various

forms of violent behaviours as they imitate behaviours observed in the media (Adebusuyi, 2008).

Crime

There is no globally accepted definition of crime due to differences in categorisation as what constitutes a crime in one clime may not be the same in another. Nevertheless, crime is a violation of societal laws which has become a worldwide security threat. Also, it is any act which attracts legal punishment for offences that are contrary to the societal norms (Mugo, 2011). The scholar further argues that two conditions must be met before an act is qualified as a crime. The first is *actus reus* (guilty act), meaning that the act has been committed voluntarily, and the second is the existence of *mens rea* (guilty mind). This pertains to establishment of intention to execute the act, which implies that any act performed involuntary (excluding ignorance of the law) or lacking in established intention like insanity, is not a crime (Sammons, n.d.).

In terms of classification, crime has been classified into two categories, namely, violent and property crimes (Ajaegbu (2012; Kien (2015). Analysing them separately, violent crime is a crime committed on human beings and the way perpetrators execute the act, harms the victim's personality and property. As this crime usually leads to shedding of blood and economic losses, Ajaegbu (2012) sees it as the greatest inhumane crime having negative effects on societies. Examples are robbery, rape, kidnapping, assault, thuggery, terrorism, murder and homicide (Ajaegbu, 2012; Soh, 2012). Conversely, property crime is an offence that leads to loss of property in which the criminals do not apply violence (Soh, 2012). Such crimes include burglary, arson, larceny, theft, wreck, pilfering, stealing, house and store breaking, and vehicle theft (Dambazau, 2007).

These classifications may not be totally accepted because a criminal is always ready to apply force

when the occasion demands it. Agreeably, armed robbers are prepared to use force to achieve their aims but it seems difficult to categorize crimes as “violence and non-violence or violence and property” (Ghani, 2017, p. 21).

Some youth in Nigeria engage in various forms of crimes like examination malpractice, stealing, gambling, homicide, smuggling, suicide, forgery, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, drug abuse and trafficking, sexual harassment, internet scam, and advanced fee fraud. Additionally, some previous studies (Ajaegbu, 2012; Adebayo, 2013; Abiodun, 2014) have paid particular attention to unemployment, poverty, moral decadence, disintegration of the extended family system, peer group influence, family size, corruption, among others, in their quests to discover why youth engage in crimes but attention has not been really given to the influence of modernity on Nigerian youth's involvement in crime.

Youth

Different views exist on who is a youth. For example, while the United Nations (UN) sees youth as individuals within age 15 and 24, the Commonwealth views people between the age bracket of 15 and 29 as youth. Similarly, the World Health Organisation (W.H.O.) considers young people as those aged between 10 and 19. For the African Union (AU), youth are as people between 15 and 35 years. The Nigerian National Youth Policy defines youth as all young persons of the ages 18 to 35 years. However, Babawale (2007) sees youth as a “period that immediately follows childhood and terminates at the stage of young adulthood, that is, a period when the individual is yet to attain a full adult status” (p.125). This scholar included adolescent period, which psychologists perceive as a period of “storm and stress” in an individual's life. Some of the characteristics of this category of people include “energetic, creativity, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, innovation, altruism” (Oni, 2011, p. 26).

From the above, youth are one of the greatest assets of any nation. Considering their ages, youth can meaningfully engage in different aspects of human endeavour and contribute to national development. The age bracket of youth is not uniform globally but age is an important factor to know who is a youth as everybody is not considered as a youth. For this study, therefore, a youth is anybody between 15 and 30 years because apart from the media being awash with people within this age bracket involving in all forms of crimes, this age category is vulnerable to the influence of modernity in their pursuit to explore the world.

Theoretical framework

Social learning theory

This study is anchored on Bandura's social learning (1977), and one of its assumptions is that any violent or anti-social behaviour is accounted for, by the continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental determinants. The theory postulates that people tend to model the behaviour of significant others, encode that behaviour and integrate it through motor reproduction (Bandura, 1977). Some of the behaviours are transferred from other countries to Nigeria through the process of globalization, facilitated by advancements in information and communication technology (ICT). Certainly, globalization has led to rapid changes in societies. Through the process of interaction and transfer, Nigerians learn other peoples' ways of life which may be contrary to theirs. Therefore, this study adopted the theory because it helps in understanding that behaviours youth exhibit that are in conflict with the societal norms are borrowed behaviours.

Methodology

The study is qualitative, and used in-depth interviews to collect data because it is a better way to obtain information on human behaviour and make inferences. The study design is descriptive survey, and the data collected were content

analysed under different themes considered relevant to the study.

Also, the study was conducted in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria because Ibadan is one of the big cities in Nigeria, and among the most densely populated area in Oyo State having different Nigeria ethnic groups, and foreigners. Oyo State has thirty-three (33) local government areas (LGAs). However, Ibadan has eleven (11) LGAs but only five (5) of the LGAs were purposively selected because they are within the Ibadan metropolis, though youth's involvement in crime has no boundary. The selected LGAs are Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-West, and Ibadan South-East.

While the studied population were both male and female youth, from 15 to 30 years of age, the sample size of the study comprised ten (10) men and women (two (2) from each LGA) who were purposefully and randomly selected, and interviewed in their homes, workplaces and worship centres. They are above 30 years of age, married, and have educational qualifications which range from secondary school certificates to higher degrees. Also, they are Christians, Muslims, self-employed, postgraduate student, and workers in public and private organisations.

The choice of interview over other survey methods of data collection is because face-to-face contacts with the respondents is a better method of collecting data related to human behaviour. A structured interviews conducted in English Language were used to obtain information on the influence of modernity on youth's behaviour in the studied area. Apart from the primary data, the study also used secondary data as its source of information.

Findings

Modernity and youth behaviour

In order to examine the effect of modernity on youth's behaviour, the respondents were asked:

Question 1: Is there any relationship between modernity and youth's behaviour in Ibadan metropolis, with particular focus on crime?

A respondent who lectures in one of the higher institutions in Ibadan contended that:

Modernity is a universal phenomenon that cut-across all segments of the society as ways of doing things will continue to change. But, it seems it affects youth most. Some of the negative behaviours of our young ones are as a result of what they learn from other cultures. Their conducts, mode of dressing, and social interactions are often foreign.

On the contrary, a female teacher in a secondary school disagreed that modernity leads to youth's involvement in crime. She said:

There is no time in human history that modernity has been totally out of question on whether or not it has effect on criminal behaviour in youth. However, most of the social vices among youth in the society are beyond modernity. Some of the problems could be traced to psychological factors.

Globalization

Furthermore, the study examined various sources which could lead to development of criminal behaviours in youth, and one of them which the study identified is globalization. Accordingly, a postgraduate student respondent maintained that:

Globalisation is responsible for most events in the developing countries, including Nigeria. The world is now a global village. The issue of terrorism, bombing, kidnapping are foreign cultures; even the way most girls dress almost appearing naked. Crazy music, dance, the changing nature of criminality, and conflict are all aspects of foreign cultures.

Also, another respondent interviewed agreed that exposure to foreign practices are responsible for

criminality among youth in the society. He buttressed it this way:

Our children and youth learn most of their bad habits from foreign cultures through internet, films and travelling. In the past, violence and crime are not as high as we experience today. Also, the nature and ways these violent acts are committed have changed because of the influence of Western cultures, where in some countries, guns are used freely. We should not allow foreign cultures that will make our children to behave in a way that will destroy them and our society.

Mass media

Moreover, the study probed the influence of the mass media on youth's participation in crime. In this regard, a pastor who was interviewed responded this way:

Most parents do not pay attention to the kind of films their children watch. They forget that whatever children watch is what they intend to practice. Some of the violent acts and crimes are learnt through the media. There is need for parents to find time for their children so that they can be useful to them and the society.

Similarly, a journalist respondent argued that:

There is no doubt that some children and young adults learn bad habits through the media, particularly through the internet. Some of them watch pornographic and crime films from the Western media. All these cannot promote positive development of the young ones.

However, another respondent who is a trader but worked in a government establishment responded thus:

Even though youth learn a lot through the mass media, it is common these days for people to travel from one country to another. In the process of this, they learn the ways of life of others, some of which

are anti-social and have effects on the society.

Good parenting

Good parenting plays significant role in the way children behave in the society. If children receive appropriate home training, this is capable of curtailing the influence of modernity on youth's behaviour. Consequently, the researchers sought the opinions of the respondents through a question.

Question 3: How do you think that the negative effects of modernity on youth can be curbed so that they will not be sources problems to the society?

A respondent who read Guidance and Counselling, and teaches in one of the public secondary schools in the studied area averred that lack of good parenting contributes to the bad behaviours of youth, including involvement in criminalities. This is because good parenting helps to inculcate proper cultural values in children which help in controlling their excesses. The respondent argued in this manner:

Most of the problems of the youth these days start from the home. In a situation that both parents have no time for their children because they are working class and come home late, the children are likely to be in the care of nanny or others who may not really provide adequate training. Some of these children may be provided with everything but lack proper home training. They can easily turn delinquent and constitute nuisance to the society.

However, another respondent maintained that:

Proper home training is good but some youth behave the way they like. The only thing is that, it seems deviant behaviours are rampant these days. It is possible because of foreign ideas that are easily spreading among youth.

Unemployment and poverty

Furthermore, youth's involvement in crime in the studied area may not be entirely attributed to modernity but could be viewed from the perspectives of unemployment and poverty among youth hence the argument of this respondent that:

It is not easy to survive without job. You see most of our youth are in difficult condition. You can imagine a situation that somebody graduates from university or polytechnic and waited for five years or more without a job. This is why some of them involve in armed robbery, yahoo yahoo, prostitution, or thuggery.

Similarly, another respondent puts it this way:

You can see that in recent times most of our young ladies are following the “sugar daddies” because of money. Some of them are being used not only for sexual purposes but also for rituals. Unemployment can be one of the causes of these social ills.

Also, a respondent asserted that:

Apart from things are changing in the society, most of the causes of crime among youth in the country are poverty and carelessness of some parents who do not pay attention to the training of their children.

Discussion of the findings

Modernity and youth behaviour

Globally, there are conventional behaviours in different societies. Therefore, incompatibility arises due to differences in values and behaviours which the youth learnt from people of different cultures. Oni (2011) evidently captures the effects on youth which include loss of identity and caught in the trap of cultural dependency syndrome besides not being Westernised instead they became culturally alienated no matter the level of copying foreign cultures (p. 27). In a situation of this nature, the youth can copy wrong values that may lead to involvement in criminalities. Also, this supports the view that differences in values and

norms lead to “radical new ideas” and possibly, high rates of crimes, particularly among youth as they imitate alien behaviours in modern media (James, 2018, p. 3). The implication is that modernity is an inevitable aspect of life which everybody, including the youth in Ibadan metropolis, will continue to experience, especially in this era of globalization.

Besides, the influence of psychological factors in youth's involvement in crime may not be totally ignored as the mental state of an individual plays roles in human behaviours. This is because there are actions some people engage which ordinarily they will not perform such actions.

Globalization

The argument of Edeh (2013) supports the findings of this study. The writer posits that “... all Western practices and cultures, both good and evil, are quickly trans-nationalised and copied by other parts of the world through the influence of globalisation” (p.6). Some of the foreign practices which youth embraced are detrimental to the society. Nowadays, it is common in Ibadan metropolis to see some youth kissing on the streets or dressed indecently in the name of civilization. This is what they learned from Western cultures. Therefore, as globalisation has brought changes in today's world, it has also affected the way youth in Ibadan metropolis perceive reality, including participation in criminality. This is the result of easy contacts with the outside world through ICT and migration. However, youth embracing foreign cultures which promote decency and development in the society is acceptable (Oluwafunmiyi, 2012).

Mass media

Some studies have linked the rise in violence to the influence of mass media. For instance, Wood & Wong (1991) revealed that children and adolescents exposure to media violence increased aggressive behaviour towards friends, classmates and strangers. Similarly, Paik & Comstock's (1994) study of the impact of media violence on

aggressive behaviour of children and youth revealed that, regardless of age, there was a significant positive correlation between exposure to media violence and aggressive behaviour.

Certainly, mass media is an influential agent of change in any society. In Ibadan metropolis, mass media such as radio, newspaper, television, films, video and internet contribute to youth criminality because most of the negative behaviours of youth could be learned as exposure of children and youth to various forms of media has increased nowadays.

Good parenting

The researchers are of the opinion that some children believe that the behaviours which people, particularly in the Western world, portray on television, social media, and those of their peers are appropriate and imitate such behaviours. During their youthful period, they may exhibit internalised bad behaviours, including involvement in crime.

In Nigeria, violent acts are easily perpetuated by members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Members of this Union perpetuated a lot of havoc in several parts of Ibadan metropolis until their activities were banned by the late former Governor of Oyo State, Chief Ajimobi. Even the incumbent Governor of the State, Engineer Seyi Makinde, initially banned their activities. This group is majorly youth carry out criminal acts which sometimes lead to loss of lives and property within Ibadan metropolis and its environs.

Furthermore, what happened in 2017 and late February 2020, during reprisal attacks by opposing cult members in Agbowo and Challenge areas, and a clash between two secondary schools in Oke-bola axis, respectively, caused deaths, injuries and destruction of property. These incidents cannot be forgotten by some residents of Ibadan metropolis. The perpetrators of these acts were youth and teenagers. Instead of using their hands and brain for productive ventures, they participated in acts which breached peace and security in the area. This

study discovered that this is due to lack of adequate parenting which ought to impact positive values to the youth from the cradle as well as the influence of modernity. Such youth are described as “endangered species” (Babawale, 2007, p. 127; Ogunlade, 2019, p. 13).

Unemployment and poverty

Additionally, there are other factors that can contribute to criminality. For instance, the prevailing economic hardship characterised by unemployment and poverty have forced many jobless youth in Nigeria, including the studied area, into crime and other vices (Karim, 2011; Abiodun, 2014; Ogah, 2014). Also, the subsisting unemployment and poverty in the country is the consequence of mismanagement of the nation's resources by successive governments and its impacts have resulted to high rate of migrations among youth (Ijioma, Ijioma, & Uzuegbu, 2012; Agugum & Ehiogu, 2016). Mismanagement of the nation's wealth is an indication of bad governance hence the inability of the governments to provide the required infrastructures that will help in creation of jobs that are capable of preventing youth from participating in criminalities.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of modernity on youth involvement in crime in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State of Nigeria. Although there were divergent views by the respondents but the study established that modernity has negative impacts on youth behaviours in Ibadan metropolis as criminality among youth are learned behaviours because in this globalised world, happenings (both good and bad ones) in one country could easily be observed and imitated by people in other parts of the world.

Recommendations

The study recommends that concerted efforts should be made by critical stakeholders in upbringing of the youth to decolonise their minds so that they would not totally depend on Western cultures and media in behaviour formation.

Undeniably, no nation can develop without great emphasis on science, technology and innovation. However, controlled exposure of children to ICT will assist in raising functional children who will later become well-behaved youth. This will prevent them from participating in criminal activities.

As unemployment can lure youth into crime, it is important to empower youth in the metropolis and other parts of the country so that they become productive. This will reduce unemployment, poverty and criminality among youth.

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