

PERSONALITY TRAITS, DRUG ABUSE AND INVOLVEMENT WITH CRIME OF IMPRISONED YOUTH IN NORTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Crime by young people is now seen as one of the most visible forms of violence in society. Around the world, the media report daily on violence by gangs, in schools or by young people on the streets. In Nigeria, youths have been involved with a number of criminal activities ranging from social-related crimes, political-related crimes, economic crimes and even school-related crimes. Upsurge in violent criminal activities in Nigeria has also been observed with the activity of kidnappers, the Boko Haram militant group and currently the Niger-Delta Avengers.

Unfortunately, criminal activities are increasingly associated with young people. In recent years the number of violent crimes committed by young people in Nigeria appears to be on the increase (Makinde, 2013). Elliott (1994) in Office of the Surgeon General (2001) stated that, there is usually a dramatic increase in criminal activities in the second decade of life, which comes to a peak during late adolescence among 12 to 20 percent of all young people. However, Nagin & Tremblay (1999) opined that there are some youths who follow the childhood-onset trajectory, becoming violent before puberty and escalating their rate of offending during adolescence.

In trying to show the interaction between personality and behavioural problems, Fishbein (1989) in Rhodes (2007) opined that behavioural problems can be linked to a difficult personality, which leads to problems of interacting with others, impulsiveness, and being unable to conform. Children with such personality difficulty may not blend into school activities and thus become ignored and rebellious. Some youths in an attempt to cope with certain personality traits rely on drugs that can produce serious behavioural side effects such as vulnerability to violence.

On drug abuse for instance, there is a long tradition linking personality, or character, to alcohol and other substance use and abuse. Drug use is related to adverse health and social outcomes (Nutt, King, Saulsbury and Blakemore, 2007). The use of other psychoactive substances, most of them illicit drugs, is also associated with massive social cost, beyond the damage to the individual

users, affecting health care, law enforcement, and legal systems (Reuter, 2006).

There are different types of drugs that youths can abuse today. The ease with which these drugs can be accessed is alarming because of their availability in many usually harmless household products. Our society has been turned into a battle ground infested with crime and drugs. It becomes compelling therefore to carry out a research to establish the factors that might compel the youth to resort to drug use.

The behavioural problems may translate into great social problems with unbearable effects on the social, economic, intellectual and physical growth of members of the society. Intellectually, the educational attainment of the youths may be affected.

Educational attainment in this study is used to refer to the level of western education acquired by the individual. The US Census Bureau Glossary (2006) defines educational attainment as the highest level of education completed in terms of the highest degree or the highest level of schooling completed. There has been an upsurge in the desire to acquire western education in our society because of the fact that education improves one's income level and one's problem-solving skills (Dike, 2000). Education is also thought to provide one with access to better and more comprehensive health care, social services, higher standards of living and general improvement in one's quality of life.

Against this background, it has become imperative to advance the knowledge of the role of personality factors, drug abuse and educational attainment in predisposition of young people to criminal acts.

Nigeria as a country has been inundated with numerous violent criminal activities. These acts of criminality have attained dangerous proportions that have become a threat to both security and peaceful coexistence in society. Some of the perpetrators of this criminal acts fall within the youth/adolescent age category. It is not clear what factors might have contributed to the current trend of events. Perhaps, the influence of personality trait, drug abuse and educational attainment might be significant in predisposing youth to criminal behaviour. The problem of this study therefore is to investigate the influence of personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment on youth involvement with crime in North-Western part of Nigeria. The research questions raised to guide this study are: what are the personality traits of youths who are in prison in North-Western, Nigeria; what is the nature and extent of drug abuse among imprisoned youths in North-Western, Nigeria; what is the level of educational attainment of youths who are in prison in North-Western, Nigeria; to what extent do youths get involved with crime and

what types of offence; to what extent do personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment determine predisposition of youths to criminal involvement. It is also hypothesized in this study that personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment do not significantly predict youth involvement with crime in North-Western Nigeria.

The study is further delimited to prisons in North Western Nigeria- a region that has been embattled with lots of youth antisocial problems for over ten years. The North-West Zone of Nigeria comprise Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi States.

Method

The design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprises youths who are presently in prisons in North-Western part of Nigeria. The total number at the time of this study was estimated to be eight thousand six hundred and forty-eight (8648). Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 384 respondents was identified from the various prisons across the North-Western geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study sample was drawn purposively from the population of prisoners in the seven states of the North-West Geopolitical zone. The proportionate sampling technique was also employed in this study to ensure that the number taken from each State is representative of the population of prisoners in each of the States.

Three instruments were used to collect data for this study. They are the Intake of Drug Inventory (IDI) and the Personality Traits Inventory (PTI) and Personality Experience Inventory (PEI). The IDI has 35 items where respondents indicate how often they have exhibited the drug intake behaviour. The IDI was structured along a four-point likert scale with the following options, Very Often, Often, Rarely and Never.

The second instrument used in this study is the Personality Traits Inventory (PTI). The PTI was adapted by the researcher in this study for the assessment of the personality types of the subjects. The original instrument called the Five Individual Reaction Norms Inventory (FIRNI) was developed in 2005 by Jaap Denissen and Lars Penke. They had the goal of devising a measure that taps into the motivational reaction norms that may underlie the Big Five Personality type (Denissen & Penke, 2005).

The PTI as used in this study is a 50-item instrument designed to elicit responses from subjects that can be used to determine their personality types. It was designed along a four-point likert scale with the options as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The PEI was used to collect data on participants' involvement with crime and educational attainment.

The instruments in this study were subjected to validation to ensure that item clarity is to the highest level and remove every ambiguity. To determine reliability of the instruments, pilot test was carried out using 20 members of the population selected randomly from the Nigerian Prisons, Gumel who did not participate in the main study. The split-half method of reliability was used to separate the items into odd and even numbers. The data so collected was analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics. The IDI yielded a reliability index of 0.74 while the PTI yielded a reliability index of 0.82. Hence the reliability of the instruments was ensured. The collected data was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics analysis such as mean and multiple regression.

Results

Table 1: Personality Traits of Imprisoned Youths in North-Western Nigeria

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
___1. is talkative	102	49	148	85	2.44
___7. is helpful and unselfish to others	98	136	93	57	2.72
___8. can be somewhat careless	78	130	69	107	2.47
___9. is relaxed, handles stress well	80	145	90	69	2.61
___11. is full of energy	132	126	66	60	2.86
___12. starts quarrels with others	114	149	50	71	2.80
___16. generates a lot of enthusiasm	114	170	71	29	2.96
___17. has a forgiving nature	96	158	80	50	2.78
___18. tends to be disorganized	75	147	85	77	2.57
___20. interacts easily	97	98	69	120	2.45
Sectional Mean (Extroversion)			2.70		
___2. tends to find fault with others	29	194	85	76	2.46
___3. does a thorough job	89	130	98	67	2.63
___4. is depressed and moody	97	133	66	88	2.62
___5. is original and comes up with new ideas	108	164	70	42	2.88
___6. is reserved	157	129	59	39	3.05
___10. is curious about many different things	98	161	75	50	2.80
___13. is a reliable worker	100	131	105	48	2.74
___14. can be tense	68	172	83	61	2.64
___15. is ingenious, a deep thinker	107	134	78	65	2.74
___19. worries a lot	110	76	96	102	2.51
Sectional Mean (Introversion)			2.72		

Table 1 shows the personality traits of youths who are in prison in North-Western Nigeria. From the table, youths who showed traits that are extroverted indicated a mean score of 2.70 while youths who tend to show traits related to introversion indicated mean score of 2.72.

The mean score for both categories are above the midpoint of 2.5 thus providing clear evidence of agreement. This implies that there is a balance among the respondents and they manifest traits associated with both personality types equally. However, the mean score for introversion is slightly higher than that for extroversion hence the possibility that tendency toward introversion is higher than tendency for extroversion.

Table 2: Extent of Drug Abuse among Imprisoned Youths

S/N	Item	Very Often	Often	Rarely	Never	Mean
7	How often do you use drugs to help lighten your mood and to make you happy?	130	47	46	161	2.38
8	How often do you use drugs out of curiosity?	46	120	94	124	2.23
9	How often do you use drugs when you want to feel very bold?	67	73	107	137	2.18
10	How often do you use drugs when you are worried and confused?	64	73	81	166	2.09
11	How often do you use drugs when you are angry and feel frustrated?	105	47	100	132	2.33
12	How often do you use drugs because all your friends use it?	56	82	52	194	2.00
13	How often do you use drugs to show others your strength?	140	60	51	133	2.54
14	How often do you use drugs to make you feel very confident?	75	122	72	115	2.41
15	How often do you use drugs to make you very active?	84	69	97	134	2.27
16	How often do you use drugs for ceremonial purpose?	63	86	72	163	2.13
17	How often do you use drugs for medical reasons?	170	100	37	77	2.95
18	How often do you use drugs to keep you awake and alert?	114	87	63	120	2.51
Sectional Mean						2.33

The data on Table 2 was analyzed to show the frequency of use of identified drugs among youth who are in prison in North-Western Nigeria.

Various means have been derived for different items creating basis for agreement and disagreement as the case may be.

Items 13, 17 and 18 are of particular significance because, respondents agree with mean above 2.50. This shows that the respondents abuse drugs often times for reasons like showing off strength, sickness or to improve on mental alertness and stay awake.

However, the sectional mean of 2.33 provides basis for the conclusion that drugs are not often abused by youths who are in prison in North-Western, Nigeria.

Table 3: Nature of Drug Abuse among Imprisoned Youths

Type of Drug	Frequency	Percentage
Smoke Cigarette	25	6.51
Wine	2	0.52
Chew Kolanut	31	8.07
Inject Heroin	14	3.65
Smoke Cocaine	4	1.04
Smoke Indian Hemp	56	14.58
Sniff Cough Syrup	20	5.21
Sniff or Inhale Rubber Solution	3	0.78
Sniff Petrol	30	7.81
Beer	30	7.81
Burukutu	17	4.43
Caffeine	19	4.95
Chinese Capsule	11	2.86
LSD	27	7.03
Morphine	30	7.81
Palm Wine	41	10.68
Valium	24	6.25

Total	384	100.00
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The analysis on Table 3 was carried out to determine the types of drug abused by youths involved with crime in the study area. The data showed that among the most abused drugs are: Indian Hemp, Palm Wine, Kolanut, Sniffing Petrol, Beer, Morphine, Cigarette and Valium. The least abused drugs include: Wine, Heroin, Cough Syrup, Burukutu, Caffeine, Chinese Capsule, LSD, Rubber solution, and cocaine. Some of the most abused drugs apparently are the easiest to access which might explain why they are often used by youth in the study area.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No Education	131	34.1
Primary Education	114	29.7
Secondary Education	99	25.8
Tertiary Education	40	10.4
Total	384	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to their educational qualifications. One hundred and thirty-one (131) respondents (34.1%) had no form of formal education; 114 respondents had only primary education (29.7); 99 respondents had secondary education while 40 respondents representing 10.4% of the sampled population had education at the Tertiary level. This implies that more of the imprisoned youths in the study area had no formal education; the next score falls within the primary school level and the number continues to fall with higher levels of education.

Table 5: Youth Involvement with Crime in North-Western Nigeria

Length of Imprisonment	Frequency	Percentage
Not Convicted	46	12.00
1-11 Months Sentence	84	21.90
1-2 Years Sentence	103	26.80
3-10 Years Sentence	95	24.70
Above 10 Years Sentence	36	9.40
Death Sentence/Life Imprisonment	20	5.20
Total	384	100.00

The data on Table 5 relating to length of imprisonment was analyzed to show the extent of youth involvement with crime in North-Western, Nigeria. It

can be seen from Table 4.6a that the highest number of youth involved with crime in the study area were sentenced to between 1-2 years of imprisonment (26%). The next higher numbers fell between 1-11 months and 3-10 years representing 21% and 24% respectively. The offences that attracted higher punishment of above ten years/ life imprisonment/ death sentence were found to be few in occurrence representing 9% and 5% respectively.

The finding here shows that the extent of criminal activity among youths in the study area may be seen in the higher order in terms of the length of convictions. To further unveil the extent of youth involvement with crime, the data on Table 5 presents the type of offence.

Table 6: Type of Offence among Youth in North-Western Nigeria

Type of Offence	Frequency	Percentage
Adultery/ Homosexual	10	2.64
ATM Fraud	6	1.58
Criminal Breach of Trust	23	6.07
Causing Hurt	10	2.64
Child Trafficking	2	0.53
Concealing of Stolen Property	3	0.79
Conspiracy/Theft/House/Shop Breaking	26	6.86
Contempt to Court	6	1.58
Credit/ Cheating/Fraud	4	1.06
Drug Abuse/ Trafficking/NDLEA	40	10.55
Fighting/ Intimidation/ Disturbing Public Peace	21	5.54
Idleness/Indecent Behaviour/Late Hours	5	1.32
Illegal Abortion	1	0.26
Illegal Possession of Arms	1	0.26
Kidnapping/ Belonging to Gang	7	1.85
Murder	20	5.28
Rape	20	5.28
Armed Robbery/ Theft	151	39.84
Suspect/ Not Convicted	15	3.96
Vandalization	8	2.11
Total	379	100.00

The analysis on Table 6 was carried out to determine the type of offence committed by youths in North-Western Nigeria and to use this as basis for understanding the extent of youth involvement with crime. A summary of the data analyzed indicates that the dominant criminal act among young people in the study area is Armed Robbery/Theft (39%) while the least

dominant is illegal possession of arms/ abortion (0.26%). It can be seen from this analysis that high degree offences such as murder, kidnapping and child-trafficking do not occur frequently. There is also evidence of predomination of petty crimes among youths involved with crime in the study area.

Table 7: Model Summary for Test of Predictability of Youth Involvement with Crime by Personality Trait, Drug Abuse and Educational Attainment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.208a	.043	.036	1.30860

The R value, the multiple correlation coefficient is a measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable. An R- value of 0.208 indicates poor level of prediction.

The R square value of .043 indicates that only 4.3% of the variability of our dependent variable (involvement with crime) can be explained on the basis of the independent variables.

Table 8: ANOVA Table for Test of Predictability of Youth Involvement with Crime by Personality Trait, Drug Abuse and Educational Attainment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	29.505	3	9.835	5.743	.001	Rejected
	Residual	650.722	380	1.712			
	Total	680.227	383				

a. Predictors: (Constant), PERSONALITY TRAIT, INTAKE OF DRUG, LEVEL OF EDUCATION

b. Dependent Variable: INVOLVEMENT WITH CRIME

On Table 8, a significant value of .001 (less than the 0.05 level of significance) shows that the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variables. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment significantly predicts youth involvement with crime in North-Western Nigeria.

Table 9: Table of Coefficients for Test of Predictability of Youth Involvement with Crime by Personality Trait, Drug Abuse and Educational Attainment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			

1	(Constant)	2.033	.708		2.873	.004
	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	-.160	.069	-.120	-2.327	.021
	INTAKE OF DRUG	.250	.084	.153	2.992	.003
	PERSONALITY TRAIT	.316	.218	.077	1.453	.147

a. Dependent Variable: INVOLVEMENT WITH CRIME

Table 9 shows the statistical significance of each independent variable. Results for level of education indicates that the p-value or significant value is .021 which is less than .05 hence the conclusion that Educational Level differs significantly from youth involvement with crime.

The analysis for drug abuse shows that the p-value or significant value is .003 which is also less than .05 hence the conclusion that Drug Abuse significantly differs from youth involvement with crime.

Lastly, the test for personality traits shows that the p-value or significant value is 0.147 which is more than .05 hence the conclusion that Personality Traits do not significantly differ from youth involvement with crime.

In conclusion, a multiple regression was run to predict youth involvement with crime from personality trait, drug abuse and educational attainment. These variables statistically significantly predicted youth involvement with crime, $F(3, 380) = 5.743$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .043$. Two of the variables (educational attainment and drug abuse) added statistically significantly to the prediction, $p < .05$. Personality traits however, added less to the statistical significance of the prediction.

Discussion

The mean score for personality types indicate that both categories (extroversion and introversion) are above the midpoint of 2.5 thus providing clear evidence of agreement. This implies that there is a balance among the respondents and they manifest traits associated with both personality types equally. However, the mean score for introversion is slightly higher than that for extroversion hence the possibility that tendency toward introversion is higher than tendency for extroversion. The actual ratio based on the first official random sample by the Myers-Briggs organization in 1998 showed Introverts 50.7% and Extroverts 49.3% of the USA. This study has further reinforced the notion that there is apparent balance in the distribution of personality traits.

The study also show that respondents abuse drugs often times for reasons like showing off strength, sickness or to improve on mental alertness. The sectional mean of 2.33 provides basis for the conclusion that drugs are not often abused by youths who are in prison in North-Western, Nigeria. This

finding agrees with Mbaegbu (2014) that many youth in Onitsha metropolis do not indulge in drug abuse as shown in the mean score of 1.81.

On the nature of drug abuse, the data showed a wide range of abused drugs namely: Indian Hemp, Palm Wine, Kolanut, Sniffing Petrol, Beer, Morphine, while the least abused drugs include: Wine, Rubber solution, and cocaine. The results of a related study on drug abuse among young people in Lagos State by Anumonye (1980) showed that the major substances used by secondary school students in Nigeria were alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and cannabis. Sunday (2006) showed empirical evidence that young people who cannot afford the expensive hard drugs resort to the abuse of unconventional substances such as rubber solution, furniture polish, paint thinner and insecticides. Oranika (1999) also observed that among the drugs used by students in F.C.T., alcohol, Indian hemp and cigarettes ranked the highest. The trend appears to be that affordability determined the type of drug used.

More of the imprisoned youths in the study area had no formal education; the next score falls within the primary school level and the number continues to fall with higher levels of education. It further suggests that the level of educational attainment for imprisoned youths in the North-Western part of Nigeria is low. The poor level of educational attainment in the northern part of Nigeria is well known has informed a government policy of designating certain states as Educationally Less Developed States. According to Habibu, Russayani and Roslan (2014) the Northern Region has an Average Educational Attainment below the country's average, while the Southern region has an average attainment above the country's average.

Relying on data related to length of sentence to determine youth involvement with crime. The offences that attracted higher punishment of above ten years/ life imprisonment/ death sentence were found to be few in occurrence representing 9% and 5% respectively. The finding here shows that the extent of criminal activity among youths in the study area may be seen in the higher order in terms of the length of convictions. Generally, youth involvement in crime has reached unprecedented proportions. In fact, just about every country in the world seems to be grappling with this problem. A New Zealand Research shows us that around one-quarter of all young men will commit at least one offence. Of that number 80% will commit only one or two offences. The remaining 20% are responsible for 80% of New Zealand's youth offending. This pattern is as evident internationally as it is in New Zealand (McLaren, 2000).

To further boost understanding of youth involvement with crime in this study, the type of offence committed by youths who are in prison in North-Western Nigeria. It can be seen from this analysis that high degree offences

such as murder, kidnapping and child-trafficking do not occur frequently. There is also evidence of predomination of petty crimes among youths involved with crime in the study area. This is in line with many fact sheets on youth involvement with crime across continents (CIVITAS, 2011).

The null hypothesis that personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment do not significantly predict youth involvement with crime in North-Western Nigeria was rejected. Two of the variables (educational attainment and drug abuse) added statistically significantly to the prediction while personality trait added less.

On educational attainment, evidence from previous studies agree with the finding that this variable can be linked with predisposition for criminal acts. Maguin and Loeber (1996) in a meta-analysis of studies that examined the relationship between academic performance and delinquency and interventions designed to improve school achievement and reduce offending found that poor school performance was related to the frequency of delinquent offending, the seriousness of offenses, and persistence in delinquency offending. This shows that students who do not perform well academically are more likely to be delinquent. This supports the view that education enhances our capacity to live and be lived with.

Drug abuse has also been linked in this study to tendency of youths to get involved with crime. This result can be easily interpreted from the view point that drugs alter the state of mind of the abuser and increase the possibility of acting in an irrational manner. Farrington (2000) supports this finding as found in the Cambridge Study which investigated the ability of psychosocial risk factors to predict antisocial personality.

Personality trait however was found (not statistically significant) not linked to youth involvement with crime. The finding in this study is supported by Nederlof, Ham, Dingemans and Oei (2010) who in their study found that Correlational analyses and multivariate analyses of variance failed to demonstrate any significant relation between the Big Five normal personality dimensions and offence category and severity.

Conclusion

The findings made in this study have shown that personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment on face value poorly predicts youth involvement with crime attributing only 4.3% of the variability of youth involvement with crime to the independent variables. However, further tests of statistical significance, led to rejection of the hypothesis that personality traits, drug abuse and educational attainment do not significantly predict youth involvement with crime in North-Western Nigeria. It was conclusively shown

that educational attainment and drug abuse added statistically significantly to the prediction, while personality trait added less. It is therefore concluded in this study that educational attainment and drug abuse are more associated with youth involvement with crime than personality trait.

Recommendations

In view of the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. The apparent decline in drug abuse should be sustained by continued campaign and education of the populace through adverts and other public enlightenment programmes by both government and non-governmental organizations.
 2. The level of educational attainment for youths in the North-Western part of Nigeria is low and calls for urgent action particularly on the part of the government as a principal provider of this social service.
 3. The length of sentence shows that the extent of criminal activity among youths in the study area is to an extent in the lower order. There must be deliberate effort by prison officials to separate prisoners according to the weight of their offences. By so doing, prisoners with light offences will not interact with hardened criminals who may be serving life imprisonment or death sentence.
- Since drug abuse has significantly predicted youth involvement with crime, all agencies of government saddled with the responsibility of drug control must monitor the various outlets through which drugs are peddled.

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