

**ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AS A MOTIVATION FOR CRIME IN NIGERIA:
STUDY OF INMATES IN OKE-KURA PRISON ILORIN, KWARA STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

The recurrent reports of deviation of all forms within Nigeria and other part of the world have propelled research interests that tend to examine criminal behaviour among inmates in Nigeria. The paper seeks to affirm economic factors as fundamental underpin for criminal behavior. This study quantitatively measured the correlations between economic factors and criminal behaviours among inmates of Oke-kura prison, Nigeria. A sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) was randomly selected from the total population of over three hundred (300) inmates. Using statistical measures as an empirical interpretative tool, tests were conducted to determine if there were correlations between economic variables and criminal behaviour. The findings bring to fore a significant level of correlation between core economic variables and the opportunities inducing deviation. This paper recommends that proper incentives be provided for employees at all levels. It concludes that unemployment and socio-economic inequalities should be the focus of government policies and intervention so as to curb the unabated surge in criminality among the Nigerian populace.

Keywords: Economic, crime, criminality, unemployment

Introduction

Criminality has it been witnessed in different parts of the world has the tendency to readjust and blend always to the changes in the society and emerging social structures (See Akers and Jensen, 2006). It develops with the technological, economic and political base of the society, and as a result, a large variety of criminal activities is shown and visible not only in Nigeria, but the world over. Since criminality has been identified as one major societal challenge, the quest for an explanation that analytical examines this vice become very important (Seddon, 2006; Luis et al., 2009; Kleemans and Poot, 2008).

Wright et al., (2014) suggested that the basis for criminality is in the way criminals think and make decisions, which are different to non-criminals. They also believe that criminals

are irresponsible, impulsive, self-centered, and driven by fear of anger. Eysenck (2013) suggested that people with certain features of personality (which he believed to be inherited) are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour if they experience a certain type of upbringing (See also, Fleisher, 1963; Becker, 1968; Erlich, 1973).

Moreover, the criminal's character and life experiences become very important in explaining the reasons why individuals engage in criminal behaviour. The proper action for a significant reduction and an effective prevention of crime rates have become a prior issue for every nation, since criminal actions are presented through different forms, everywhere and in every time. The adducible reasons for explaining criminality cannot be tied to a singular factor; it has been noted that criminal actions come from different motives:

In the 1950s and 1960s, intellectual discussions of crime were dominated by the opinion that criminal behaviour was caused by mental illness and social oppressions, and that criminals were helpless victims" the economics approach "implies that some individuals become criminals because of the financial and other rewards from crime compared to legal work, taking account of the likelihood of apprehension and conviction, and the severity of punishment (Becker, 1993, p. 390).

Different studies have explained the implications of socio-economic factors on crime, examining the relationship between motives and illegitimate activities which appear to be different across countries (Seddon, 2006; Luis et al., 2009; Kleemans and Poot, 2008). Due to the complexity of criminal action, the results are not unanimous, so therefore a prior theoretical approach can be extracted (Dritsakis and Gkanas, 2009).

This paper examines the socio-economic correlates of criminals by studying inmates of Oke-Kura Prisons. The relationships between criminal behaviours and variables such as: unemployment rate, size of labour force, income, poverty, family structure, education, social status, severity of sanction, and welfare spending are examined. As noted by Sampson and Groves (1989): sparse friendship networks, unsupervised teenage peer group and low organizational participation, are strong motivations of criminal behaviour, also a similar view was presented by Glaser and Sarcodote (1996) confirming their assertion that: family dysfunction, single parenthood or female headed households has facilitated criminal activities. This assertion critically presents socio-economic variables as influencing agents of criminal behaviour.

One major challenge that has been identified in literatures is that, there has been rapid increase in reported cases of criminality and in fact, it has become a major issue to decision makers (politicians) and law enforcement agents (CLEEN, 2006; Omotor, 2009). Criminal behaviours has recently become a discussion among specialists and politicians, paying more attention to issues such as the, casuation and motivation of criminal behaviours, prisoner's way of living, the application of rehabilitation programs (employment, education, and learning) and correction to legislative system, (Lambropoulou 2007).

As a result of the heightened cases of criminal manifestation within and outside Nigeria ranging from internal terrorism (Boko-Haram insurgency in the Northern part of Nigeria), murder, theft, burglary, rape, and many other; this study therefore critically examines the reasons "why" individuals continually engage in criminal activities. Douglas (2009) noted

that results indicate that lagged crime rate, per-capita income, and population density are significantly and positively correlated to most forms of crime.

This vice becomes more alarming when a critical examination is given to the Nigerian society, questions and thoughts are provoked when researchers and individuals interested in this area of discuss understands that offenders are most times aware of the outcome of their actions and yet not refrained from carrying out this societally condemned act. Some of these thoughts are: Is the society to be blamed for the type(s) of crime inherent, and for it citizenry participation or is the individual personally motivated after rational thought to engage in criminal activities?

These among several others form the core component of discussion for this paper. The study of crime and it determinant is closely related to poverty, social exclusion, income inequality, cultural and family background, religion, unemployment, age, gender, race, urbanization, and a host of other economic and socio-demographic factors that influence the mind and behaviour of individual in making decisions (Buonanmo and Montolio 2008; Omotor, 2009, and Kurteph and Onel, 2006).

Understanding the Complexity of Criminal Behaviour

Various researches or studies have been carried out in an attempt to identify the causes of crime (Sobel and Osoba, 2009; Decker et al., 2007; Omotor, 2009; Rosenfeld, 2009). Theorists all agree that crime is a complex phenomenon and therefore finding the root of the problem is very difficult. According to the World Bank (1997 cited in Bertot, 2008), Crime and violence are obstacles to economic growth and poverty reduction strategies because their effect in physical, human and social capital structure of the society is massive, and their harmful impact in government capacity building are enormous. The combined result of these negative effects of crime and violence is a reduction in economic growth and an increase in poverty. Until the seventies, crime was analyzed from the individual deviation influenced basically by the writings of sociologists, criminologists and lawyers but recently and with the emergence of economic writers like Gary Becker, the dichotomous approach to the analysis of crime has been broadened and expanded to include a critical appraisal of other factors that influence criminal behaviour (Becker 1968). By other factors in this case implies, social and economic variables. Becker (1968) opined that some persons become criminals not because their basic motivation differs from that of other persons but because their benefits and costs differ.

Becker assumes that individuals are situation maximizers, who are rational enough to make the most profiting decisions in situations. For example, individuals would commit crime in a situation whereby the reward of illegal activity is high and also the consequence in terms of sanction from the society is relatively low as compared to legal activity. Criminals behave rationally and they rely on a cost benefit analysis of their activities.

Social variables have also been instrumental to criminal behaviour, according to Glaeser and Sacerdote (1999), it is well known that there is more crime in big cities compared to small cities or rural areas. This is propelled by the fact that social interactions that specify that an individual is more likely to commit crime if his peers commit than if they do not commit crime.

Scholarly articulations have named poverty, social exclusion, wage and income inequality, cultural and family background, level of education and other economic and social factors

as influential factors influencing individual's propensity to commit crimes (Buonanno, 2003; Sacerdote and Glaeser, 1999).

Economic Narratives of Criminal Behaviour

The first economist that treated crime from an economic perspective was Fleisher.

In 1963, Fleisher stressed the importance of understanding the relationship between delinquency and labour market condition from the perspective of public policy and furthermore focused his attention on other aspects of the functioning of the labour market, such as the distributions of wages and the determination of population distribution that may as well have important effects upon the allocation of time among legitimate and illegitimate forms of activity, he pioneered the study of the role income plays in the decision to commit crime. In his submission, the principal theoretical reason for believing that low income increases the tendency to commit crime is that it raises the relative cost of engaging in legitimate activity (Fleisher, 1963). To Fleisher therefore, the level of reward offered by both legal and illegal activity will determine the chances of crime commission or omission by individual.

Buonanno continued this analysis in his early 21st century paper: "the socio-economic determinant of crime: a review of literature", when he identified the importance of the level of income of potential victim, he argued that the lower the level of income of potential victims, the higher the incentive to commit crime especially crime against property, (Buonanno, 2003).

Fleisher finalizes that;

An examination of delinquency rate and other variables by age and through time suggests that the effect of unemployment on juvenile delinquency is positive and significant. However, this statement is easier to support when it refers to individual who are over sixteen years of age (Buonanno, 2003, p. 4).

Fleisher's paper lunch a search light into the once gray area of research in understanding how individual make choices to engage in crime from an economic point of view.

Another landmark contribution to the analysis of crime from an economic point is Gary Becker's powerful seminar paper, presented shortly after Fleisher's work in 1963. In his Nobel lecture, Becker (1993) emphasizes that while in the 1950s and 1960s, intellectual discussions of crime were dominated by the opinion that criminal behaviour was caused by mental illness and social oppressions, and that criminals were helpless victims. The economic approach to criminal investigation implies that some individuals become criminals because of the perceived high financial incentive promised in criminal activity as against highly competitive legal engagement, taking account of the likelihood of apprehension, conviction and the severity of punishment. Becker viewed crime as a consequence of rational human action and as a result of the perceived benefits attached to illegal activities. Ehrlich (1973) expanded the work of Becker by examining how income levels and distribution may affect criminal tendency and crime rate.

Ehrlich (1973) opined that, the mean legitimate opportunities available to potential offenders may be approximated by the mean income level of those below the state's median (income)". For a given median income, income inequality can be an indicator of the differential between the payoffs of legal and illegal activities. Also, Fleisher (1966) and Ehrlich (1973) considered the effect of unemployment on crime rates, by studying the

relationship between unemployment and crime rate within different communities and it was discovered that, unemployment rates were less important determinants of crime rates than income levels and distribution, Grogger and Freeman, 1995; Imrohoroglu et al., 2000 also supported this in their various studies.

Conversely, after a critical analysis of income inequality and median income, Ehrlich (1975) found a positive and significant relationship between the average number of school years completed by the adult population (over 25 years) and particularly property crimes committed across the U.S. in 1960. He provided a possible explanation of the perplexing empirical findings and noted that: It is possible that education may raise the marginal product of labour in the crime industry to a greater extent than for legitimate economic pursuits, also the higher average levels of education may be associated with less under-reporting of crimes. It is possible that education indicators act as a surrogate for the average permanent income in the population, thus reflecting potential gains to be earned from crime, especially property crimes and combined with the observation that income inequality raises crime rates, it is possible to infer that certain crime rates are directly related to inequalities in schooling and on-the-job training.

Emerging from the studies examining the relationship between economic variables and crime the assessment of the effects of police presence, convictions, and the severity of punishment on the level of criminal activity (Becker, 1968 and Ehrlich, 1973; 1975; 1996). Individuals who are considering whether to commit crimes are assumed to evaluate both the risk of being caught and the associated punishment. The empirical evidence from the United States confirmed that both factors have a negative effect on crime rates.

However, a distinction is often made between the deterrence effects of policing, convictions and the incapacitation effect of locking-up criminals who may have a tendency to rejoin the crime industry once they are released, deterrence effect of the police instill fear and instill a sense of responsibility into the citizens but incapacitation will only refrain them for some time and not affect their attitude towards crime. This therefore implies that policy makers must ensure more of deterrence mechanisms that will deter an individual from crime commission as against incapacitation actions. Sjoquist (1973 Cited in Pryor, 2008) follows the approach used by Fleisher and Becker, and argued that the basic idea as in Becker's papers, is that under some conditions, criminals can be treated as rational economic beings, assumed to behave in the same economic manners as any other individual making an economic decision under risk, this therefore means that except for some psychopaths, criminals are rational and logical beings like every other human in the society. There is an impressive quantity of empirical literature relating factors that influence costs and benefits of criminal activity (Pryor, 2008; Ehrlich 1993; Becker, 1968). Economic crime predictors have included many labor market variables; the unemployment rate, employment size, size of labor force, earnings and poverty are among the proxies used. Theoretically, labor market conditions should help govern the incentives for crime, but care must be given to this specification because a specific labor market variable can exhibit both positive and negative incentives. Ehrlich (1996) illustrates this point by noting that as the average earnings of a geographical area rise, the incentive to engage in criminal activity should decline because of legitimate earning opportunities. However, to the extent earnings correlate with average community wealth, the returns to criminal activity may rise, providing greater incentive for illegal activity, this means that increase in the community wealth may be a motivating factor for some others to engage in criminal behaviours. Since

legitimate earning opportunities had increased, acquisition of properties and material belongings also increases alongside an improvement in the upward social mobility of community dwellers, the site therefore becomes prone to criminal victimization and an attraction to criminals.

A similar argument can be made with respect to unemployment rate, high unemployment rates suggest more economic distress and would be expected to positively influence crime (Devine et al., 1988; Cantor and Land 1985; Osborne et al., 1992). On the other hand, with more unemployment, the likelihood of finding a vacant house to burglarize is reduced and the prospect of being observed by otherwise unemployed individuals is increased, negatively influencing criminal activity. Both of these examples illustrate that labor market variables can induce conflicting incentives in the sense that it can be of positive or negative influence to criminals and criminal behavioural exhibition.

Other economic variables assumed to influence crime are poverty and income inequality. Patterson (1991) reviewed the empirical crime literature for these variables. The concern is whether absolute poverty or relative poverty (income inequality), or both contribute to crime. He concluded that absolute poverty is more strongly associated with neighborhood crime rates, although the relationship is conditional on the type of crime considered. He also observed that there are numerous ways that absolute poverty has been viewed as an influence due to the subjective nature of the concept.

Finally, an interesting work was presented by Block and Heineke (1975), the authors present an alternative formulation of the criminal choice problem. They follow the theoretical framework used by Becker, Ehrlich and Sjoquist, though they stated that in particular, Becker, Ehrlich, and Sjoquist summarize the consequences of time-consuming illegal activities in terms of a distribution of wealth alone without fully considering the underlying multi attribute choice problem. Furthermore, they show that by not fully specifying their choice problems, and therefore the transformation between what is inherently a multi attribute decision problem and the wealth-only problem the three authors mentioned above are led to conclusions which are valid only in very special cases.

Social and Demographic Narratives of Criminal Behaviour

Sociologists and criminologists have developed a long list of social and demographic variables presumed to be causal crime variables. The general theme of many sociologists is that the urban setting provides a social structure that is conducive to abnormal, deviant or criminal behaviour. Family structure, ethnicity, education, social status, severity of sanctions and welfare spending are broad classes of social variables suspected of influencing crime (Glaeser and Sacerdote, 1996; Sampson and Groves, 1989). Population, age distribution, geographical location and weather make up an incomplete list of demographic variables considered in some empirical studies (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Osborn, et. al, 1992; Glaeser and Sacerdote, 1996).

Social disorganization is believed to manifest itself through higher crime rates. Sampson and Groves (1989) provided evidence that indicated crime increased in areas distinguished by sparse friendship networks, unsupervised teenage peer groups, and low organizational participation. Following this line of reasoning, authors like, Sampson et. al, (1989), Osborn et. al, (1992), Glaeser et. al, (1996), have used variables reflecting family dysfunction as explanatory variables. Single parent or female headed households have been used successfully in their empirical research. Sacerdote et. al, (1996), found that the inclusion

of female headed households dominated other demographic variables. They believe that the female headed household variable may be endogenous and embodies the effects of other exogenous, demographic factors that lie at the root of a “substantial share” of crime in cities. For similar reasons, other social or environmental variables have been employed in empirical crime research.

The presence or intensity of such a variable may reflect an underlying social structure conducive to crime. For example, Spelman (1993) examined data from a low-income Austin Texas neighborhood and found that the crime rate on blocks with abandoned buildings was twice the rate found in blocks without abandoned buildings. His argument was that social decay is accompanied by physical deterioration, as homeowners and small business people put less time and money into maintaining their buildings. The abandoned buildings do not cause crime directly; they are merely indicators of the underlying social decay. Likewise, the presence of legalized gambling, Buck et al., (1991), appears to positively influence crime.

Social status is correlated with education and learning, both expected to reduce crime on the margin. Public relief and welfare programs in general provide disincentives for crime. The sanctions for criminal activity are directly related to the cost of committing a crime because it is a deterrent; higher (more severe) sanctions reduce crime by increasing its cost. By the same token, imprisonment sanctions further reduce crime by incapacitating criminals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Differential Association Theory

Differential association theory can be understood as comprising two important dimensions. The first dimension is behavioural-interactive and it explains deviance as being produced through “direct association and interaction with others who engage in certain kinds of behaviour; as well as indirect association and identification with more distant reference groups” (Akers and Sellers, 2004, p. 85). The people or groups with whom an individual constantly interacts with either directly or indirectly are seen as weaving strong relations that births various attitudinal patterns, these relations provide a framework for the manifestations of tenets and principles of social learning theory. That is, within this social context, individuals are exposed to varying definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, as well as a variety of behavioural models that may differentially reinforce criminal and non-criminal behaviour. These models may also serve as a source for the imitation of behaviour.

These people or groups with whom an individual associate can be broken into primary and secondary sources by social learning theorists. Primary associations include those with immediate family and friends. Secondary sources of social learning include a much wider range of people and would include, for example, teachers, neighbours, and religious groups. Each of these groups are thought to contribute to the attitudes and values an individual adopts, as well as to how that person behaves in various social contexts.

It is generally understood, under the theory of differential association, that the timing, length, frequency and nature of the contact are important determinants of behaviour. That is, the greatest effect on a person’s behaviour occurs at the earliest point of interaction, the longer the duration of the association, the more frequently the association occurs, and the closer the association is (Akers and Sellers, 2004). From a social learning perspective, then,

associations made early with family would arguably play an important role in shaping one's behaviour.

Social learning theory links attitudes and values to the influence of general and specific definitions. General definitions would include broad beliefs about conforming behaviour that is influenced principally through conventional norms, as well as religious and moral values (Akers and Sellers, 2004). These beliefs are thought generally to be those that do not support the commission of criminal or deviant acts. Specific definitions are seen as those that "orient a person to particular acts or a series of acts" (Akers and Sellers, 2004, p. 86). The main premise behind this notion of definitions is that the greater the number of ideologies favouring deviant or criminal behaviour, the greater the likelihood that an individual will take part in that type of conduct. Social learning theory also accounts for conforming behaviour to the extent that the greater the number of definitions favourable to conventional norms, the less likely an individual is to engage in deviant or criminal acts. It is conceivable within this understanding of social learning that an individual could adopt conforming attitudes and values about certain behaviours while at the same time develop attitudes and values that justify or excuse some types of non-conforming behaviours.

In explaining criminal behaviour, definitions are seen as either approving of or neutralizing the behaviour. Definitions that are approving generally frame criminal behaviour in a positive light, whereas neutralizing definitions act as a means of justifying and/or excusing some or all forms of criminal conduct (Akers and Sellers, 2004).

Cognitively, definitions favorable to deviance provide a mind-set that makes one more willing to commit the act when the opportunity occurs or is created, behaviourally, they affect the commission of deviant behaviours by acting as internal discriminative stimuli (Akers and Silverman, 2004, p. 20).

It is important to note that an individual who has adopted approving or neutralizing definitions of deviant behaviour does not necessarily have to act on them. Instead an interactional process whereby conventional norms may be weakly held, thereby providing little or no restraint against criminal behaviour, and definitions that are favourable to deviant conduct "facilitate law violation in the right set of circumstances" (Akers and Silverman, 2004, p. 21). Consequently, the context under which these behaviours take place is redefined in light of these approving and neutralizing definitions.

Discussion of Findings

TABLE 1: SHOWING RESPONDENTS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (N = 120)
SEX		
Male	100	83.3
Female	200	16.7
AGE		
18 – 20	43	35.8
21 – 35	58	48.3
Above 35	19	15.8
RELIGION		
Christianity	63	52.5
Islam	49	40.8
African Traditional Religion	8	6.7
Others	-	-
OCCUPATION		
Unemployed	4	3.3
Student	43	35.8
Business	31	25.8
Civil servant	32	26.7
Artisan	10	8.3
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	52	43.3
Single	50	41.7
Separated	7	5.8
Divorced	5	4.2
Widowed	6	5
OFFENCE		
Felony	26	21.67
Misdemeanor	94	78.33
EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
Non-formal education	10	8.3
Primary education	20	16.7

Secondary/Technical	42	35
Polytechnic	34	28.3
University	14	11.7
Others	-	-

Source: Researchers Survey, 2014.

From Table 4.1 above, 100 (83.3%) of the respondents are males, 20 (16.7%) are females 43 (35.8%) are between the ages of 18-20yrs 58 (48.3%) falls within 21 and 35yrs and 19 (15.8%) are above 35years. Respondents who are Christians are 63 (52.5%), 49 (40.8%) are Muslims, while 8 (6.7%) belongs to Africans traditional religion.

On the occupational status 4 (3.3%) are unemployed, 43 (35.8%) are students, 31 (25.8%) were engaged no business, 32 (26.7%) are civil servants, 10 (8.3%) are Artisans. 52 (43.3%) are married, 50 (41.7%) are single, 7 (5.8%) are separated, 5 (4.2%) are divorced and 6 (5%) are widowed.

On the highest educational status perspective 10 (8.3%) of the respondents have non-formal education, 20 (16.7%) had primary education, 42 (35%) had secondary education, 34 (28.3%) had polytechnic education while 14 (11.7%) had university education.

Table 2: CROSS TABULATION OF AVAILABILITY OF SOURCE OF INCOME AND LEVEL OF MONTHLY INCOME

Source of Income	Monthly Income				Total
	Below ₦20,000	₦21,000- ₦50,000	₦51,000- ₦100,000	Above ₦100,000	
Yes	21	28	5	2	56
No	33	25	5	1	64
Total	54	53	10	3	120

Source: Researchers Survey, 2014.

The cross tabulated table of the source of income and range of monthly income above is designed to examine the if the income individuals receive for haven labored for a month basically adequately and efficiently caters for their needs and wellbeing. The table therefore reveals that the just 56 persons of the 120 inmates sampled has constant source of income and out of this 56 persons, majority of them receives less than ₦50, 000 as monthly incomes, this therefore emphasizes the play of poverty in the analysis of crime. Inference drawn from above is the fact that poverty is one of the strongest motivations of criminal behaviour, when individuals do not have enough to eat and to cater for themselves, they develop other ways to meet their needs even if it is at the expense of the society. Crime and poverty are therefore two factors that coherently relate with themselves, the relative deprivation theorists are of the opinion that when individuals are relatively deprived of the basic and essential materials needed for survival; they become forced to engage in criminal behaviours of all forms as a way to grow of the miserable condition of hunger and deprivation.

Table 3: CROSS TABULATION OF RANGE OF MONTHLY INCOME AND ABILITY OF INCOME TO CATER FOR NEEDS

Range of Monthly Income (₹)	Ability to Meet Needs					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Below 20,000	14	18	14	8	0	54
21,000 – 50,000	9	19	14	4	7	53
51,000 – 100,000	2	1	1	0	6	10
Above 100,000	0	1	0	0	2	3
Total	25	39	29	12	15	120

Source: Researchers Survey, 2014.

Table 3.1: Analysis

Statistical Measurement	Value	Level of Significance
Pearson Correlation (r)	0.325	0.000
Chi-Square (X ²)	39.900	0.000

Source: Researchers Survey, 2014.

X²T =37.633

df =12

Significant at P < 0.05 and X² < 0.05

Decision Rule

The result of the tests conducted above reveals that the null hypothesis (H₀): there is no significant relationship between economic factors and criminal behaviour is rejected because the p value (0.000) is less than 0.05 and also the value of X²C (39.900) is greater than the value of X²T (37.633). The result therefore establishes that there is a very significant positive correlation between economic factors and criminal behaviours, Merton study of the capitalist society aligns with this when he stated that, crimes are birthed within gaps created by culturally induced aspirations for economic success and the unequal distribution of opportunities for achievement, the study discovered that when individual needs are not adequately met and the chances of survival becomes strain, the resultant effect of that scenario described above is heightened criminality and insecurity of lives and property.

Table 4.12 shows that 53% of the respondents agreed that the insufficient financial status of their parents influenced and motivated the chances they had to commit crime since they had to cater and fend for themselves. The fact that economic factors such as; income, wage disparity influences crime especially in this capitalist world is undeniable, Merton further explained that: uniform economic success aspiration across social class is promulgated by capitalist societies and as a result crime is concentrated among the lower classes because they have the least legitimate opportunities for achievement (Merton 1968). Imperfect coordination of economic means and ends leads to limited effectiveness of social structure in providing regularities and predictability and a condition of anomie or cultural chaos supervenes (Merton, 1968).

Conclusion and recommendation

There is a need for policy makers at all levels to understand the role and influence of social and economic variables that predisposes individuals to criminal behaviour. This paper has revealed that these factors especially the economic variables play very important and vital role in predisposing individuals to conditions warranting deviance. Insufficient income, unemployment, wage disparity are instrumental factors sky rocketing crime rate within various societies.

The paper advances a new form of unemployment, since over 90% of the sample population were employed before conviction, the pondering question therefore is what factors could be responsible for participation in criminal activities? for some it was insufficient income and the inability of their monthly income to adequately meet their needs but for others it is not; the new phase of discovery is that employment without active engagement in positive productive labour still equals unemployment. Employment in its true sense is remunerated activity in exchange for labour (either physical or mental) for something productive. Majority of those employed today in Nigeria especially in the civil service are employed on paper but so many of the people that make up this group do not have clearly stipulated job description, even those with job description are not effectively supervised to make sure they carry out their responsibilities.

Therefore, better policies that would increase the standard of social and economic life of the populace should be formulated and implemented.

It is no longer a rumor that the way and manner, insecurity of lives and property, kidnapping, assault and violence has spread and escalated in Nigeria has been heightened. Hence, this paper recommends that its findings be properly adopted and implemented and also particular attention should be given to the issues listed below:

- There are so many factors contributing to the rampant increase in crime that have to be addressed before we can think of moving this great country to higher height. One of the major factors contributing to the increase in crime in our society today is unemployment. Unemployment is a condition or state of being willing and capable of working but being out of work. In times past, the educational sector was structured in such a way as to train students to be capable of filling up the available colonial posts which were present at that time. The teaching styles and techniques that were present in colonial times were developed towards filling up the available white collar jobs. Nowadays, we find out that the same mindset that facilitated the setup of the educational sector in the era of colonialism is the same mindset that governs the setting up of Educational institutions today. In our Universities and Colleges of Education, the syllabus is still structured in the past colonial ideology of "going-to-school" to "get a-white-collar-job".
- Today, the avenues for obtaining a suitable, well-paying employment are different from those in past colonial eras, our nation is embedded with greed, corruption nepotism, ethnic loyalty at the expense of national safety. Even those who are employed are not actively engaged in productive labour and therefore they are more or less still idle and could be vessels for perpetuating criminality

- Employed civil servants and other government officers should be actively engaged, they should be supervised to make sure they work for what they are been paid for so as to minimize cost and ensure effective investment of national wealth.
- It is not unusual to note that emphasis is now being placed on technical and agricultural empowerment to ensure that we do not miss out in the global race for economic stability. But we find out that in our institutions of learning, students are not trained to be able to cope with the changing times in the society. As a famous philosopher once said, 'the only thing constant is change itself.' For us to be able to move forward, both in economic, technological and agricultural development, we need to change our thinking attitudes. Education, which is a process of training and instruction designed to give knowledge and develop skills, is supposed to suit the ever-changing times. In essence, for the problem of crime to be reduced, we have to restructure the educational sector to better equip our youths to cope with the changing times in our economy. This has a significant role in reducing crime because we find out that students who graduate from the various institutions of learning have no jobs because they have not been properly schooled in the prevailing ways of life and as such, due to frustration, the youths of today may result to criminal activities.
- The homes and religious organizations have important roles to play in curbing the crime wave in Nigeria. These criminals live in homes and even receive religious instructions from religious groups. The family heads and religious leaders should pay more attention to the moral upbringing of youths. If the youths are given the right training from childhood, they will not depart from the right path and, even if they do the proportion will be minimal.
- Government need to provide employment with better remuneration so as to discourage participation in criminal activities, it will help individuals look forward to picking legal jobs and even those that are employed like the security officers would not have to circumvent their ways to make ends meet.

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