



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PANACEA TO YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT CRIMES IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines the effect of social entrepreneurship on youth violent crimes in North-West, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted with a sample size of 605. The study instrument was a structured questionnaire. Multiple regression and correlation analysis were carried out on the data collected. It is discovered that there is a positive significant effect of social innovation on reduction of youth kidnapping ($r = 0.643$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$), while social value creation also has a positive significant effect on eradication of animal rustling ($r = 0.690$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$), this implying that both independent variables have strong capacity to ensure reduction or eradication of both dependent variables. The study recommends amongst others that those individuals in the society who have the requisite qualities and not only economic-seeking, but also social-mission-oriented should be supported and encouraged by the government to establish social enterprises and that the state governments should display more justice, fairness and equity in their governance.

Keywords: Social Innovation, Social Value Creation and Youth Violent Crimes Reduction.

Introduction

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria as a nation has been enmeshed in a critical time of her nationhood as she encounters plethora of insecurity in form of terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, animal rustling, car snatching, armed robbery, militancy, oil bunkering, illegal sales of fuel, rape, all of which have reached unbearable and alarming rates in many parts of the country. The number of violent crimes has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2009 as opined by Imhonopi and Urim (2012) in Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim (2013). Insecurity is one of the most glaring and much talked about thing in Nigeria today. The violence crimes became more visible

in 2011 as a result of herder-farmer conflict which worsened from 2017 to 2018, including cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence, armed robbery and banditry. The violence has affected approximately 35 of the 92 local government areas in the four states of North-West Nigeria. According to Ozoigbo (2019), approximately 21 million people in these states have been exposed to insecurity as a result of violent criminals' activities.

Some Nigerian institutions in charge of shaping behavior have been observed to be underachieving, if not neglecting their responsibilities. Many studies have found that the 18-30 year old age group is responsible for the vast majority of crimes in almost all societies (Igbo,

2007). This is the age of youth, when young men and women are bursting with energy and on the lookout for excitement and trouble. People in this age group, according to Igbo, are more likely to commit armed robbery, rape, burglary, arson, and looting.

According to the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (2005), economically, socially, and politically disadvantaged Nigerian youth are among the prolific perpetrators of armed criminality and gang violence. Similarly, those between the ages of 30 and 40 are more likely to commit nonviolent crimes such as fraud, drunkenness, embezzlement, and gambling. According to Ogude (2017), the pursuit of material success over all other admirable virtues has become deeply ingrained in Nigerians of all socioeconomic backgrounds. These are the evil worms that have eaten their way deep into the hearts of Nigerians. Findings of some researches (Onifade, et. al. (2013); Shalangwa, (2013) and Ozoigbo, (2019) have shown that the causes of youth violence and banditry may be linked to border sharing between Nigeria and neighboring countries, as well as poverty.

These phenomena are wreaking great havoc on the country in terms of human lives lost, population displacement, property destruction, and investment losses. The magnitude of its occurrence is such that, hardly a day passes without a reported act of banditry, yet, the unreported cases are likely higher. More terrifying is the frequency of its occurrence in North-Western Nigeria. As it has taken on a formidable dimension, it not only necessitates a multi-stakeholder approach to quell the conflagration threatening Nigeria's statehood, a subtle but effective strategy should be considered as a possible solution to the problems.

Over the years, successive governments in the country have been on their toes to tackle all these criminal menace, with little or no meaningful impacts on the citizenry. The government has persisted in the face of this audacious challenge, developing strategies to contain or extinguish the conflagration.. Agencies and non-governmental organizations have launched programmes and implemented interventions to help youth empowerment in order to discourage them from engaging

in criminal activities. In addition, government has employed several strategies such that diplomacy has evolved from a force-for-force, carrot-and-stick approach, but the menace persists. As the problem defied all of these treatments, academics, social researchers, security experts, and consultants did not rest on their laurels in making various recommendations and proposing possible solutions to address this national scourge. General public opinions and confessions of some of the arrested violent criminals point to the fact that the chief cause among others of youth banditry in the country is high rate of unemployment and illiteracy (Orogbu, Osita & Onuzulike 2021). Hence, this paper seeks to examine the possibility of social entrepreneurship serving as an effective tool for solving the social menace. Social entrepreneurship is another approach that arose from the realization that the challenges of finding effective and sustainable solutions to many social problems are significant, and that the solutions may necessitate many of the characteristics associated with successful business innovations (Alvord et al., 2004) in Oghojafor, Aduloju & Olowokudejo (2011).

Realizing from the review of empirical studies that no study has been conducted on the subject matter in the North West of the country, the study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in quelling the scourge of youth violence in the North-West, Nigeria placing youth empowerment as a moderating variable.

Therefore, the paper is organized into five sections. These include introduction which gives a background to the study, while section two comprises literature review and followed by methodology which forms the third section. Sections four and five are respectively findings of the study and conclusion and recommendations.

Based on the objective above, the following null hypotheses (H_0) were formulated and tested:

H_01 : Social innovation as youth empowerment has no significant effect on reduction of youth involvement in kidnapping.

H₀₂: Social value creation as youth development has no significant effect on eradication of youth involvement in animal rustling.

H₀₃: Social Entrepreneurship has no significant relationship with youth involvement in violence.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a subject of interest amongst researchers in the recent time. Social entrepreneurship is evolving with several sets of practices, yardsticks and meanings world-wide. There are various approaches to social entrepreneurship, and there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes social entrepreneurship. Simply put, social entrepreneurship according to Haugh (2007) is described as the pursuit of economic, social and environmental goals by enterprising ventures, as well as a human response to social and environmental problems. This definition portends that the fundamental motivation for social entrepreneurship is to create social value rather than the myopic personal and shareholder wealth (Zadek & Thake, (1997) in Ogbojafor et. al (2011).

Dees (1998) in Austin & Reficco (2009) defined the concept of social entrepreneurship as an innovative activity with a social purpose that takes place in either the private or nonprofit sectors, or in both. It includes phases such as identifying a specific social problem and developing a solution to address it, evaluating the social impact realized, and developing a sustainable business model that generates a social-objective directed, for-profit or a business-directed, non-profit entity that addresses the triple bottom line (social, economic and environment)(Kickul & Lyons 2012). In this context, the specific social problem identified is the youth violent crimes and its consequences. Social enterprise and social entrepreneurship are terms that are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes to distinguish one another. A social enterprise is an organization that generates net positive externalities through some combination of products and services that it sells and its

method of operation, and makes conscious efforts to increase the positive externalities of its business while reducing the negative externalities (Jamison, (2006) in Ogbojafor et. al (2011).

Social Entrepreneur

A person, group, network, organization or alliance of organizations that seeks large scale change through ground-breaking ideas about how governments, non-profits and businesses can address significant social issues is regarded as a social entrepreneur (Light, 2005). The emphasis here is how to use businesses to effect significant social changes within the society while still making profit. Social entrepreneurs are to social change, what business entrepreneurs are to the economy (Bornstein, 2005). This implies that while business entrepreneurs focus on profit making, the social entrepreneurs are after the positive change in the society. Researchers have demonstrated the importance of social entrepreneurs to solve social problems in relations to the state (Roy, 2013).

Social Innovation

The design and implementation of new solutions that imply conceptual, process, product, or organizational change with the ultimate goal of improving the welfare and well-being of individuals and communities is referred to as social innovation (OECD, 2019).. Social innovation is the process of creating and implementing effective solutions to difficult and often systemic social and environmental issues in order to advance social progress.

Social Value Creation

Social value creation could be seen as a way of bringing social change or creating social long term impact (Singh, 2016). A long lasting and impactful change in the society is the focus of social value creation.

Youth Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as a means of assisting or encouraging someone to be self-employed or self-sufficient (Babalola et al., 2005). Individuals and communities can be empowered by increasing their

economic, political, social, educational, or spiritual strength. Empowering the youth is analogous to putting money in a bank that is unaffected by any kind of theft. The positive outcome of the investment cannot be consumed in its entirety. Youth empowerment is the concept of empowering, strengthening, and encouraging young people to take charge of their lives (Akiri, Onaja and Kunanzang (2013). This will instill in the youth the habit of self-actualization and independence, as well as reduce unemployment, crime, and other social vices that have recently ravaged society. It is critical for both nations and the empowered. The future prosperity of nations is secured through youth empowerment because these are the people who will take care of many functions and sustain the country's democracy, because the youth are the leaders of tomorrow. Akintola and Adiat (2013) cited in Orogbu, et. al., (2021) opine that youth empowerment fosters an enabling environment for an individual by increasing motivation to perform. The path to youth empowerment is anchored in a person's attitudinal, structural, and cultural aspects, which drive the desire to make certain decisions in the person's life (Tope, 2011) in Orogbu et al (2021). However, youth empowerment entails not only teaching young people how to take charge of their lives, but also including them in decision-making processes or issues that are important to them, as well as their collective resolve.

Violent Crime

In ordinary language, the term crime refers to an illegal act that is punishable by the state. It entails the use of force, or the threat of force, to intimidate someone with the intent to rob, rape, or kill. According to Slatta (1987) in (Jude et al., 2020), violent crime is the taking of property by force or threat of force, often by a group, usually of men. According to Shalangwa (2013), armed criminal violence is defined as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not wantonly, using all types of offensive or defensive weapons, particularly in semi-organized groups, in order to overpower the victim and obtain loot or achieve some political goals. Such criminals are usually remorseful. In the same vein, Ogude (2017) defined banditry as a type of organized crime committed by outlaws that typically involves the threat or use of

violence. A bandit is a person who engages in banditry and primarily commits crimes such as extortion, robbery, and murder, either as an individual or in groups. While all citizens are ultimately responsible for their own actions, it is incorrect to hold an individual solely responsible for his or her unlawful act. For example, certain factors in societies, cultures (family values), systems (educational, political, and law-enforcement, among others), economies, and so on support an individual's potential for criminal activity (Shoemaker, 2000). Violent criminality and Banditry can be found in homes, workplaces, schools, highways, banks, and even neighborhoods, with the majority of its cases occurring in urban areas and major highways. Violent criminals not only steal from people, but they also destroy communities and force people to flee. According to Conklin (1992) in (Jude et al., 2020), it typically involves theft with violence or threat of violence by a person or persons with whom the victim has had or has not had prior contact, and it is usually unprovoked and unpredictable. These submissions indicate that activities of the violent criminals and bandits are outlawed and non-productive as they lay fears and unrest on the citizenry and government of the society.

Empirical Review

This section analyzes various related research studies and reviews them with a view to taking a standpoint on research gaps that may be discovered.

A study carried out by Orogbu, et. al., (2021) titled *Youthpreneurship: A Gateway to Sustainable Development in Southeast, Nigeria* adopted a random sample of 200 youths and tested its hypotheses at 5% level of significance through correlation analysis and found out that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between youth empowerment and innovativeness. This implies that there is high tendency that majority of youth could be empowered through the innovative power of social entrepreneurship and invariably reducing unemployment amongst the youth. Sabelo and Happyson (2017) studied the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship programmes and enhancing an entrepreneurial culture in Swaziland. Adopting survey

research of 123 young students of six different institutions of higher learning, they found out that lack of access to finance was a major barrier to entrepreneurial entry for young people and that several youth entrepreneurial programmes were designed without the input of young people, hence not addressing the need of the youth. The output of this study shows that youth entrepreneurial programmes towards building entrepreneurial culture should be all-inclusive by seeking the inputs of young people and thus creating sense of belonging amongst the youths. This will go a long way in deterring youths from engaging in criminal activities.

Oghojafor, Aduloju & Olowokudejo (2011) examined social entrepreneurship as an instrument for curbing youth gangsterism: The study was an exploratory

research with a sample of 200 entrepreneurs and employed Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness-of-fit Chi Square to test the hypotheses and found out that not all social problems can be adequately addressed by market forces or public sector and so some of these could be better handled by social entrepreneurship. This study was limited by the fact that it only considered urban communities in Nigeria with a relatively low sample and its research subjects who were entrepreneurs are not fit for study as they could not give appropriate response on the mindset of the alleged violent criminals.

Conceptual Framework

The model below depicts the conceptual framework that guides the study;

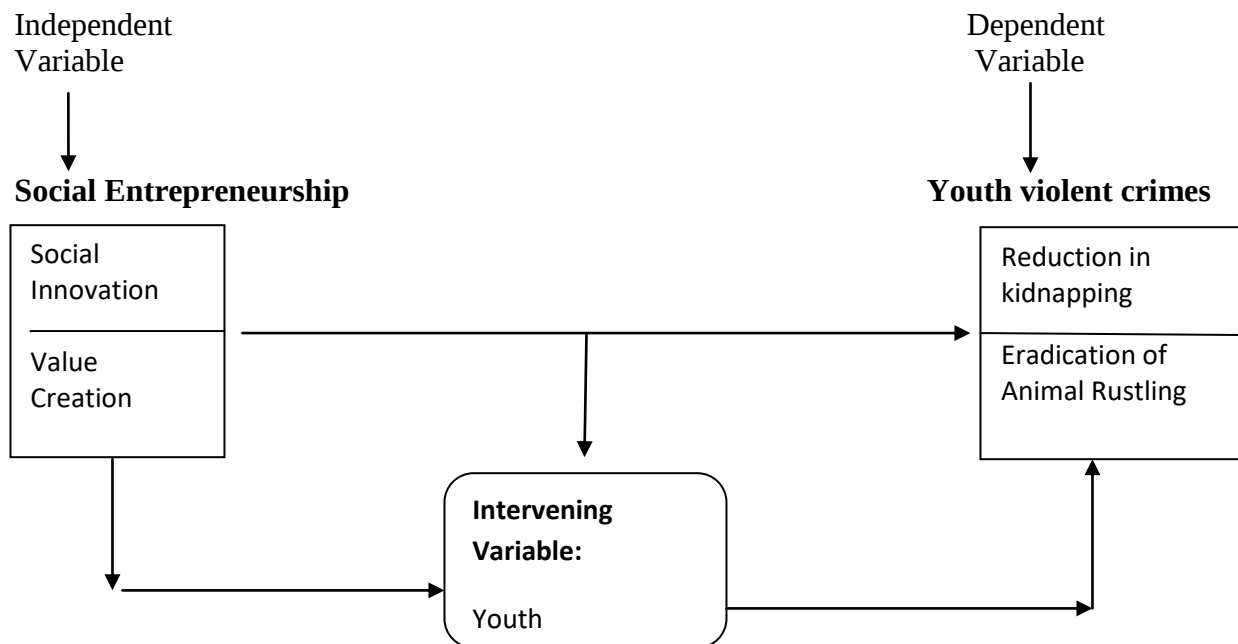


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Source: Constructed by the Authors

The above research model is based on the study's title, in which Social Entrepreneurship is the independent variable with the goal of reducing and eliminating youth involvement in kidnapping and animal rustling through productive and lawful activities.

Methodology

This section of the research focuses on methods of data collection, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, reliability and validity of research instrument, measurement of variables and method of data analysis

The study adopts a survey design. That is, the researcher gathered information through certain police stations and correctional service centers as well as from individuals who have fallen victims of the bandits and those who have been identified, apprehended and reformed and/or repentant bandits and people identified through various national newspapers and magazines as social entrepreneurs in the three states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara. The population of this study is infinite as the exact number of youths involving in violent crimes in the North West cannot be readily ascertained. Therefore, sample size for the study is 650 based on the notion that an infinite population could have a sample size of 650 and above (Yamane, 19670. Data collected for the study was analyzed with the aid of multiple regression and correlation analyses.

The reliability of the research instrument is obtained through the widely adopted internal consistency test referred to as Cronbach alpha that which shows that the coefficients of all the sections of the questionnaire used in this research is greater than 0.7. Also, the study adopts a validity test using four experts drawn from Department of Business Management, Federal University, Dutsin-ma and correctional service staff of the selected states in the North-West to peruse, amend and ascertain clarity, face and content validity of the instrument.

Measurement of Variables

The dependent variable which is youth violent crimes was measured through two dimensions of reduction in kidnapping and eradication of animal rustling, the

independent variable which is social entrepreneurship was measured through the number of social innovative activities geared towards engaging the youth and invariably creating social value for the society which would eventually douse the scourge of youth violent crimes.

Model Specification

The model specification of the study signifies a multiple regression model as indicated below:

$$SE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 YE - \beta_2 CpK - \beta_3 R_L E + e_n \dots\dots\dots 1$$

Where:

SE signifies Social Entrepreneurship

β_0 signifies intercept of the regression model.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ symbolize parameters of regression model

YE signifies youth empowerment

CpK signifies involvement in Kidnapping

$R_L E$ signifies involvement in animal Rustling

e_n signifies error term.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 650 questionnaires distributed, only 605 which accounted for 93% were duly completed and returned. This section presents the results of the data generated through the 605 valid questionnaires received from the respondents in the three states. Findings from the results were also analyzed and discussed. Youth violent crimes are regressed on social innovation and social value creation using multiple regression model generated above.

Table1. Multiple Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	50.979	1.290		6.803	0.000
	Social Innovation	.690 .589	.052 .056	.460	4.847 3.807	0.000 0.006

	Social	.721	.082	.470	3.736	0.000
	Social Entrep			.362		

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Violent Crimes

Source: Authors' Computation (2021) using SPSS

Hence, the coefficient table depicts that the independent variable, social innovation (social entrepreneurship) is statistically significant in the model, with p-value (0.000) less than (0.05) level of significance, this implies that social innovation has a significant effect on the reduction or eradication of kidnapping (youth violent crimes) in the region. In addition, social value has a

significant effect on the eradication of youth involvement in violent crimes with p-value of 0.006 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This also reveals that 69 percent of the independent variable (social innovation) accounts for most of the variation in the dependent variable (youth violent crimes)

Table 2. Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	.643 ^a	.453	.449	1.39793	53.655	.000 ^b	1.676
				a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Entrepreneurship b. Dependent Variable: Youth violent crimes Source: Authors' Computation (2021) using SPSS			

The above table, with $R(0.643)$ depicts a strong positive correlation between social entrepreneurship and youth empowerment thereby influencing reduction in youth violent crimes, this shows that at 0.000 significance, there is high correlation between social entrepreneurship and reduction as well as elimination of kidnapping and animal rustling. The $R^2(0.453)$ implies that 45% of the variation in reduction of violent crimes by youth is explained by the influence of social entrepreneurship while the remaining 55% could be explained by other factors not captured by this study. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson (D-W) statistics of 1.676 in the last column of the table is close to 2 which according to Field (2019) mean that absence of autocorrelation among the residuals. This is because, the presence of autocorrelation has the potential of biasing, and misleading and making a regression result spurious.

Findings

It was discovered that majority of the people involved in violent crimes in the North-West are youth with a percentage of 56.2 of the people surveyed being within the age bracket of 26-35 years while 23.3 percent fall within the age of 18 and 25 years making a total of 78.5%, and that the efficacy of social innovation in curbing the youth involvement in violent crimes is high. This is evident by the fact that majority of the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship is all about solving societal and environmental problems such as youth unemployment through economic ventures which curb youth criminality. Social innovation empowers youths to engage in more productive ventures which invariably reduce tendency of indulging in violent crimes as the talents and potentiality of the youth are

awaken. This findings is in line with the studies of Orogbu, Osita & Onuzulike, (2021)

It was also discovered that some causes among others, of youth involvement in violence could include political, economic and social factors in the sense that some of the youths involved in the violence were once political thugs and hooligans, unemployed and illiterates.

Social Value Creation enhances propensity of non-involvement of youth in animal rustling. This is also corroborated by the studies of Oghojafor, Aduloju & Olowokudejo (2011). Social Value elevates the youth status in the society which prevents them from committing social vices and that mutual cooperation, peace, development and violent-free society ensue as a result of social value creation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study indicates that social entrepreneurship is a subtle tool that could empower the youths in the Northwest, Nigeria and keep them away from violent crimes. Hence, the paper proffers the following recommendations:

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- i. Individuals in the society who have the requisite qualities and not only economic but also social-mission oriented should be supported and encouraged by the government to establish social enterprises.
- ii. The state governments should adopt fairness, equity and more justice in dispensation of governance so that their subjects would not be feeling marginalized especially the youth.
- iii. Youth should be encouraged through public enlightenment programmes such as radio jingles and other electronic media address so that they do not join bad gangs and miscreants.
- iv. Youth should be empowered by providing soft loans ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 Naira to establish social enterprises.
- v. Few existing social enterprises such as Almajiri Football League should be adequately supported by the government and host communities.
- vi. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) should be urged to key into the mission of social enterprises by directly investing in social entrepreneurial activities.

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