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A panel study of the Patterns and Drivers of conflict in the Niger Delta area

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ABSTRACT

This is a panel research that examined the changes in the perception of grievances stemming from government economic programmes among youth group in Ndokwa East Local Government Area in Delta State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the perception of participants over the implementation of government employment/empowerment programmes in the local government area. The research is anchored on Robert Merton's anomie theory. The study also drew on Ted Gurr's Frustration-Aggression and Albert Cohen's theories to enhance its analysis. The study adopted a survey design method. Pre-coded questionnaires were administered to 20 respondents that were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The result shows that 85% of the respondents believe that there is limited chance for youths not linked to political elites to benefit from government employment/empowerment programmes, while only 10% disagreed with the statement. The study also reveals that despite increase in government employment and empowerment programmes, lack of transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in the implementation process hinders many youths unconnected to politicians the opportunity to benefit.

KEYWORDS: Unemployment, patterns, drivers, conflict, Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the biggest social problems facing the Nigerian society today because of the present economic recession in which many companies are downsizing. The youth are mostly affected by the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. As unemployment rate continues to rise so there is increase in youth restiveness and other forms of criminal behavior, such as kidnapping, oil bunkering, militancy, armed robbery, piracy etc. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate was 13.3% in second quarter of 2016, up from 12.1% in March, reaching the highest since 2009. Youth unemployment also increased to 24% in 2016 from 21.5% in 2009.

The government has put in place several employment and empowerment programmes such as the Federal Government Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P Project and N-POWER PROGRAM), and the Delta State Development Commission Programme (DESOPADEC) as well as employing some youths from oil producing communities for surveillance and pipeline monitoring. Despite how laudable these programmes are, they have failed to ameliorate the unemployment situation facing many youth from oil bearing communities including those from Ndokwa East. Many have resorted to subsistent fishing/farming and daily low paying jobs for their survival. Due the high level of joblessness among youth in oil producing communities and increased poverty, there is an increasing demand for increase in revenue derivation or outright resource control from various militant groups in the Niger Delta.

The unemployment situation facing oil producing communities is made worse due to the activities of multinational oil companies (MUOCs). These companies, in many occasions, fail and also neglect their corporate social responsibilities to the communities where they operate. Some provide employment opportunities for some youth of these communities; however majority of these employments are usually temporarily and on part time basis. As a result, many oil bearing communities lack basic infrastructural development, which increases the poverty situation in many oil bearing communities.

In view of the current rate of joblessness in Ndokwa East Local Government Area, this research tries to provide data aimed at measuring ongoing programme performance, and to track the experiences of cohesive groups of participants through time to reveal any evolving changes to their experiences or attitudes which may be attributable to NSRP's interventions. Specifically, the study intends to track changes (patterns, trends, drives and dynamics) in the

perception of grievances stemming from economic programme from cohort groups of youth in target states. The findings and conclusions reached in this study are based on two assumptions: (1) there is a significant relationship between high rate of unemployment and youth restiveness in an area; (2) there is likelihood for grievances among youth to increase when there is lack of transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in government employment and empowerment programmes.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Conflict is an incessant problem in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria, because the region is undeveloped and many of her citizens are very poor. Youth unemployment in the region is also very high. As a result, any small incident triggers violent conflict. Several government programmes have been put in place including SURE-P and N-POWER programmes as a way of providing employment and empowerment for jobless youths and assuaging their grievances, but these government programmes are sometime manipulated by political elites and do not end up benefitting the jobless youths intended for, and those connected to the political class tend to benefit from employment schemes. This situation creates the feeling of anger and frustration in many youths and fuels violence in the region. This situation is further compounded by activities of oil multinationals such as Shell, Agip, Exxon/Mobile and Total that are only interested in oil exploration but cares less about the impact of their activities on the environment and the communities. Several studies (Gbenemene, 2018) have examined some of the drivers of conflict in the Niger Delta area, but these studies have not investigated the perception of grievances stemming from implementation of government employment and empowerment schemes.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to track the changes (patterns, and drivers) in the perception of grievances stemming from government economic programme from cohort youth group in Ndkow East Local Government Area, Delta State. Another, objective is to proffer solution to the issue of government employment and empowerment programmes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

An examination of Robert Merton's anomie theory will help us understand some of the drivers of conflict in Ndokwa East Local Government Area (LGA), particularly among the youths. The concept of anomie was originally developed by Emile Durkheim in his book titled, "The Division of Labour in Society,"

where Durkheim argued that anomie exists in a society where the rules of how individuals interact with one another were disintegrated, and people were unable to determine how to act towards one another. Durkheim, therefore, opined that anomie would exist where there is a mismatch between personal or group standards and wider social standards, or from the lack of social ethic which produces moral regulation and absence of legitimate expiration. Merton extended Durkheim's analysis by conceptualizing anomie as a state of normlessness in society, and such normlessness arising when there is inconsistency between cultural goals and the means of achieving them. Thus, Merton contended that anomie would result due to social response or adaptation due to a disjunction between socially approved means and culturally accepted goals. Merton buttressed his arguments by noting that the rate of deviance in American society compared to other societies was due to the emphasis on success goals more than the emphasis on approved means of achieving these goals. The stratification of society, therefore, limits the opportunities for success for the less privileged member of society. Drawing from this hypothesis, Ndokwa East Local Government Area (LGA) is rich in mineral resources (crude oil) but majority of her young people are jobless. Although majority of the youths lack the skills that make them employable, but the limited employment opportunities in the LGA and the nation generally, make many youth frustrated and increase the anger for violence. This situation is made worst with the Nigerian culture that encourages everybody to success without a corresponding emphasis on hard work. With few job opportunities in Agip oil company operating in the area, many youths are frustrated coupled with the fact that most government employment/empowerment programmes never get to most youths without political connections.

2.2 Conceptual Review

The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals. Conflict can also mean a divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. It is also a process where two parties try to frustrate each other's goal attainment. The root causes of conflict include political differences, economic and social inequality, ethnic and religious diversity, poverty and poor governance (Adegbonmire, 2015).

The Relationship between Unemployment and Conflict

Unemployment, particularly among the youths is the driver of most conflict in the Sub-Saharan Africa. As

the population is growing with shrinking job prospect, many youths encounter frustration and anger about their job situation, which in many instances is a trigger for violent conflict. In a UN report on the relationship between unemployment and conflict, it concluded that youth unemployment was a threat to social stability, which makes those jobless youths vulnerable to recruitment by rebels. Accordingly, an unemployed go through economic crunch because they are unable to meet their financial obligations, which may lead to a decline in the standard of living, and subsequently violent tendencies. Unemployment creates poverty and low self-esteem in the jobless. When the period of unemployment is extensive, the victim becomes frustrated and violent (Fougerer, Francis & Julien, 2009). Similarly, Diejomoah and Orimalade (1971) noted that one of the consequences of generalized unemployment is the rise in the wave of violent crimes in society. Also, Steven and Rudolf (2001) analyzed the effect of unemployment on violent crime and found a significant positive drop in crime which was attributable to the decline in the unemployment rate. Another study examined the link between unemployment and violent conflict including gang violence using economic models of developing country civil wars with special focus on the occurrence of 'youth bulge'. It found that youth unemployment constitutes a key cause of insurgency or civil war in developing countries (Cramer, 2011).

III. METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERY

Primary data for this research was obtained through administration of pre-coded questionnaire to 20 respondents who are members of Ndokwa East Youth Assembly (NEYA). Another method of data collection was through oral interview of respondents. Apart from the primary data used for this research, secondary data were sourced through books, journals, and internet sources. Prior to the date of the interview, the lead researcher had pre-informed the youth president who also doubles as the gatekeeper to inform the participants about the scheduled interview. In order to ensure that all participants were present during the interview the lead researcher made several telephone calls and sent SMS to participants notifying them of the date and venue of the interview.

The questions in the questionnaire were divided into three separate sections so as to elicit different sets of information from the respondents. The first section contains questions on socio-demographic factors, while the second sections contains questions on the respondents' experience of empowerment programmes, and the last section contains questions on respondents' observed changes in the implementation of government employment/empowerment programmes. In addition, oral

interview was conducted in order to elicit detail information from some respondents who were not literate enough to understand the type of questions they were being asked.

The population of this research was members of Ndokwa East Youth Association. The sample size for this research is 20 sampled members of the association who are selected for the purpose of administration of the questionnaire and continuation of the longitudinal cohort study. The procedure for this study is based on a purposive sampling technique. The questionnaires were administered to respondents based on their level of participation in the association and knowledge of issues within local government area, particularly how employment programmes were implemented. The interview of respondents was conducted in three days from 2nd of October through 3rd of October, 2016 at Aboh, the local government headquarter of Ndokwa East Local Government Area of Delta State.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1: Data Presentation

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Economic-Demographic Characteristics

Categories	Frequencies	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex				
Female	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
Male	16	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Age				
21-25	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
26-30	6	30.0	30.0	40.0
31-35	12	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Education Level				
Completed junior Secondary School	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
Completed Senior Secondary School	12	60.0	60.0	70.0
Completed two year post-secondary education	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
Completed undergraduate university degree	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
Complete graduate university degree	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Marital Status				
Single	13	65.0	65.0	65.0
Married	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Data in table 4.1 indicates that majority of the respondents are males (80%), while 20% are females. Also majority of them (60%) fall between 31-35 years, 30% of the respondents fall within 26-30 years age bracket, and 10% of them are within 21-25 years.

Further, 60% of respondents have completed senior secondary school education, while 10% have completed graduate education, and another 10% have completed junior secondary school education and only 5% have completed undergraduate education. Finally, the data shows that majority of the respondents (65%) are single while 35% are married.

4.2 Data Analysis

Experiences of Youth unemployment/Empowerment Programme

Table 4.2: Youths are Unemployable

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not true	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
Partially true	2	10.0	10.0	85.0
True	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The study reveals that 75% of respondents believe youths in the area are not unemployable compared to 15% who think it is true that many of the youths are unemployable. Arguably, when this findings is compared to participants level education, where majority had completed just senior secondary school, compared to the few that had completed undergraduate university degree, there is the tendency to conclude that majority of the youths are unemployable. However, some respondents contend that youths in the area are actually unemployable because they are poorly educated. On the other hand, others disagree that youths in the area are not unemployable. They argue that youths are employable but the poor implementation by the government of skill acquisition and employment programmes make them unemployable.

Table 4.3: Youths are Underemployed

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not true	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Partially true	3	15.0	15.0	20.0
True	16	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The data shows that overwhelming majority of the youths (80%) is underemployed while only 5% of respondents think otherwise. As to why many youths are underemployed, many respondents attribute this situation to lack of employment opportunities and lack of transparency, and inclusiveness in government employment and empowerment programmes. While this statement by participants may be tenable, however, it is also arguable that where many of them have only completed senior secondary school education, it is difficult for them to find well-paying jobs with such level of education.

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Table 4.4: 70-90% of Youths are Unemployed

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not true	3	15	55.0	55,0
Partially True	1	85.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

85% of the respondents indicate that 70-90% of the youths are unemployed while 5% believe it untrue that 70-80% of the youths are unemployed. . The high rates of unemployment in the area could cause several social vices including youth violence and criminality. For example, Cohen (1965) identified depressed economic condition in a country and high unemployment rate as major factors that contribute to criminality and violence in a country. Cohen also argued that these factors are extremely difficult to change and address except there is reordering of the political and economic structure of a country. Recently, Asamu et al (2015) found unemployment to be a significant contributor to youth criminality and other social vices. In sum, high rates of youth unemployment increases youth restiveness.

Table 4.5: Awareness of any government programmes to provide employment/empowerment for youths

0	1	5.0	5.0	5,0
Yes	15	75.0	75.0	80.0
No	2	10.0	10.0	90.0
Don't Know	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The result shows that majority of respondents (75%) indicate that they are aware of programmes by government, private or non-government organization to provide employment for youths of the area, while 10% said they do not know if such programmes exist. and empowerment programmes.

Table 4.6: Listing of employment/empowerment programmes targeted at youths

None listed	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
Only listed 1	7	35.0	35.0	50.0
Listed 2	7	35.0	35.0	85.0
Listed 4 and above	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
Not applicable	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Our finding in table 4.6 shows that 70% o respondents either listed one or two porgrammes targeted at youths specifically, and 15% listed none. Further, 5% of respondents listed 4 above of such programmes, and 10% indicated not applicable. This means that more youths are aware of employment/empowerment programmes by

government, private or non-government organizations targeted at youths. For instance, many respondents noted that apart from the SURE-P (Subsidy Re-investment Programme) introduced by the federal government, there are other programmes introduced by the state government or other law makers representing Delta State such as SSai-n-OSSai empowerment programme, where the then member of the House of Representative representing Ndokwa East provided ke-ke and trucks for youths. There is also the YAAKEB empowerment programme introduced by Governor Okowa where youths of Delta State are trained in POP, Catherine and tilling. N-POWER, a federal government employment programme intended to engage graduate youths in teaching. Lastly, OSANEBI empowerment programme, where the current member of the state House of Assembly is training some youths of the area in skill acquisition. The new programmes are laudable in alleviating the unemployment situation in the area, except that most of these employment and empowerment programmes are provided by government officials and none is coming from the private sector. Since they are provided by the government and political elites, the beneficiaries are usually pre-selected and are mostly those close and loyal to the politician including their close friends and family members. The tendency for people not close to the government official to benefit or be selected is very slim.

Table 4.7: Respondents benefit from Employment/Empowerment Programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
No	19	95.0	95.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

95% of respondents claim not to have benefited from any employment/empowerment programmes, while only 5% said they have benefited from such programmes. The reason why many of the respondents claim not to have benefited from employment/empowerment programme is that they are usually diverted by top politicians from the area. This situation was well articulated by one of the respondent, who stated,

“There is less care of the leadership about the plight of the people. For instance empowerment programmes such as ke-ke are given to former commissioners rather than the youth”

Another respondent described the state of employment/empowerment programme lucidly as,

“The political leaders are the ones that mostly benefit from the empowerment programmes and not the youths. For example, the ke-ke programme that was introduced by the government prior to the general election in 2015 only benefited politicians and not the poor”

Table 4.8: Effectiveness of Programmes in helping youths

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very effective	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Effective	7	35.0	35.0	40.0
Not effective	7	35.0	35.0	75.0
Not at all effective	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
Don't know	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Total	21	100.0		

Data shows that 40% of respondents think the programmes are very effective, while 50% believe the programmes are not effective in helping youths. 10% of respondents stated that they do not know if the programmes are effective or not. The fact that the programmes are not effective in helping the youths was well captured by one of the respondents who described clearly how most government employment and empowerment programmes works this way:

“The selection process was not transparent, only few people close to politicians are selected”.

Another respondent also noted: “Only few get selected and benefit from government employment programmes”.

This perception about lack of transparency in selection and implementation of government programmes has persisted despite the introduction of several empowerment programmes by the state governor and other law makers representing Ndokwa East local government area.

Table 4.9: Government Publishes Information on Selection Process

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
No	15	75.0	75.0	95.0
Don't know	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The result shows that majority of respondents (75%) believe that government does not regularly publish information on selection process to these programmes, while 20% think they do.

Table 4.10: Government Ensures Equal opportunity for all youths in the Selection Process

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes				
No	20	100.0	100.0	100.0
Don't know				
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The result of the analysis shows that overwhelming majority of the respondents (100%) believe there is no equal opportunity for all youths in the selection process for government employment/empowerment programmes.

Table 4.11: Chances for youths not linked to politicians

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
No	17	85.0	85.0	95.0
Don't know	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100	100	

Table 4.9 shows that majority of the respondents (85%) believe there are very limited chances for youths not linked to politicians to be selected, while 10% think there are greater chances for youths not linked to politicians to be selected. Only 5% stated that they don't know whether or not there are greater chances for youths not linked to politicians to benefit from employment/ empowerment programmes.

Table 4.12: Youth Associations and CSOs make inputs in the design of employment programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
No	15	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	20	100	100	

We found that youth associations and CSOs make very little inputs in the design of employment/empowerment/programmes. In fact, 75% of respondents believe youth associations and CSOs do not make input, while 25% claim that they do make input.

Table 4.13: Gov. Publicizes budget and expenditures information on employment programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	2	100.0	100.0	10.0
Total	20	100	100	

The distribution in table 4.13 shows that all respondents (100%) think that the government does not publicise budget and expenditure information on employment programmes,

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Q18A.Table 4.14: Selection of female youths to benefit from employment programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	9	45.0	45.0	95.0
Don't know	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100	100	

85% of the respondents do not believe that more female youth are selected and benefit from employment and empowerment programmes, compared to 5% who said that female do benefit. Another 10% indicated that they do not know whether or not female youths benefit from government employment and empowerment programmes.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that males dominate the youth group (15) than females who are just five. Also majority of the youth fell within 26 years to 35years age bracket. These two categories make up 15 of the total respondents interviewed. This shows that unemployment is prevalent among the youth member of the population, particularly males who make up the bulk of the respondents. Since there is high rate of joblessness among the youth in the area, majority of the respondents (13) have decided to engage themselves in private businesses.

Contrary to expectation, majority of the respondents (11) are educated at secondary school level, five (5) have completed two years of post-secondary school education, while only four (4) have completed undergraduate degree programme.

The perception of lack of transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in government employment and empowerment programmes suggest a failure of government in putting in place a team that ensures that the selection process is transparent and get to expected target populations. The government, private companies and NGOs initiate employment and empowerment programmes, but in most cases but such programmes often fail to achieve their objectives because they do not get to their target beneficiaries. In most cases, these programmes are hijacked by local political elites who ensures that their own person is given such position. Consequently, these youths become tools in the hands of politicians to be used in election rigging and intimidation of political opponents. However, many turn their anger and violence against society when their affiliation to local politicians is no longer generating the desired benefit.

This view is supported by Ted Gurr in his theory of frustration and Robert Merton's social structural theory. They argued that people become agitated and violent when there are limited opportunities for them to get what they want through legitimate means. A success that is highly cherished by the Nigerian society. As a result, such individuals resort to violence and criminality in order to vent their anger at society.

Many Ndokwa Youths engage in private businesses such as commercial motorcycle and subsistence fishing and farming as a way of ameliorating their difficult economic situation, while others retreat into a sub-culture of criminality. These activities provide illegitimate means for acquiring material things cherished by the larger society. This situation agrees with the work of Cloward and Ohlin in Iwarimie-Jaja (2003) who argued that individuals engage in criminal activities when the opportunity for them to become successful through legitimate means is restricted. Since there are limited opportunities for many youths in the Niger Delta to become successful, many of them use illegitimate means such as armed robbery, kidnapping, oil bunkering, piracy, oil theft, cyber-crime, cultism etc to acquire the material things that are highly cherished by the Nigerian society. Unemployment is a major cause of the crisis in the Niger Delta. The situation is aggravated by the lack of transparency in the implementation of government employment and empowerment programmes. As many youths are unemployed, so there is increase in the level of poverty, which leads to frustration and agitation and violence.

Our research finding shows that there is increase awareness of the existence of government employment programmes. There is also increase publicity of such programmes. Nevertheless, selection into these schemes is not based on merit. This is because other extraneous factors such as nepotism, political god fatherism, and party loyalty still play major influence rather than educational qualification. This explains why there is less input of youth associations and CSOs in the design and implementation of these programmes. More significantly, the lack of transparency in the whole process also makes it difficult for the government to publish regularly information on the selection process, budget and expenditure, and list of beneficiaries. Since poverty is an endemic social problem in Nigeria and particularly in the Niger Delta area, the government is more likely to adopt a pre-selecting method for beneficiaries of any of their employment and empowerment programmes. This situation creates desperation, especially among jobless youths, who may be compelled to join cult groups and other criminal gangs in order to cause violence in society.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Unemployment remains a very serious problem facing many Nigerian youths. The problem of unemployment is quite severe among the youths who form the largest segment of the Nigerian society. In fact, over 70% of Nigerian population is youth, out of which 54% of them are unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics). When their creative talents and labour power are fully and effectively utilized, a nation can make giant strides in socio-political and economic development. Youths in Nigeria are confronted with various challenges including problem of unemployment. The challenging problem of unemployment that the youth face is the underlying factor for most of their behaviours. As a result, their perception on key questions raised in this research points to a number of implications and recommendations. The perception of high unemployment rate among them (100%) alone suggests a risk. They can express disapproval of that condition in various ways including using violence against the state and society.

The conclusion drawn from the study is that the dominance of males over females is due to societal and cultural perception of youth groups in the Niger Delta region. Nigerian society views youth groups to be strictly a male association. As a result, most women are less inclined to join and be involved in the activities of such groups. Moreover, since culturally women are expected to be married and confine their life to family household, society sometimes frowns at them engaging in activities outside the home, especially joining youth groups that is already perceived as a male association.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is that majority of respondents are educated at secondary school level. This may explain why there is high level of unemployment among them, because they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to secure employment outside of the local government area. This finding supports the work of Akpan (2003) noted that there is a strong relationship between employment and educational attainment. In his study of 632 young graduates in Uyo, he found that the higher one acquires education/skill of employment, the higher the likelihood of gaining employment. Although the mere acquisition of education/skills may not necessarily make an individual employable, as is the situation today in Nigeria, including the Niger Delta, however it is gateway to finding employment. The socio-economic implication of this is that there are other intervening variables between employment and

educational attainment. These may include social class, sex, tribe, religion, and connection to highly placed individuals in society, particularly politicians. An intervening variable such as political connection is the main determinant in securing employment or being selected to participate in government employment and empowerment programmes. This may also explain how some youth who are connected to political elites benefit from employment and empowerment schemes, while majority who lack such connections are not selected

5.2. Limitation/Challenges to the Study

This research is limited by our inability to administer the questionnaire to all the 20 respondents who participated in the 2015 cohort study. We recognize the fact that this is a longitudinal study in which there is likelihood for respondents to relocate. However, we believe that if there were no substitution made and all the respondents who participated in the 2015 survey were interviewed in 2016 it would have improved the research findings. The nature of the present research being a longitudinal panel study of a cohort group presents some biases. The fundamental problem of attrition or relocation of participants causes bias in the study because such drop out of participants could affect our analysis and the findings of the study. Additionally, the absence of randomization or probability sampling techniques also creates bias in the research findings, because the interpretation of result is limited to the group under study. There is also the problem of internal validity with a study that uses the purposive method of sampling because such sampling technique is not representative. Thus the problem of selection of participants which, in this case is purposive and non-random, present some serious problem with generalization.

5.2.1 Issues arising during delivery

One of the problems we faced was that not all the respondents that were interviewed in 2015 showed up for the present interview. This is because they were either sick or have relocated. In order to deal with this problem, participants were substituted with those present. We substituted three respondents in place of those who could either not be reached or have simply relocated to other places. The substitution of respondents became necessary as a way of ensuring that the questionnaire and interviews can capture the views and perception of, at least, 20 respondents required for this research.

Another problem that came up during the research was where to assemble the participants for the interview. Since there was no provision made to hire a hall in order to conduct interview, it became extremely difficult to gather respondents in an open

space or under a tree to conduct interview. We were able to resolve this problem by contacting the manager of the hall who agreed to allow us to use the hall but at a discount rate.

5.4 Recommendation

Government

Government should create employment and skill acquisition programmes for youths of the area, as this will provide legitimate means of livelihood and reduce the attraction for joining criminal gangs and engage in criminal activities.

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