



**Unemployment and Deviant Behaviors amongst Prison in-mates in Calabar, Nigeria:  
A Cause -effect relationship**

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**Abstract**

This article aims at exploring the issue of unemployment and deviant behavior in Nigeria. Unemployment rate is a phenomenon that is bedeviling various nations across the globe in varying degrees as it affects policies and development. Currently, there has been an upsurge in the frequency of unemployment in Nigeria. This has caused fear among the citizens as security of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed. The phenomenon of unemployment has impacted negatively on the economic, social and political life of the nation. The growing population of any nation represents the driving force for development. For such growing population to become useful resources, they must be gainfully employed. A questionnaire termed “Unemployment and Deviant Behavior Questionnaire” (UDBQ) was administered on 200 respondents selected from the inmate of Calabar Prison through purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The finding established a significant relationship between unemployment and deviant behavior in Calabar Cross River State. Solutions and suggestions were made that family planning should be encouraged in other to tame the rising population growth in the country. Also, the educational system must promote youth entrepreneurship, innovative skills and virile apprenticeship schemes rather than focusing on theoretical learning alone if the issue of unemployment and deviant behaviors must be resolved.

**Keywords:** *Unemployment, deviant behavior, prisons in-mats, Social Problem,*

**Introduction**

Deviant behavior is that behavior that varies distinctly from the norms acceptable to the society; it is unconventional to social norms. Criminality is a category of deviance, which is the breach of a society’s officially enacted criminal law. Most cases of deviance emerge due to social and economic deprivations which people suffer from. It should be noted that Nigerians suffered less social ills in the past because a larger percentage of her population were significantly engaged in various occupations especially agriculture, but presently, it is moving towards the opposite direction. It is no longer news that unemployment as a cause of deviant behavior is one of the major social issues affecting Calabar. Young and able bodied men and women roam the streets of Calabar in search of jobs that are far reached. As a result, they are idle, hungry and angry. Since an idle mind is the devil’s workshop, they are prone to join bad groups and eventually become law breakers.

According to Edinyang and Archibong (2016), criminal deviance spans a wide range, from minor traffic violations to sexual assault to murder. Criminal act may be induced by many unforeseen factors and circumstances. Taylor (2006) observed crime to be a fault in the social system whose institutions do not work equally for all its members. Adding that socially and economically sound persons could not turn out to be criminals. Report from crime index showed that a greater percentage of most people associated with crime are poor, uneducated, often unemployed and residents of low income neighborhoods (Anasi, 2010). There is influx of youth immigrants to Calabar yearly searching for nonexistent employment opportunities thereby leading to high rates of unemployment. In the absence of any meaningful job to sustain these youths, most of them often settle for many outlawed and illegal trades and crimes such as drug pedaling, prostitution, child trafficking, and abduction and kidnapping, armed robbery, theft, burglary and youth restiveness. Some are hired as assassins by those in power for political reasons; while street boys and girls popularly called “skolombo” and” l’acacerra” roam the streets of the city committing mayhem.

Due to unemployment which makes one to be involved in an unwholesome attitude and behavior, could bring sadness thereby, making them unhappy and unsatisfied, People acquire certain skills in life so that they could gain employment and provide for their basic needs and that of their families. This hope is always dashed due to unemployment in Calabar. Unemployment is a global trend, though it seems to occur mostly in the developing countries of the world with social, economic, political and psychological attendants. The unemployed consists of all those who have acquired the requisite skills and are willing to work but are unable to find a job. It refers to the condition of people who are without jobs. Thus massive unemployment in any country is an insinuation of far more

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complex problems (Okafor, 2011). The labor force of Nigeria is made up of those between the ages of 15 years and 59 years. The unemployed constitute an unsettled labor force which results to overcrowding and anti-social behaviors especially at the urban areas. Unemployment arises when the demand for labor as a factor of production, falls short in demand. Unemployment in Nigeria has assumed a greater dimension with the emergence of crude oil, as every young school leaver had to abandon the village in search of white collar jobs in the urban areas (rural-urban drift); leaving agriculture to remain a thing of the past. Government on its own part failed to encourage agriculture which was the mainstay of the economy in the 1960s.

Poverty as another root of deviant behavior is a global phenomenon resulting in many countries administering numerous policies in a bid to curb it. Wenger (2007) describes it as a living condition in which individuals fail to achieve minimum standard of living. To Haralambos & Hoborn (2000) it is a situation where a person is unable to acquire the minimum necessity that makes for well-being. Poverty is synonymous with relative deprivations which is the effect of unequal distribution of resources. The degree of poverty also correlates with unemployment. Higher unemployment level would increase poverty and at the same time engenders criminal activities due to depression associated with being unemployed (Short, 2007). Statistically, countries with higher poverty level, especially poorer areas and ghettos, usually having much higher crime rate than areas made up of middle or high class individuals (Danziger & Haveman, 2001). In support of this, Ludwig (2000) opined that people resort to crime only if they perceive that the potential benefit overshadows the cost of committing a particular crime. "If legal ways of obtaining money cannot support one, then illegal ways are resorted to in order to live on". Crime offers ways in which deprive people can obtain goods and services that they cannot achieve through legitimate means.

The 2006 population census in Nigeria estimated to be 140,431,790 and projected for the future indicates that it will be over 180 million by the year 2020. With this, Nigeria is seen to be the most populous nation in Africa; hence her growth in population rate has also resulted in rapid growth in labor force which tends to be higher than the rate of jobs supply. As a result of these unemployment and poverty, different crimes have been committed by Nigerians. Unfortunately, the population of Nigerians serving different jail terms due to crimes committed as a result of poverty and unemployment leaves one bewildered and surprised. To reduce this trend, different governments have put in place different strategies and programs to fight poverty and unemployment. Some of the programs include providing employment opportunities and skills acquisitions, which were made prime objectives of the various governments in Nigeria, aimed at training her citizens in order to meet with the challenges of an ever dynamic economy. In the quest to solve the problem of unemployment and reducing poverty and reducing the rates of Nigerian youths committing crimes and ending up in prison, a number of empowerment programs were created since Nigeria independence. Some of which are highlighted below;

- National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP)
- Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP)
- National Poverty Alleviation Program (NAPEP) (2001) this is a poverty alleviation program introduced by the administration of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria to tackle poverty and reduce unemployment.
- National Economic Empowerment and Development Scheme (NEEDS) (2004) it is a program design to sustain Nigeria economic growth and reduce poverty
- Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P)
- Social Investment (N-POWER) program and many other similar program funded by various stakeholders including State governments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations.

At the states level, the Cross River State government for example has established the biggest factory in Africa- the Cross River State Garment factory, The Green Police under the newly created Ministry of Climate Change. There is also presence of Premier Export Processing Zone (EPZ), Tinapa Business Resort and a host of others agencies and organizations. All these efforts are geared towards tackling the menace of unemployment and poverty

reduction, but the resultant effect is insignificant. Most of them are either non-functioning or are gradually dying as a result of poor managerial efficacy and efficiency and absence of political will by the present administration to nurture and sustain them. Economic activities are not vibrant as should be and some ventures seem to have gone to “sleep” with the political leadership. In the words of Yakubu (2010), youth employment and poverty alleviation program implemented in the last few decades have failed to brazen out the multidimensionality of poverty as most of these programs were unable to respond to the exact needs of the poor. Program such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP), Better Life Program National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Subsidy Readjustment-Program (SURE-P) have all been affected by common problems; such as inadequate funding, project duplication, gross inefficiency, poor coordination of programs, corruption, lack of transparency, accountability and continuity (Obadan, 2001). It is in line with this that the paper seeks to survey unemployment as the cause of deviant behavior in Calabar and its environs.

The broad unemployment issue remains a major social, security and economic challenge in Nigeria. Related problems like poverty, crime, prostitution, drugs and alcohol abuse continue to plague the society. Youth population is on the increase, with the general recession which Calabar is not an exception; establishments are closing down due to high taxation and poor power supply, high dependency on public and private service jobs, lackadaisical attitude on the part of government towards the promotion Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) among others. Because of the above, there is the tendency to go into crimes such as cultism for political patronage, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, Advanced Fee Fraud (419) among others. These have resulted to insecurity in the society, poverty, drug abuse among youths leading to depression and mental sickness, debasement of values and ethics of the society, fear of investing in an unsecure society especially by foreigners. Despite governments, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector efforts geared towards tackling these social menaces of unemployment by providing the needed amenities and creating employment in Cross River State for the unemployed youths, the problem still persists. It is against this backdrop that the researchers seek to investigate the how unemployment influences deviant behavior among the youths in Calabar Metropolis.

Unemployment generally, has remained a major challenge or issue facing applicants all over the state and Nigeria in particular. Associated problems like crime, poverty, alcohol, and drugs abuse continue to plague the society. Adebayo (2013) found that the growth of cyclical unemployment is based on the fact that the government is not providing empowerment for all and sundry, that is why there is a gradual decrease graduate in the number of currently seeking for jobs, through the provision of entrepreneurship programs which can make the citizens self reliant and less dependent on government for jobs. Adejumola (2009) in his view was of the opinion that cyclic unemployment and deviant behavior could be tackled for the growth and development of the country; when industries are built, companies are brought to the country, small and medium scales enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged by the government, tax rate are reduced or tax holidays are given to industries and the likes to tackle unemployment and curb deviant behavior among the youths.

Lampon (2008) conducted a survey on the effect of cyclical unemployment and children’s deviant behavior in the society, the study revealed that unemployment leading to poverty and deviant behavior are caused by the type of public policy adopted by the government, the neglect of agricultural activities and focus on oil boom and of indigenous technology and inadequate patronage that is received by the locally manufacturing companies and industries from both government and the consumers are all contributory to unemployment, poverty and deviant behaviors. Ernest (2009) observed that cyclical unemployment and deviant behavior by children is as a result of inappropriate school curriculum. The author equally emphasized that educational sector over the years lack entrepreneurship content in the curriculum that could have aid her teaming graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. Ernest (2009) further attributed the causes of cyclical unemployment to unstable policy development by the government, corruption, lack of infrastructure, policy summersault and educational training and irrelevant political environment.

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The concept of structural unemployment and deviant behavior have assumed a global trend which has resulted in many countries with Nigeria inclusive, designing different policies and programs in a bid to curb unemployment as the cause of deviant behavior. Just as the name implies, structural unemployment occurs when there are no sufficient jobs to maintain the people who are trained on particular sector of the economy. Unemployment as a syndrome is so rampant in the urban centers than the rural areas, some of the major problems include; frustration, disappointment, crimes like robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking, fraudulent behaviors, kidnapping for ransom which led to increase poverty.

Okafor (2009) who carried out a study on structural unemployment and deviant behavior in the society found that unemployment is the major cause of social vices like arm robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, drug pedaling, destitution and political thuggery. The author further emphasized that majority of people survive by engaging in various activities such as petty trading, stealing, casual work and other illegal activities. Okafor (2009) reiterated that apart from the obvious economic implications of Nigeria's high unemployment rate, the social implication can be devastating, condemning a large sector of the country's population to poverty and inequality.

Gabriel (2010) in his study call for government and private individual to support the building of industries, companies and factories so as to create employment for the teeming population. The author equally opined that in Nigeria for instance, economic success is a goal and target that every individual must try to attain through education and skill acquisition, which the under-privilege in the society do not have equal opportunities due to their socio economic and political status, with attendant outcome of structural strain that results in crime and deviant behavior. Thus, they result to stealing and deviance as a means of survival and economic success.

### **Research methodology**

The research employed survey research design, with purposive sampling as a technique. for sample selection. Two research questions and hypotheses were raised and formulated for the study;

How does cyclical unemployment influence deviant behavior amongst Prison in-mates in Calabar Prison?

To what extent does structural unemployment influence deviant behavior among Prison in-mates in Calabar Prison?

Cyclical unemployment does not significantly influence deviant behavior amongst Prison in-mates in Calabar Prison.

Structural unemployment does not significantly influence deviant behavior among prison in-mates in Calabar Prison.

The study is located within the Calabar prison, the studied population is made up of the inmates of Nigerian prison Calabar, Cross River State. The Calabar prison like every other prison in the world is meant to act like a remand home to discipline, curb violent and lawless behaviors, rehabilitate in-mates, develop vocational and entrepreneurship skills and educate prison in-mates for the development of better citizenry. Statistics shows that Calabar prison houses about 835 inmates (Calabar Prison, 2017), while the study sample is made up of 200 inmates purposively selected in the Calabar Prison. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire tagged "Unemployment and Deviant Behavior Questionnaire" (UDBQ). The researchers with the aids of Prison Warder (Officer) identified the inmates who volunteered information. The instrument had 100% return rates. The administered questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the One Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA). The results of the analyses are presented on the following tables.

### **Results and discussion**

To answer the question of how does cyclical unemployment influence deviant behavior among prison in-mates in Calabar prison? And to test the hypothesis: Cyclical unemployment does not significantly influence deviant behaviors among prison in-mates in Calabar prison.

The independent variable of this hypothesis is cyclical unemployment which was categorized into three groups (low, medium and high), while the dependent variable is deviant behaviors among prison in-mates in Calabar. Data

generated from the instrument was analyzed using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool, the result is presented on table 1. The result in table 1 shows that the calculated F-value of 3.106 is significant at p-value of .047 with 2 and 197 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implies that cyclical unemployment has a significant influence on deviant behaviors among prison in-mates in Calabar prison of Cross River State.

Table 1: Summary of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of cyclical unemployment on deviant behaviors among prison in-mates in Calabar prison

Cyclical unemployment	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Low	63	17.21	5.10
Medium	69	19.05	4.03
High	68	18.81	4.60
Total	200	18.36	4.58

  

Sources of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Between groups	128.789	2	64.394	3.106	0.47*
Within groups	4083.766	197	20.730		
Total	4212.555	199			

P=.05, DF=2,197.

In order to find out which of the cyclical unemployment level influences more on deviant behaviors, a Fisher Least post-Hoc test was conducted as observed in table 2

Table 2: Post Hoc tests on the influence of cyclical unemployment on deviant behaviors in Calabar metropolis

		Multiple Comparisons		
(I) Cyclical unemployment	(J) Cyclical unemployment		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig
Dimension2	Low	Medium	-1.84022*	.020
		High	-1.59939	.051
	Medium	Low	1.84022*	.020
		High	.24083	.756
	High	Low	1.59939	.051
		Medium	-.24083	.756

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It can be seen from table 2 that medium cyclical unemployment exerts more influence on deviant behaviors than low cyclical unemployment (mean difference = 1.84022, p <.05). In the same vein high cyclical unemployment provides more influence on deviant behaviors than low cyclical unemployment (mean difference = 1.59939, p <.05). Moreover, high cyclical unemployment provides more influence on deviant behaviors than medium cyclical unemployment (mean difference = .24083, p >.05). However, the difference between high and medium cyclical unemployment was not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

To answer the second question of the extent to which structural poverty influences deviant behavior among prison in-mates, and to test the hypothesis which stated that structural unemployment does not significantly influence deviant behaviors among prison in- mates in Calabar prison, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was again carried out. The result is presented on table 3.

Table 3: Summary of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of structural unemployment on deviant behavior among prison in-mates in Calabar prison

Structural Unemployment	N	$\bar{X}$	SD		
Low	68	19.186	4.205		
Medium	69	19.196	4.210		
High	63	17.467	3.996		
Total	200	18.616	4.137		
Sources of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Between groups	147.167	2	73.583	3.566	0.30*
Within groups	4065.388	197	20.636		
Total	4212.555	199			

P =.05, DF =2, 197.

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated F-value of 3.566 is significant at p-value of .030 with 2 and 197 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore implies that structural unemployment has a significant influence on deviant behaviors among prison in-mates in Calabar prison.

In order to find out which of the structural unemployment level influences more on deviant behaviors, a Fisher Least post-Hoc test was conducted as observed in table 4. It can be seen from table 4 that medium structural unemployment provides more influence on deviant behaviors than low structural unemployment (mean difference = .00964, p >.05).

Table 4: Post Hoc tests on the influence of structural unemployment on deviant behaviors in Calabar metropolis

Multiple Comparisons					
(I) Structural unemployment	(J) Structural unemployment		Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	
dimension 2	Low	Medium	-.00964	.991	
		High	1.71977*	.025	
	Medium	Low	.00964	.991	
		High	1.72941*	.031	
	High	Low	-1.71977*	.025	
		Medium	-1.72941*	.031	

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In the same vein high structural unemployment provides more influence on deviant behaviors than low structural unemployment (mean difference = 1.71977, p <.05). Moreover, high structural unemployment provides more influence on deviant behaviors than medium structural unemployment (mean difference = 1.72941, p <.05). However, the difference between low and medium structural unemployment was not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

## **Discussion of findings**

The present study contributed to the understanding of the link between youth unemployment and deviant behavior especially amongst prison in-mate Calabar prison, Cross River State. The result of the study offered empirical support for the existence of a positive and statistically significant association between the two intertwined variables of unemployment and deviant behavior. The findings bore semblance to the study of Ololo and Meisamari (2012) and was also in harmony with the result of earlier study of Ezie (2012) which indicated that the accelerated levels of crime in our city centers like armed robbery, street crimes, prostitution and all facets of violence could be attributed to the incidence of youth unemployment. To a very large extent, the study mirrored the views of Nwogu (2012) who found that the unemployment condition of the youths results in various crimes when they could not get jobs. This category of people becomes frustrated and ready tools in the hands of those who want to use them to cause confusion in the polity (Obaro, 2012). They grab this opportunity because they see it as an avenue to seek revenge on a system that provided them nothing but frustration. During the exhibition of their frustration, they either become crime lords for themselves and their friends or warlords in the hands of politicians and other crime kingpins. When the law catches up with them for crimes they committed, they are sent to jail without those who contracted them to commit such crimes for their own selfish purpose. Even within the prison wall, more crimes are being committed, this therefore means that outside the function of rehabilitating prison in-mates, more precautionary measures must still be taken to avoid crimes within the prison walls. The culminating effect as argued by Aregbesola (2008) is that youth unemployment is a waste of human resources in the country, since most resources that would have been gainfully employed to bring about productivity are waste behind prison bars and walls. Thus, government effective policy on job creation and provision of an enabling environment is important if the problem of youth employment is to be tackled.

The finding of this study is also in line with those of Rao, (2006); Okafor, (2011); Obaro, (2012); Nwogu, (2012) found respectively that most youths who leave their villages to urban centers to find white collar jobs that are nonexistent engage in crimes because they needed to make livelihoods for themselves. Most often than not, they end up involving in criminal activities unknowingly, where they are coerced into crimes by friends and other peers. Most often, they end up in prison yards like drama or jokes. Nwogu, (2012) further found that major contributory factors of youth unemployment in Nigeria are: long term dependence on oil revenue to the neglect of agriculture, the craze for nonexistent white collar jobs, squander mania and high profile corruption of politicians and bureaucrats, poor industrial growth and type of educational curricula which hardly prepares the students for vocational, entrepreneurship skills but for paper qualification without commensurate skills. These findings were in agreement with those of Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, (2010); Murphy, (2008); Alanana, (2003); and Fapohunda, (2003). Similarly, the findings of the study have shown that poor dispersal and diversification of economic base, lack of foresight, bad planning and haphazard implementation of policies on the part of government and duty bearers have contributed to the rising profile of youth unemployment in the country. By implication, these findings are suggestive of the need to re-examine the whole nature of the Nigerian society in order to understand and surmount the root causes of youth unemployment and deviant behavior in the country. They are also indicative that unless these contributory factors are check-mated, the country cannot create job spaces for the teeming population of unemployed youths. Furthermore, empirical evidence from the study did confirm that the type of criminal behaviors pervasive among the unemployed youths in Nigeria are serious crimes like robbery, kidnapping, cyber crime, drug, trafficking, burglary, rape ritual killing amongst others. This finding is in line with the position of Rao (2006) who in his study found that youth unemployment is a destroyer of character and damager of the moral fabric, not only to the affected youths, but the society at large. It was discovered that most prison in-mates in the prison, did not know that their friends were luring them into crime, while others committed the crimes for which they are serving jail terms when they were on drugs. The result therefore suggests that impunity in the commission of crime by the youths exists because it is the cheapest option they can take to meet their livelihoods in the face of daunting challenges of meeting their daily livelihood for their life sustenance.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals that both cyclical and structural unemployment have significant influence on deviant behavior among prison in-mates in Calabar prisons. Based on this finding, most of the in-mates in Calabar prison are there because they committed crimes against the state, because they were poor, so they needed to meet their daily livelihoods, but since they were unemployed and government and other well to do hardly consider or think about them, they decided to commit crimes which will give them immediate satisfaction to solve their unemployment situation. It was equally discovered that most of those in the prison, did not know that their friends were luring them into crimes which they ordinarily would have resisted. It is therefore concluded that most inmates believed that committing crimes to gain immediate relief is the way out, because government was supposed to create employment for the qualified one, but they failed in this bid, hence cyclical and structural unemployment push the unemployed youths into crime.

### **Recommendation**

From the foregoing, the findings of the study have led to the following recommendations.

- ❖ Government should be more proactive in tackling youth unemployment situation since this category or groups seems to be more prone to be the most economically active groups. They should at all levels make youth empowerment programs a priority.
- ❖ The educational system must promote youth entrepreneurship, vocational and innovative skills and virile apprenticeship schemes rather than focusing on theory, if the issue of unemployment and deviant behavior must be resolve.
- ❖ The quality of education should be improved.
- ❖ There is the urgent need for school curriculum overhauling, where entrepreneurship, vocational and technological skills can be developed.
- ❖ Vocational centers should be established, the youths should be encouraged to go there instead of pursuing youths without requisite academic prowess to go to school for the purpose of getting paper qualification to get a white collar job.
- ❖ Parents should screen the types of peers and friends their children associate with and weed off friends with questionable character that might influence their own children negatively, especially into committing crimes.
- ❖ There must be close monitoring to ensure that the new education curricula which lay emphasis on entrepreneurial studies are well and adequately implemented.
- ❖ Agricultural sector should be revamped, while rural industrialization should be encouraged to check rural – urban drift.
- ❖ Government should beef up security of lives and properties. This will encourage foreign investors which will in turn yield employment for these teaming youths.

- ❖ Since unemployment and poverty goes side by side, the problem of unemployment gives rise to the problem of poverty; eradication of poverty vis-a-vis prompt delivery of basic amenities especially at the rural areas will go a long way to create wealth which will portend growth and crime free society.

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