



Poverty and Its Implication in Adamawa State: An Application of Nominal Group Techniques

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Abstract Adamawa state is located in the northeastern part of Nigeria. It has been experiencing Boko Haram insurgency attack since 2010 up to date. The state is recently facing other waves of insecurity, such as kidnapping, robbing using tricycle by Shila boys, and farmer's Fulani herdsmen crises. As a result of insecurity, many people have left their sources of livelihood. Many people have become refugees, where their survival becomes a big challenge. Most of them rely on National and International Organizations for their survival. Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to investigate the relationship between poverty and crime in the state. The Nominal Group Techniques method applied consists of six experts. The study was carried out in seven different settings; four Nominal Group meetings were organized at each setting. The conscious was reached on each idea during the meetings, which a facilitator chaired. This paper aims to use the nominal group technique to investigate the relationship between poverty and crime rate in the state. The technique was chosen due because it is easy to modify. Its incorporates a qualitative and quantitative way of processing data in a group environment and eliminates problems associated with group dynamics approaches. The results reveal that poverty plays a more significant role in criminal activities that are taking place in the state. It further discloses that insecurity is the major contributing factor to people's poverty in the state by depriving the citizens who were predominantly farmers from going to their farms. The result also reveals that empowering the citizens by giving soft loans and good parental guidance to the youths helps reduce the crime rate.

Keywords Crime, Insecurity, Poverty, Nominal Group Technique, Nigeria

Introduction

Poverty in Africa is a threat to economic and social stability. About 45 percent of the approximately 590 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line, implying that potential human resources are underdeveloped and underutilized. According to the World Bank [1], poverty is the inability to attain a minimum level of a standard of living, which considers income and expenditure per capita to measure welfare. Citizens are often disenfranchised and politically frustrated. The risk of social upheaval is increased by high and growing inequality in many African countries. The severe crisis that engulfed the African social sector in the 1980s has not abated. High rates of unemployment, currently estimated at 30 per cent, may continue to the end of the century, contributing to the high levels of poverty, which remain the main challenge to Africa's development efforts. Nigeria, for example, few people are rich, but the majority are poor [2]. Most people's per capital income today is around the same level as in 1970.

Crime is one of the human security problems confronting humanity across the world. Nations have grappled to contain the rising incidence of homicide, armed robbery, kidnap, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, illegal gun-running and host of others. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2011 reported that homicides globally were estimated at 468,000. More than a third (36%) was estimated to have occurred in Africa, 31% in the



Americas, 27% in Asia, 5% in Europe and 1% in the tropical Pacific Region United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [3]. “United Nations 2011 Global Study on Homicide”. According to the report, economic crisis; food insecurity; inflation; and weak or the limited rule of law are factors that drive crime. However, the drivers of crime are not restricted to the causative factors mentioned above.

Africa has been on the forefront on global statistics on crime. South Africa and Nigeria have recorded high incidents of violent and non-violent crimes in recent times. The incidents of murder increased from 15 609 murders in 2011/12 to 16 259 murders in 2012/13 in South Africa, with an increase of 650 murder cases or a 4.2% increase when comparing the total numbers of murders with the previous year [4]. The same issues happen in Nigeria and Adamawa state where the number of murders is in increase. According to the same report, murders and attempted murders during an aggravated robbery or inter-group conflict (such as gang or taxi violence), and vigilantism make up between 35% and 45%. Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of violent and non-violent crimes [5]. Notable in this regard, is the rising incidents of armed robbery, ritual killings, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping. They are now ravaging the polity like a tsunami and spreading a climate of fears and anxieties about public safety (ibid). The upsurge of crime has been ongoing as Nigeria has been on the global crime map since the 1980s [6]. For decades, these throes of crime are traceable to poverty, poor parental upbringing, and greed amongst the youth to get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control model of national security, etc.

Events of the past few years show that the spate of crime has assumed a debilitating proportion and requires policymakers’ intervention in this regard. According to Osawe [7], crime portrays the inability of the government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of economic activities considering the alarming increase in criminal activities in Nigeria such as armed robbery, terrorism and other related crimes [7]. Nike [8] avers that crime relates to drug use which has the social consequence on students manifesting in various forms including assassination, kidnapping, kidnapping, lack of interest in education, armed robbery and other criminal offences. It has been observed that a factor which motivates criminality is that availability of arms in the hands of illegal users, particularly civilians. For instance, the proliferation of arms contributes to conflict in two main ways namely: ‘increasingly lethal firepower is likely to cause higher levels of destruction, and that augmentation of sophisticated weaponry creates a vicious cycle whereby competing militias engage in an arms race to gain dominance in capability [9]. A Third Report on Violence in Nigeria (2006-2011) by Nigeria Watch Database noted that the second main cause of violence is a crime. This is heavily concentrated in the South, especially in highly populated areas like Lagos and Port Harcourt. However, the Middle Belt is not immune to armed robbery and banditry, especially in Plateau State, which records higher crime rates (Nigeria Watch, 2006-2011). These statistics on the trend and patterns of violent and non-violent crimes are worrisome and needs urgent attention from a multi-dimensional approach by stakeholders involved anti-crime crusade.

The nominal group technique (NGT) was developed by Andrew Van de Ven and Andre Delbeq at the University of Wisconsin in 1971 [10]. This method uses a structured meeting and a group facilitator to elicit opinions from the group in attendance. Specifically, formal NGT develops a panel of experts, similar to the Delphi method. However, NGT brings these experts (about 9-12 of them) together to gather information.

The Problem

Nigeria has been facing several Criminal challenges. These include the rise in armed robbery, kidnapping, and insurgency by the Niger Delta militants, ethnic conflicts, and recently, the Boko Haram sect’s activities. Hundreds of Nigerians and some foreigners have been killed due to one violent crime or the other. At the same time, property worth millions of Naira have also been lost to insecurity in the country. Fundamentally, no one and place is considered safe within the country.

In contrast, those in the southern and presently northern parts grapple with kidnapping and other violent crimes. Nigerians in the North live in utter terror, not knowing where and when the next set of bombs will explode. These crises and criminal activities individually and collectively create insecurity and breach of the peace that is likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the state and the country at large [11].



The paper seeks to determine the poverty level, resulting from unemployment and inflation, increases Adamawa State's criminal activities. The various security challenges facing the country have attributed to unemployment in many cases. Poverty makes people suffer other deprivations such as insufficient food, illiteracy, inadequate shelter, disease, lack of remunerative employment, exploitation and insecurity of life and property.

Brief Description of the NGT

NGT is a management tool that is being increasingly used to generate a large number of ideas. The technique helps identify problems, exploring solutions and establishing priorities for the generated solutions. It structures group interactions to elicit the information and judgments of individual participants and promote the development of a consensus among all group members. The technique has the following steps: Modified Nominal Group Technique for Group Decision-Making.

- a. Enunciation statement (the question should be well understood by all and the participants are expected to be knowledgeable on the issue),
- b. Silent generation of ideas in writing,
- c. Round-robin recording of ideas,
- d. Serial discussion on the ideas,
- e. Voting to select the essential ideas, and
- f. Discussion and reaching consensus on the selected ideas.

For a successful nominal group session, the following rules should be observed:

- No criticism of any idea during the session,
- The more unusual and original the idea, the better,
- While generating ideas, quantity not quality is the primary objective,
- Dissecting, modifying and commingling of ideas is desirable,
- Anonymity of input,
- Defer in-depth evaluation until all the inputs are displayed.
- If all the rules and guidelines are followed, then hopefully, a highly successful session will be conducted. In the following, we list the advantages of a successful nominal group session:
- A large number of ideas are generated,
- Separate stages of idea generation and evaluation,
- Equal and balanced participation from all the people participating in the session,
- Virtually every meeting is dominated by somebody, but in the NGT, we find no domination by anybody,
- The technique overcomes the 'bond' among a group of participants and it also nullifies somebody's loyalty to another,
- Since the decision is through consensus, there is very little chance of facing resistance while implementing the decision,
- Costs (both time and money) of conducting NG sessions are quite low,
- Quality of selected ideas,
- Overall sense of accomplishment.

To conduct a successful NG session having all the foregoing advantages, the role of the facilitator should not be overlooked. In fact, much of the success of the session depends upon the capabilities of the facilitator. Before the beginning of the session, he/she should clearly state the problem concerning the issue and briefly explain the various steps of the NGT. Needless to say, if he/she follows all the previously stated rules of the NGT, then no one can dominate the session. It is a good idea to conduct a pilot test of the question before conducting the actual session. The ideal number of participants in an NG session is 10-12, and the facilitator should be able to conclude the session within 90 minutes.

Applications of the NGT

Since the development of NGT by Delbecq et al. [12], the technique has been applied to solve a wide variety of problems. A few areas of applications are: change management [13], consumer research [14], education, health



management [15], information system design and planning [16-17], job evaluation [18-19], management training [20-21], organizational development [22], productivity measurement [23-24], strategic planning [25], and total quality management [26]. In addition to the above, the technique has been applied to solve various types of social problems [27].

Previous Modifications of the NGT

Since the introduction of NGT, a number of modifications of the technique have been proposed. Fox [28] proposed to use 3. 5-inch cards to provide all the ideas by one person at one time instead of round-robin recording of ideas. Though it ensures the anonymity of the participants, the shortcoming of this proposed modification is that one cannot get stimulated by other's ideas. To increase group member participation, Bartunek and Murningham [29] suggested one of the two possible voting procedures: (i) vote for an idea at one time with a minimum number of votes for selection, or (ii) vote as described in (i) Modified Nominal Group Technique for Group Decision-Making 5 but eliminate the ideas with only a few votes prior to the additional voting. In addition to the above, NGT has been combined with other methodologies. Some of the integrated methods are NGT and Multi-attribute utility theory [30]; and NGT and Multi-dimensional scaling [31]. Also, in numerous studies, NGT has been compared with the Delphi technique. We have provided a brief description of the Analytic Hierarchy Process, a popular multi-criteria decision-making tool, which can be applied to the NGT process.

Discussion of the Results

Table 1: The rate of crime committed by an inmate related to poverty from 2014 – 2019 in Adamawa state

S/no	Year	Prison capacity	Total Inmates	No. of Male	No. of Female	No. of Inmates with related to poverty crime	% of Inmates with related to poverty crime	% of other Inmates
1	2014	2,580	1546	1536	10	1469	95	5
2	2015	2,580	2277	2261	16	2186	96	4
3	2016	2,580	2052	2028	24	1929	94	6
4	2017	2,580	2175	2154	21	2066	95	5
5	2018	2,580	2211	2186	25	2123	96	4
6	2019	2,580	2122	2094	28	2037	96	4

Source: NBS and Prison offices.

The data from Table 1 above shows the fluctuation of several inmates detained with a crime related to poverty from 2014 to 2019 in Adamawa state. The data reveals that 2015, 2018 and 2019 have the highest number of admitted inmates (96%) out of the total for that particular year—followed by 2014/15 with 95% while 2016 has the lowest percentage of 94%. However, The NGT study was executed in seven different settings; in each setting, the NG meetings' results were analyzed by comparing the different ideas for recurring ideas. After four-to-five NG meetings, no new ideas were added to the list of ideas discussed during previous NG meetings. Still, to honour the residential settings' engagement in the study and out of respect for the participants, each of the study parts (see Table 2) was executed in each of the settings. For making full use of the individuals' rich information, each item was analyzed, and the analysis was not limited to the items with the highest score. To this end, the "drug, set, setting model" of Zinberg [32] was used to identify substance-orientated, person-orientated and environment orientated prevention strategies. This model was supplemented with strategies for early intervention and for counselling/guidance. Each of the individual items was attributed to one of the strategies in the Zinberg model by researchers. The results of the NGT study are shown below. Table 2 is the final results of the NGT study.

Tables 2: The final total ranking method results for the six NGT experts

S/no	Idea	Total Rankings for six people
1	People with low financial standing steal other people's property	16
2	People from poor families result to crime to earn their daily bread	18



3	Poor people commit criminal activities by engaging in selling of drugs in your community	8
4	Investments owned by the rich people, in the community are illegally acquired	7
5	Committing crime has nothing to do with financial standing of a person	0
6	Boko Haram, Kidnappings, farmers herdsman crises has destroyed many people's investments.	27
7	Insecurity in the state has rendered many people jobless.	11
8	Most employment done in this country is through knowing someone, unfortunate ones are to find possible ways of survival.	7
9	The salary structures of most workers are not sufficient to take care of the family's need, which forces some workers into unethical deals to compliment.	20
10	Government policy does not encourage small entrepreneurs; rather, it is making them out of business. Most of them do not have access to a loan.	22
11	NGOs give support to many families in Adamawa state to get an education and daily basic needs to avoid crime	13
12	People without family support can be easily engaged in criminal activities	28
13	The constituency development fund (CDF) support the vulnerable to reduce hunger and crime	10
14	Most criminal with rich relatives is hardly tried before the law	22
15	The Buhari administration policy of Feeding schools and giving money to older people reduces crime activities that the beneficiaries might commit.	14

Serial numbers 1-6 are about the relationship between financial standing and crime. The results reveal that idea 6 has the highest-ranking score, followed by 2 and 1. It shows that Boko Haram activities have seriously affected the people of Adamawa state by depriving them of their livelihood, followed by the low-income family background, leading some people to commit the crime easily. Serial numbers 7-10 are about the relationship between employment and crime. The results reveal that idea 6 has the highest-ranking score, followed by 2 and 1. These show that Boko Haram activities have seriously affected the people of Adamawa state by depriving them of their means of livelihood, followed by low-income family background, leading some people to commit a crime easily. Serial numbers 11-15 are about the relationship between social support and crime. The results reveal that ideas 2 and 4 have the highest ranking. This indicates that a lack of family support and injustice in the play's judiciary system plays a role in people's tendency to commit crime such as discrimination, stealing, and juvenile delinquencies, etc.

Summary of the findings

The Nominal Group Techniques (NGT) has established a relationship between financial standing and crime among the people of Adamawa state. It also revealed a significant relationship between people's financial standing and the tendency to commit a crime. World Bank [33] report shows that the growth of Africa investment stopped in the 1970s including the drop in both domestic and foreign savings terms of trade and production declined reducing real income and a large public sector deficit between 1984-85 worsening domestic economic performance leading to high poverty index in Africa. Parrillo [34] supports R. H. Lauer and J. C. Lauer [35] that even women in the past who often depended on men for financial support have even terminated miserable marriages and have become self-reliance through employment (self-supporting) at the same time.

Summary of the findings between employment and crime

NGT results revealed a relationship between employment levels of the people and the tendency to commit a crime in the study area. This study supported Mulinge [36] work, saying that children of separated, divorced or orphans end up doing petty jobs as housemaids, shamba boys, and assisting business people to sell their products. This is a criminal offence to involve school-going children into child labour with meagre wages. Hawkers and business people mostly used school dropouts in marketing their second-hand clothing, peddling alcohol, drugs and work in hotels where they are paid minimal wages.



Criminal activities such as burglary, gambling, stealing, price-fixing, and bribery amongst the civil servants are hazardous. Another issue is fare-hikes on the commuter vehicle, corruption, and government funds embezzlement.

Summary of the findings between social support and crime

The research reveals a relationship between social support and the tendency to commit a crime in the study area. Indeed, men believed that the household duties are for women traditionally. Failure to fulfil their obligations results in domestic violation, murder, assaults, child abuse, spouse and child battering, divorce, or separation. An explanation for the study's findings could be that poverty is the critical propelling factor to the household crimes in Adamawa. Social support involves financial and material support to the vulnerable poor to help them meet the socio-economic challenges. Masses in the State has been praising federal government initiative like N-power, Ancops Borrowing scheme, School feeding, the money given to older people etc.

Conclusion

The study on the application of NGT to investigate the impact of poverty on crime among the people of Adamawa state of northeastern Nigeria was intended to establish the relationship between financial standing, the employment, and effect of social support in the society and their tendency to commit a crime in the study area. The study's purpose was to generate ways of solving poverty issues to reduce crime among the people and identify the community's vulnerable individuals. Unemployment and lack of social support are the major problems affecting the growth and development of the state. Many Nigerians cannot meet the basic needs of life because they have no jobs. In the study area, many people lost their means of livelihoods due to criminal activities like Boko Haram, kidnappers armed robbery, etc. The last result puts the area in great danger since the study has shown that such people are vulnerable to commit a crime. To tackle insecurity problems, the government should engage people, especially the teeming youths. It can be done by establishing farm settlements and employing people who will contribute their quota to national development. They should provide creative and different vocational skills for them to learn. By so doing, they will be a job- providers and not job seekers. Governments should provide a mechanism to encourage financial institutions to grant soft loans to intending entrepreneurs to start small scale businesses. The businesses will sustain them and prevent them from indulging in criminal activities. The Ancops borrowing scheme, N-power and money for older people, should be expanded to cover more people in need. Emphasis should be given to the state's north local governments like; Madagali, Michika, Mubi North and South, Maiha, Hong and Gombi because they were affected by the insurgency.

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