

## INFLUENCE OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION ON DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF YOUTHS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

**Shuaib A.MUHAMMED**

Department of Counsellor Education,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria  
[muhammed.sa@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:muhammed.sa@unilorin.edu.ng).

**Falilat A. OKESINA**

Department of Counsellor Education,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria  
[okesina.fa@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:okesina.fa@unilorin.edu.ng).

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**Mulikat Ladi A. MUSTAPHA**

Department of Counsellor Education,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria  
[ladiuthman9150@gmail.com](mailto:ladiuthman9150@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*Youth deviant behaviour is an increasing problem in Nigerian society today. This paper investigated the influence of relative deprivation on deviant behaviours of youths in Ilorin Metropolis. It considered relative deprivation as an important element that influences deviant behaviour among youths in Ilorin. Unemployment, lack of basic needs and income inequality were used to measure the extent of youth deprivation and their involvement in deviant acts. The design of the study was a survey type. The population for the study comprised all youths in Ilorin Metropolis. Total of 200 respondents were sampled for the study using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected from the respondents using an instrument titled "Influence of Relative Deprivation on Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire" (IRDDBO). The hypotheses generated were analyzed using chi-square statistical analysis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference in the influence of unemployment, lack of basic needs and income inequality as a measure of relative deprivation on deviant behaviour of youths in Ilorin metropolis. The implication of this is that deprivation resulting from these measures can cause youth to engage in deviant acts. It is therefore recommended that counsellors should extend their services to include value orientation and self-employment counselling to assist youth in developing right attitude to life in the face of deprivation and to manage their feelings instead of engaging in deviant act which can be detrimental to living a good life.*

**Keywords:** Relative deprivation, Deviant behaviour, Youths

## Introduction

The youth are often faced by a number of challenges that are unique. These challenges differ between developed and developing countries, with the latter facing rapid urbanization that does not match government investments in social infrastructure. Irrespective of this, the challenges predispose the youth to involvement in deviant behaviours. Recently, youth deviant behaviour has become a global issue of great concern and requires immediate attention. Deviant behaviour is considered abnormal or antisocial acts, different from the norm and which does not conform to what society expects (Nwankwo, 2006). Roberts (1981) while describing the criteria for acceptable behaviour in any society hold the view that an individual behaviour is not acceptable or is antisocial if any of these three criteria are seen; the behaviour does not allow a person to function effectively with others as a member of society, if the behaviour does not permit the person to meet his or her own needs and the behaviour has a negative effect in the wellbeing of other member of the society. Crime and deviant behaviour among youths of every country of the world is usually seen as a reactionary form of actions which have in one way or the other represented a diversion from development of real political situation to the experience of deprivation, poverty, exploitation and so forth suffered by the youth.

Youth deviant behaviour is an increasing problem in Nigerian society today and there are different factors that can be attributed to this problem. Some of the identified factors include deprivation (in terms of income inequality, unemployment, and poverty), exploitation, corruption, poor housing and environmental condition, quality of early childhood care e.t.c. (Erdwin 2007 & Mbutia, 2013). From the factors identified, deprivation is one major factor that is believed by the researchers to be an important factor that influences deviance in the society. Also, previous researches illustrate a connection between relative deprivation and delinquency, as individuals who experience relative deprivation are more likely to offend (Baron, 2006; Eitle, D'Alessio, & Stolzenberg, 2006; Webber, 2008). Relative deprivation according to realists occurs when individuals or groups subjectively perceived themselves as unfairly disadvantaged over others; perceived as having similar attributes and deserving similar rewards.

According to Schaefer (2008) the feeling of relative deprivation is a conscious experience of a negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and present actualities. There are various measures of relative deprivation as posited by researchers such as Moore, (2005) and Erdwin (2007). Some of the measures include poverty, unemployment, income inequality, access to education, gender discrimination, social stratification, resource allocation e.t.c. However, only three measures of relative deprivation are considered for this study with a view to finding out their influences on deviant behaviour of youths. These are employment opportunity (unemployment), inadequate basic needs (poverty), and income (income inequality).

Employment opportunity is the provision of jobs to all citizens of a country without any discrimination against anyone. It ensures fair opportunity to all applicant in hiring process, competing for promotions, equal access to training and so forth (Ferrer-i-Carbonel and Frijters; 2004). It can be observed that, the provision of employment

opportunity around the world is usually ceased due to global economic crunch and other factors that saw companies and industries folding up. In fact, the high rate of joblessness is not a problem peculiar to the developing countries like Nigeria, rather a global one.

Admittedly, Nigeria could not have been expected not to have a taste in the global trend. Yet, the rate of unemployment in the country is a worrying phenomenon that requires greater attention than it is currently receiving. The National Bureau of Statistics reported in 2010 that 32.5 million in a population of over 140 million people are jobless (Charles, 2011). According to this report, the statistics means one out every five is jobless, and that Nigeria accounts for about one of every seven unemployed person in the world. Experts in this area have linked high rate of unemployment to individual or group deprivation. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) observed that unemployment lower person's self-worth, happiness and predisposed individual or group to compare themselves with others and realize they have less than them which invariably trigger them to deviant behaviours.

Inadequate basic needs as a measure of relative deprivation on the other hand are different from other material needs because they can be satisfied and without them an individual may not live a comfortable life. Generally, the basic needs are usually considered to be food, clothing, and shelter. Regarding food for example, specific amounts of nutrients are needed by every human. Similarly, regarding clothing, people need enough to protect them from heat or cold, rain or wind and regarding shelter, simple walls and roof with door and window would seem sufficient for an individual or group with bed, table and chair.

Most of these basic needs according to Raheem (1993) are insufficient in many Nigerian towns and are often referred to by many researchers as poverty. Foods for instance, are the cheapest things one can lay hands in some countries (even in Africa). In Nigeria, as Anyawu (2005) noted, common staple foods are now very expensive and many people have devised different formula to survive. Anyawu (2005) further added that, food, water, health and housing were the four basic and important parameters to measure the value of people's lives and all these have become elusive to the masses in Nigeria. A popular adage says "An hungry man is an angry man". Inability of an individual to access basic human needs for survival as in the case of every average Nigerian youth can be attributed to the reasons why youths are easily hired for unwarranted protests and being paid for thugery activities. It may also influence many youths to engage in deviance act in order to meet their daily needs.

Income (income inequality) as a measure of deprivation is defined by Roberts and Tybout (1997) as the consumption and savings opportunity gained by individual, firm, and entity within a specified time frame, which is generally expressed in monetary terms. However, income in this context is the sum of wages, salaries, interests and other forms of earnings received by an individual in a given period of time. An individual's income determines what he or she consumes or buys. It can be observed that income around the world is distributed in an uneven manner, with some people earning more than others. Hence, people with higher income can afford all the necessary needs for surviving, acquire properties and even luxuries. While the low income earners may find it

very difficult to afford these needs. In the Nigerian experience where government policies encourages income inequality e.g. Lack of uniformity of income earned by individuals of equal qualifications in the federal, state and local government institutions and agencies is a major factor influencing corruption and malpractices among low income earners. Following this, it can be observed that, individual level of deprivation is simply the gap between the individual's income and the income of all individuals richer than him.

Following from the foregoing, it can be observed that the increasing level of deviant behaviors among Nigerian youths can be attributed to relative deprivation (most especially socio-economic deprivation) caused by the gap that exist between the rich and the poor as well as inability of the states to provide the basic needs for the people. This is the reason why this paper considers it necessary to examine the influence of relative deprivation on deviant behaviours among youths in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of relative deprivation on deviant behavior of youths in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. However, the specific objectives of determining the extent to which unemployment, inadequate basic needs and income inequality as measures of deprivation influence deviant behavior among youths in Ilorin metropolis.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. Inadequate basic human needs as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior.
2. Income inequality as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior.
3. Unemployment as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted for the study is a descriptive survey. The population for the study comprises of all educated youth between the ages of 20 and 45 years old in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. The simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred (200) respondents from the targeted population. The instrument used for collecting data is a self-designed questionnaire titled "Influence of Relative Deprivation on Deviant Behaviours of Youths Questionnaire" (IRDDBYQ). The questionnaire comprised two (2) sections; A and B. Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents which include information on gender, age, marital status and religion. While section Section B contained fifteen (15) items which seek to establish some of the influence of relative deprivation on deviant behaviours among youths.

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the draft of the questionnaire was given to experts in the Department of Counsellor Education and Sociology, University of Ilorin, to vet for face and content validity. IRDDBYQ was later subjected

to the test re-test method to establish its reliability. Thus, twenty (20) youths in Offa, Kwara State who did not form part of the respondents for the study were first served with the questionnaire and at an interval of four weeks; the questionnaire was administered to the same group of youth. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula. The correlation co-efficient obtained was 0.68 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Based on this, the instrument was adjudged reliable for the study. The data obtained from the instrument were analysed using frequency counts and percentage for the descriptive data while chi-square statistical analysis was used to test the null hypotheses generated.

## Results

**Hypothesis 1:** *Inadequate basic human needs as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior.*

**Table 1:** Mean and Chi-square on Inadequate Basic Needs and Youth Involvement in Deviant Behaviour

S/N	Basic needs	Mean	Df	X <sup>2</sup>	x-value	P value
1	Inadequate feeding influences deviant behaviour					
2	Lack of shelter influences deviant behavior	7.62	4	22.30	11.07	.000
3	Inadequate clothing influences deviant behavior					
4	Lack of access to health care influences deviant behavior					
5	Inadequate family care influences deviant behavior					

Table 1 presents the mean and calculated chi-square of respondents' perception on lack of basic needs and youth involvement in deviant behavior. The result shows a calculated X<sup>2</sup> value 22.30 and critical table value of 11.07 with degree of freedom 5 (P value .000 < 0.05) level of significance. Since the chi-square observed value is greater

than the critical table value, the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. This means that inadequate basic needs have significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behaviour.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Income inequality as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior*

**Table 2:** Mean and Chi-Square on Income Inequality and Youth Involvement in Deviant Behaviour

S\N	Items	Mean	df	X <sup>2</sup>	x-value	P value
1	Gap between rich and poor influences deviant behaviour					
2	Lack of uniformity of income earned by individuals of equal qualifications influences deviant behavior	7.24	5	67.30	9.48	.000
3	Irregular earnings can influence youth involvement in deviant behavior					
4	Unregulated earnings due to corruption can influence youth involvement in deviant behaviour					
5	Low income encourages youth involvement in deviant behavior					

Table 2 presents the mean and calculated chi-square of respondents’ perception on income inequality and youth involvement in deviant behavior. The result on the table revealed a calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 67.30 and critical table value of 9.48 with degree of freedom 4 (P value .000 < 0.05) level of significance. Since the chi-square observed value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. This means that inadequate income inequality have significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behaviour.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Unemployment as a measure of relative deprivation does not have a significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behavior*

**Table 3:** Mean and Chi-square on Inadequate Unemployment and Youth Involvement in Deviant Behaviour

S\N	Items	Mean	df	X <sup>2</sup>	x-value	P value
1	Unemployment opens youths to illegal means of earning a living					
2	Unemployment rendered youths unproductive and hence influence youth deviant behavior	7.62	4	104.80	9.48	
3	Job insecurity influences deviant behavior					.000
4	Loss of job influences youth involvement deviant behavior					
5	Unemployment influences common deviant act among youth such as theft, robbery, gambling, fraud and bribery etc					

Table 3 presents the mean and calculated chi-square of respondents' perception on unemployment and youth involvement in deviant behavior. The result on the table revealed a calculated X<sup>2</sup> value of 104.80 and a table value of 9.48 with degree of freedom 4 (P value .000 < 0.05) level of significance. Since the chi-square observed value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. This means that unemployment have significant influence on youth involvement in deviant behaviour.

### Discussion of the Findings

From the literatures reviewed and data collected, it has been established that youth involvement in deviant behavior in Ilorin Metropolis is as a result of relative deprivation suffered by the youths. The finding of the study revealed that inadequate basic human need is an important factor that influences youth involvement in deviant act such as theft, robbery, gangsterism e.t.c. the finding is in line with the view of Erdwin (2007) who suggested that the quality of early childhood care and conditions, and parental and family relationships, local and family poverty, poor housing and environmental conditions are all have a major impact on family life and the quality of such care.

Also, the findings of the study revealed that income inequality was also an important factor influencing youth's involvement in deviant act. This is in agreement with the view of Mbuthia (2013) who submitted that economic factors influencing

deviant behaviour in the youths are mostly related to the level of income the youth have and or the level of income of their family members. In this study, education is considered an economic factor influencing deviant behaviour.

Unemployment as a measure of relative deprivation for instance, has been seen as the major factor that rendered youths unproductive and opens them to illegal means of earning a living. The findings of the study is in line with the view of Farrinton (1990) who opined that unemployment poses serious challenges to the Nigeria cities and that it has given rise to youth restiveness and other social vices experienced in the country. The findings of the study is also in agreement with the view of Duclos and Gre'goire (2002) who argued that without jobs, Nigeria youths would easily fall prey to people who want to foment trouble. Also the study agrees with the view of Thomas (2003) who noted that long-term unemployed youths are at high risk of social exclusion, feel socially isolated and economically excluded. Unemployment threatens the overall integration of the youth into society that may lead to criminal offence.

### **Conclusion**

The major aim of this study is to investigate the influence of relative deprivation on deviant behavior of youths in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. It was to determine whether the variables (measures of relative deprivation) considered in the study, from the findings of the study it can be concluded that inadequate basic needs; income inequality and unemployment have influence on youth involvement in deviant behaviour. Therefore, inadequate basic needs for human survival, income inequality and unemployment are three major measures of deprivation that are largely responsible for the increasing level of deviant behaviours such as theft, robbery, arson, burglary, fraud and host of others perpetrated by the youths.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the findings and that have been discussed in this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Counsellors should extend their services to include value orientation, financial management and self-employment counselling to assist youth in developing right attitude to life in the face of deprivation and to manage their feelings instead of engaging in deviant act which can be detrimental to living a good life.
- Youth need to be counselled on the need prioritized their needs based on their earning and to avoid unnecessary competition with colleagues, acquire self-appreciation and self-contentment.
- Creation of productive employment to eliminate underemployment of human and material resources.
- Counsellors through relevant government ministries and departments and other non-governmental organizations should provide guidance and counselling to the youths on the dangers of engaging in deviant behaviours.

- In addition, efforts should be made provide adequate entrepreneurship training centers to equip youths in particular for self-employment, and facilitate maintenance of community level projects.

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