



Criminal Victimization and Factors Responsible for Crime Incidence in Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Criminal victimization constitutes a serious threat to national and global development and stability. This study examined criminal victimisation and factors responsible for crime in Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Data were acquired through crime victimisation questionnaire survey. A total of 400 respondents were selected using a systematic random sampling method for administration of questionnaire. An administrative map of the study area was acquired from the Ministry of Land and Survey, Bayelsa State which was used as the base map. These data were analysed using both descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and the Principal Component Analysis. The study revealed that 65% of the respondents and/or their family members had experienced victimisation by criminals. The study also found that theft/stealing had the highest incidence rate of 44.84% while kidnapping (0.72%) had the lowest proportions. It was also revealed that poverty and unemployment were the major causes of crime accounting for 38.42%. Furthermore the results of the study showed that poverty eradication was the key solution for reducing crime incidents, followed by the provision of employment ranked 1st and 2nd respectively. The study therefore recommends that there is need to create enabling environment for business growth and job creation by the state government to reduce the unemployment figure.

Keywords: Victimization, Criminal Incidence, Socio-economic, Poverty, Survey

1. Introduction

Crime victimization within and across borders is a serious threat to national and global development and stability. Nigeria has recently been faced with unacceptable levels of delinquency and crime, which are very pitiful, widespread, chronic, devastating and catastrophic for the advancement of growth in the nation (Daukere et al., 2020). The current situation in the country is pitiful, considering that the high rate of criminal victimization of citizens has led to an unattractive investment by local and foreign investors in many parts of the country (Ejemeyovwi, 2015). Judging from print and non-print media, the upsurge in criminal activities such as theft/stealing, assault, false pretense and cheating, armed robbery, murder, arson, rape, indecent assault, house breaking, banditry, abduction, etc. is widespread and appears to regard Nigeria as a failed state incapable of providing protection of life and property to its people.

A variety of reasons have been attributed to the increase in the rate of victimisation of residents. Numerous socio-demographic factors may be responsible for a particular crime, such as household income, educational attainment, employment status, poverty status, age, ethnicity, religion (Mitchell,

2011; Ibrahim and Mukhtar, 2017). Political negotiation and economic advantage (Hazen and Horner, 2007), sexual sex, marriage, adultery, ransom, retaliation, sale, trafficking body parts, slavery, criminal behaviour, murder and for other motives may be other factors for the outbreak of violence and crime (Ibrahim and Mukhtar, 2017). Every crime, however, relates to a place's social and physical characteristics. Therefore it is not possible to overemphasize understanding the social and demographic characteristics of a location in describing the variables of crime occurrence. The lack of accurate data on the occurrence of crime and victimization has hampered the area's perception of the pattern of crime. There are many problems in Nigeria that affect the compilation of accurate recorded crime statistics (Alemika, 2013).

Crime victimization, where individual targets suffer crimes over a period of time, is one of the most profound findings of a decline in crime. The victimization survey is critical in criminological geography to understand the existence and locations of criminal occurrence. This applies to data collection activities focused on respondents who record their own crime encounters as either an offender or a victim (Lynch and Addington, 2010). The official crime reports generated by the criminal justice system, however, mostly suffer from many dimnesses or flaws, such as unreliable figures due to unreported figures of crimes, recorded but unreported crimes and record manipulation to suit political and/or institutional objectives (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2005). Criminologists have developed two strategies for collecting information on the degree and pattern of crime and victimization in a society, to supplement the official statistics given by the criminal justice system. Crime and victim surveys are these tools. The consistency of the victimization study over police data is shown to be fair (Alemika, 2013). It reflects the amount of crime preventable by concentrating attention on individuals and places victimized by crime (Pease and Farrell, 2016).

Criminal victimization varies across communities and defines a sense of protection across households. The occurrence of criminal incidents can elicit many feelings from the general public, such as indignation, sorrow, frustration, disgust, and shock (Eban, 2011). In Nigeria, the CLEEN Foundation conducted National Crime Surveys in 2005, 2006 and 2009 and, overall the study found that 47.1% of respondents across the nation had been victimized by offenders for three years (Alemika, 2011). It was also recorded that the most common forms of victimization were theft of various types of property (money, GSM

devices, agricultural products, automobiles, etc.), robbery, domestic abuse, physical assault and burglary. Criminal activities play a detrimental role in both the accessibility and functionality of public facilities in Nigeria's urban environment (Ajayi and Ajayi, 2012). Worldwide, the pattern and severity of the occurrence of crime has become a threat to the well-being of members of society. Crime has become a neighbourhood or national epidemic.

A number of studies in Nigeria had analysed crime using police crime data and victimisation survey methods (Bello, et al., 2012a; Yelwa and Bello, 2012; Bello, et al., 2012b). For example, Yelwa and Bello (2012) assessed property crime in Katsina State, Nigeria using cluster analysis complemented with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyse the crime data collected from the Statistics department of the Nigeria Police Force, Katsina State command. Furthermore, Bello, et al (2012a) conducted a research covering Nigeria by applying algorithms on different interval measures simultaneously. They added that crime data can be classified more efficiently across the country using GIS. In another research by Bello, et al (2014) applied principal component analysis to analyse the pattern of criminal victimization in Katsina Senatorial Zone, Katsina State, Nigeria. The study attempted to identify the common crime types being victimised by residents using crime victimisation questionnaire survey. The result of the analysis showed that theft was the most common crime with 56.4% of the respondents admitted experiencing theft victimization in the study area.

Ajayi and Ajayi (2014) examined and analysed the spatial pattern of crime incidence in and around major motor parks/bus stops in Ibadan metropolis using a questionnaire survey. The findings of the study revealed that over 64% of the respondents had witnessed crime while 38% had been a victim of crime across the five parks of the Metropolis. It further showed that 40.4% of respondents believed that unemployment and poverty are the leading causes of high incidence of victimisation around motor parks in the city. The location of these studies is different from the present study as well as its significant socioeconomic characteristics on the effects of the factors controlling the occurrence of crime.

In Bayelsa State, crime rate is also at alarming rate which has caused protest and public disorder in recent times. The state was ranked 21 out of the 36 states with a total of 1,541 reported cases in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This situation

has become worrisome and a source of concern to all investors and stakeholders given its negative effects on the development of the state. Bayelsa West Senatorial District is one of the oil rich areas of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The presence of higher institutions such as University of Africa, Toru-Owa, Isaac Boro College of Education Sagbama, makes it attractive to those seeking opportunities for better livelihoods and living conditions. In recent times, the area is witnessing rapid population increase, accompanied by physical growth and expansion since the creation of Bayelsa State in 1996. The recent increase of the population has been due largely to the influx of persons into these higher institutions.

Therefore the concentration of people and activities in Sagbama, Ekermor and other major communities in the study area is likely to generate social vices such as crime; making it a suitable research site. Also, it is necessary to provide accurate information on victimisation pattern in the area as a research of this kind has not been conducted in the study area prior to this. This will in turn assist the residents and security personnel to understand the spatiotemporal distribution of criminal events in the area. The main

aim of this study is to examine the criminal victimisation and factors responsible for crime in Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The objectives are to identify the victimisation pattern of residents from various crime types and to examine the factors responsible for crime and how can it be remedied in the study area.

2. The Study Area

The study region of Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, Nigeria has a total landmass of 2,771.9km² comprising Sagbama and Ekeremor Local Government Areas (LGAs) (Daukere et al., 2020). It covers from Latitudes 4°42'N - 5°23'N of the Equator and Longitudes 5°23'E - 6°32'E of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bordered to the north by the Delta State and to the south by the Kolokuma/Opokuma, Southern Ijaw and Yenagoa LGAs of Bayelsa State. There is also a coastline of around 60 km on the Bight of Bonny in the study region. Many of the communities are almost entirely (and in some cases) surrounded by water, rendering them inaccessible by road (see Figure 1).

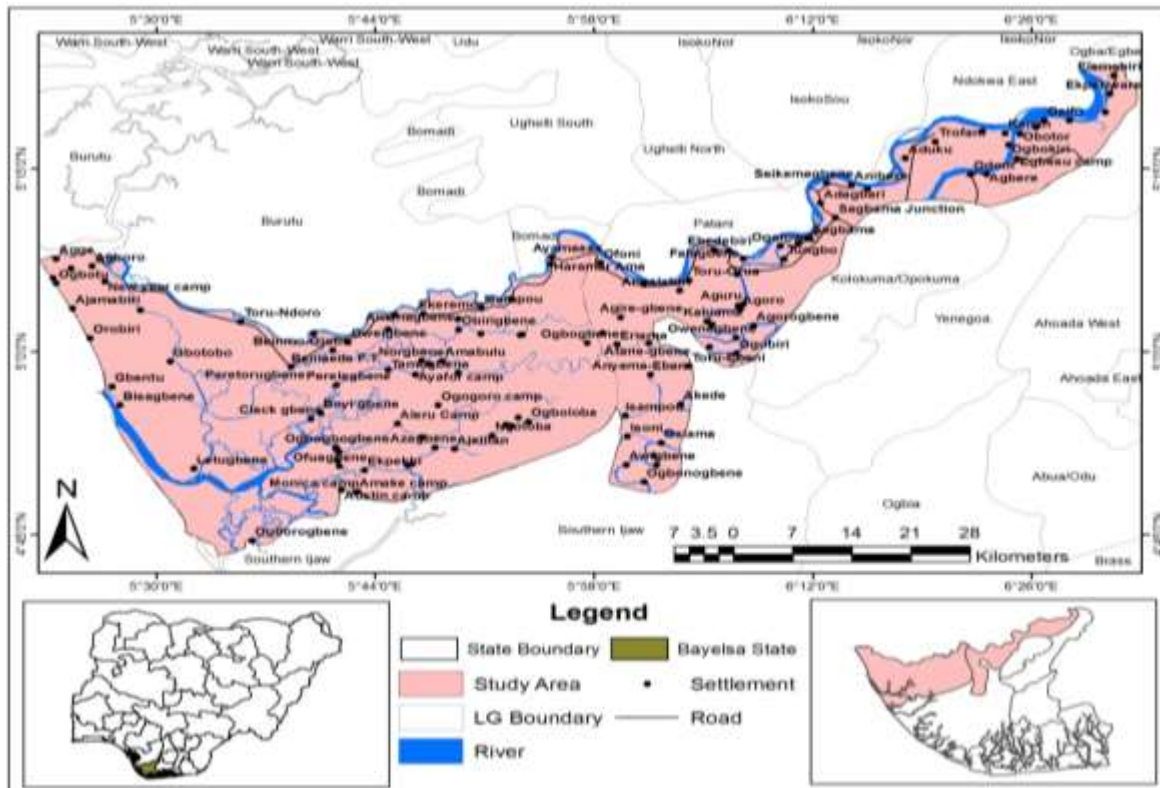


Figure 1

1: Bayelsa West Senatorial District
 Source: Adapted from Daukere et al. (2020)

The tropical monsoon climate of the study region is characterized by heavy rainfall, with an average annual mean of 2,550 - 2,755 mm (Mmom and Akpi, 2014). The area has tropical rain, which typically occurs any month of the year with heavy downpour, but over 80% of it occurs in the months of May to September (State Employment and Expenditure for Results [SEEFOR] Project, 2015). The amount of rainfall is adequate for all-year-round crop production and the wet season is no less than 340 days. The mean minimum annual temperature ranged from 23° - 31°C with a high relative humidity of about 78-82 percent, the warmest months are December to April, and the relative humidity is high throughout the year and decreases slightly during the dry season (Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, 2005). The soils of the area, underlain by cretaceous sediments, are of young Quaternary and recent alluvium geological formation and are mostly low-lying. The vegetation in the area is freshwater swamps and lowland rain forests, and these various types of vegetation are associated with the different soil units of the region (State Employment and Expenditure for Results [SEEFOR] Project Bayelsa State, 2016). As a rule, the idea is that foliage encourages crime because it prevents offenders and criminals from being seen (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001). Consequently, the area is heavily vegetated, contributing to fear, fear of crime, and possibly crime itself.

The total population of the study area as of the 2006 population census was 269,588 and 186,869 for Ekeremor and Sagbama LGAs respectively. As of 2010, the population of the study area increased to 512,599 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Because of population growth and rural-urban migration, the region is undergoing remarkable expansion and change in both political and social structures, where most people are moving to a planned market-oriented economy. Therefore the

region's urbanization speed may have a direct effect on high crime rates; a great deal of theorization has been done on why larger cities characterized by anonymity have higher crime rates than smaller communities. The region is dominated by the Ijaw people (Ijo). Pijin is recognized as one of the official languages, but the main local dialect spoken is the Ijaw language of Mein, Tarakiri, etc. Among a multitude of other ethnic groups are the Urhobo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ogoni, Ikwerre, Epic/Atissa, Ogbia, Igbo, Hausa, and other minority groups.

3. Materials and Methods

A reconnaissance survey was carried out by the researchers in order to have an adequate knowledge of the study area. The administrative map of the study area at a scale of 1:50,000 were acquired from the Ministry of Land and Survey, Bayelsa State. Reliable records of crime victimization in the form of digital police registers in Nigeria are difficult to obtain, so we used the crime victimization questionnaire survey to obtain data on the rate of victimization. The data on socio-demographic characteristics, factors responsible for crime and the solution to crime prevention were obtained from the crime victimisation questionnaire survey. The methodology for data collection was in-home, using a systematic random sampling selection procedure. 400 respondents were interviewed shared proportionally to the population of each ward of the LGAs. The responses were the experience of a respondent and/or his/her relatives over the past five years. The responses on criminal victimization and solution to crime were converted to percentage for the LGAs. On the other hand, the responses on factors responsible for crime were analysed using Principal Component Analysis. The eigenvalues was used to determine how many factors are to be retained (Usman et al., 2012).

Table 1: Projected Population and Sample Size by Wards

S/N	Ward	Population 1991	Projection 2018	Sample Size
1	Tarakiri	14,369	29,577	23
2	Oyia-kiri I	9,653	19,870	15
3	Oyia-kiri II	10,189	20,973	16
4	Oyia-kiri III	2,446	5,035	4
5	Oyia-kiri IV	5,786	11,910	9
6	Oporomor I	5,093	10,483	8
7	Oporomor II	24,147	49,774	38
8	Oporomor III	11,285	23,229	18
9	Oporomor IV	11,063	22,772	17
10	Oporomor V	7,663	15,774	12

11	Eduwini I	9,580	19,719	15
12	Eduwini II	13,511	27,811	21
13	Agbere	10,438	21,416	16
14	Angalabiri	11,403	23,472	18
15	Ofofi I	10,892	22,420	17
16	Ofofi II	4,993	10,278	8
17	Ebedebiri	13,757	28,317	22
18	Ossiama	7,142	14,701	11
19	Asamabiri	4,817	9,915	8
20	Odoni	6,400	13,174	10
21	Trofani	3,162	6,509	5
22	Sagbama	12,565	25,864	20
23	Agoro	15,724	32,366	25
24	Toru-Ebeni	11,439	23,546	18
25	Adagbabiri	11,403	23,472	18
26	Osekwenike	4,938	10,164	8
Total		253,858	522,541	400

Source: NPC, Bayelsa (2019)/Author’s Compilation (2019)

A total of twenty six wards in the Senatorial District were used in order to analyse crime in the study area (see Table 1). The total population of Bayelsa West Senatorial District was estimated according to the 2006 census as 456,457 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). However, the 2006 population figures of the study area were not disaggregated into the 26 wards. Hence, the 1991 National population and housing census results which were disaggregated into localities were used in order to find the proportion of people in the respective wards of the Senatorial District. The wards population figures were projected to 2018. The projection was based on the average population growth rate of Bayelsa State that is 2.92%, using the Newman’s (2001) formula: $P_n = P_o + (\frac{1+R}{100} \times P_o) n$. Having determined the sampling frame, the Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size thus: $Sample\ Size = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$. In each of the wards, the sample size was based on the projected population of the ward. The sample size of the wards was proportional to the population of each ward thus: $Proportion = \frac{n}{N} \times S$.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the analyses are discussed.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2 presents social characteristics of the respondents interviewed during the field survey.

Education teaches individuals to be patient which could discourage crime. The data analysis in Table 4.1 revealed that 45.8% of the respondents had Secondary education while 22.5% obtained tertiary education. The result also revealed that 13.5% of the respondents had no formal education. Respondents with tertiary education are those who had either obtained Diploma, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), or a University Degree. With this result, one could say that the level of literacy in the study area is moderate and this could be linked to the many tertiary Institutions in the area such as Isaac Boro College of Education, Government Teacher’s Training Institute, Bayelsa State Polytechnic and a campus of the Niger Delta University and the University of Africa. Educational attainment of individuals is very important in crime reduction strategy because there is a relationship between education and crime from an economic perspective. Educational qualifications directly influence high earnings of people which may reduce time spent in criminal events. This implies that individuals who had acquired higher education such as a university degree may affect major source of their income which can reduce high crime rate if employed.

In Nigeria and perhaps some other places across sub-Saharan Africa, a household may be home to 14 or more people, and several families may live in the same housing unit. The findings of the study as presented in Table 4.1 revealed that 26.8% of the respondents had family sizes between 5 and 7 and this was closely followed by 2-4 people accounting for 24%. The family sizes with 11-13 persons had the lowest proportions (10%). The finding revealed that

61.4% of the respondents had family sizes of at least 5 persons and above. The significance of this information is that a further cause of crime can be found in dysfunctional family life and childhood, which can lead to a life of crime. Family violence and other issues are also related to crime in many ways (Yaacoub, 2017). The high figure of respondents with large family sizes could be attributed to poverty and

unemployment which could also lead to life of crime. This finding corroborates with that of Umar (2017) wherein the study revealed that the household size 6-10 persons was high accounting for 42.48% in Kaduna Metropolis and are thus beset by acute unemployment, poverty and inequality leading to high crime rates in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Qualification		
No formal education	54	13.5
Primary	73	18.3
Secondary	183	45.8
Tertiary	90	22.5
Total	400	100.0
Household Size		
Less than 2	59	14.8
2-4	96	24.0
5-7	107	26.8
8-10	51	12.8
11-13	40	10.0
14 and above	47	11.8
Total	400	100.0
Duration of stay at this locality		
Less than 1 year	40	10.0
Between 1-2 years	39	9.8
Between 2-5 years	46	11.5
More than 5 years	275	68.8
Total	400	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	368	92.0
Islam	8	2.0
Traditional worshippers	24	6.0
Total	400	100.0
Primary Occupation		
Farming	193	48.25
Trading (Business)	64	16.0
Artisan	67	16.75
Civil service	76	19.0
Total	400	100.0
Monthly Income		
Bellow 18,000.00	192	48.0
18,001.00-45,000.00	118	29.5
45,001.00-60,000.00	46	11.5
60,001.00-75,000.00	35	8.8
Above 75,000.00	9	2.3
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Work (2019)

Furthermore, the length of an individual's stay in a specific geographical region is important for the understanding of people and their setting. Accordingly, the finding of the period of living analysis shows that 68.8% of respondents have been

living in the research area for more than 5 years. This implies that long period of living is important in account of crime history in a given area. The longer duration of living enhances provision of reliable information regarding the occurrences of crime

incidents in the study area. It is also fair to conclude that most of the respondents would have clear knowledge on the history of the occurrence of crime in their respective neighbourhoods.

In addition, the distribution of the respondents by religion reveals that 92% of the respondents were Christians, 2% were Muslims while 6% of the respondents were traditional worshippers. The religious believe of the people in the study area influences their experiences and attitudes towards crime. Findings have shown that religion tends to have a deterring influence on crime-related attitudes and behaviours (Adamczyk et al., 2017).

Table 2 also reveals that 48.25% of the respondents were farmers, 19% were civil servants while 16% were engaged in trading. The finding also corroborates the observations of Alagoa (1999) which shows that most of the people in the Sagbama LGA were engaged in agro-based occupations such as cassava production, fishing, and palm oil extraction. The study further revealed that artisan accounted for 16.8%. The study therefore revealed that 81% of the respondents were engaged in informal sector which is characterised by uncertainty as some of the gains accruing to the traders, peasant farmers and artisans are seasonal. This could predispose some to criminal acts when their livelihoods could not make ends meet. This assertion

can be justified when viewed from the fact that 48.0% of the respondents earned below ₦18,000 while 2.3% of the respondent earned above ₦75,000 on monthly basis. The income levels of respondents from various occupations determine how much someone is prone to crime. The finding corroborates with Oyinloye et al. (2017) where 40% of the income of respondents earn below the then national minimum wage of ₦18,000 per month in Akure, Nigeria. Income levels influence crime in a neighbourhood where an increase in income level decreases crime rates (Wang et al., 2019).

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. As shown in Table 3, 64.3% of the respondents were males while 35.8% were females. This result agreed with the population census of 2006 for Ekeremor and Sagbama LGAs of Bayelsa State where males were more than the females. The findings also agreed with that of Olajuyigbe et al. (2015) in the southern part of Nigeria which showed higher proportion of males. This suggests that, as Francois et al. (2015) found that males were rated as the gender most likely to commit crime in Ho Metropolis, Ghana, by 87.25% of respondents, crime may be high in this study area due to the large number of males.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	257	64.2
Female	143	35.8
Total	400	100.0
Age Group		
15-20	33	8.3
21-26	51	12.8
27-32	99	24.8
33-38	95	23.8
39-44	35	8.8
45-50	24	6.0
51-56	27	6.8
57-62	20	5.0
63 and above	16	4.0
Total	400	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	128	32.0
Married	225	56.25
Divorced	16	4.0
Separated	8	2.0
Widowed	23	5.75
Total	400	100.0
Number of children		
None	125	31.3
1-2	87	21.8
3-4	70	17.5
5 and above	118	29.5
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Work (2019)

The distribution of the respondents by age group is also given in Table 3. The importance of understanding the age-crime relationship is one of the most vital within the field of criminology. Age class of a given area determines the type of crime events that will be prevalent in that area. Results in Table 3 shows that the age group 15-38 years accounts for 69.7% of the respondents. The significance of this information by extension implies that it is likely not that most of the people that fall within the working population are gainfully employed and as such, incessant criminal events in the area could be linked to the presence of few firms which are willing to hire the youths, while others who hire often retrench their staff due to poor economy and the inability of the local government councils, state government and the multi-national oil companies to absorb the jobless able-bodied youths. This finding corroborates with that of Nwachukwu and Bartholomew (2015) wherein the study revealed that the people within ages 25-40 years in Owerri Metropolis was high and are thus beset by acute unemployment, poverty and drug addiction with its consequential effects on criminal incidence.

The findings of the study further revealed that 31.3% of the respondents had no child while 29.5% had more than five children, 17.5% had 3-4 children while 21.8% had 1-2 children. This information is importance in understanding the likelihood of children engaging in crime. For instance, street children phenomenon which is a worldwide challenge where no nation across the world is exempted from the challenge of children neglect and parental un-readiness that results in abandonment and outright lack of care that drives such children unto the street to find ways and means of fending for themselves.

In addition, more than 56% of the respondents were married and it is not unexpected that some of such people might get evolve in crime in order to meet up with ends need while 32% were not married. The finding further revealed that 5.8% were windowed, 4% divorced while only 2% were separated. The finding of the study corroborates with Oyinloye et al. (2017) where the authors found out that the married people were more than single in Akure, Nigeria.

Crime Types Experience By Respondents in Bayelsa West Senatorial District

Crime victimization survey was used to measure the extent and pattern of victimization experienced

among members of the localities across the study area. This was done in order to compare the respondents' experiences with various types of crime to the crime reports from the police divisions. There were noticeable differences in the rate of occurrence of each of this crime type across the 26 political wards of the study area. Table 4 shows the experience of crime victimization of respondents in the study area.

Table 4 shows the experience of victimization among respondents and/or their family members in the five (5) years prior to the time of survey. Findings revealed a total of one thousand eight hundred and eleven (1811) cases of incidences of victimisation by criminals on respondents and/or their family members. The findings depict that 65% of the respondents and/or their family members had been victim of criminals. 35% of the respondents opined that they had not experienced or witnessed any crime type in their neighbourhood. This implies that a larger proportion of the respondents admitted that they or their family members had experienced and/or witnessed the occurrence of criminal acts within and around their neighbourhoods. This indicates that the study area has a high crime rate. These results corroborate to those of Arisukwu et al. (2020), in which 59.2% of the respondents had been victims of crime for at least once in Omu Aran and Ilofa communities of Irepodun and Oke Ero LGAs respectively of Kwara State, Nigeria. This table further revealed that theft/stealing accounted for 44.84% of the incidence rate followed by assault with 18.55% while kidnapping had the lowest proportions of victimisation rate with 0.72%. It reveals that theft/stealing represented the largest proportion of all crime types experienced or witnessed in the area. This figure is in sync with the crime statistics collected from the Divisional Headquarters of the area which recorded that theft/stealing was the crime type with highest incident rate for the period considered in this study. This could also be attributed to the fact that the area is characterised by lower income earners with about 48% of the respondent earning less than 18,000 naira (see Table 1). This shows that the residents are highly susceptible to higher levels of thefts in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This study also corroborates with the study conducted in Kaduna, Nigeria by Umar (2017). The author reported that there was a strong relationship between neighbourhoods of high rate of theft and lower socio-economic status.

Table 4: Experience of Crime Victimization by Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Victimized or witnessed crime		
Yes	260	65.0
No	140	35.0
Total	400	100.0
Types of Crime being a victim or witnessed		
Armed Robbery	95	5.25
Murder/Homicide	37	2.04
Attempted Murder	21	1.16
Theft/Stealing	812	44.84
Assault	336	18.55
Rape	46	2.54
Attempted Rape	91	5.03
Forgery	48	2.65
Burglary/Home Breaking	224	12.37
Suicide	23	1.27
False Pretense and Cheating	65	3.59
Kidnapping	13	0.72
Total	1811	100

Source: Field Work (2019)

Rape was underreported in police crime records, according to one observable feature of the findings. There was also no mention of suicide in the police reports. For example, 7.57% of respondents and/or their family members have been the victims of rape or attempted rape. This figure is higher than what the police have reported in the study carried out by Daukere et al., 2020 which cover same time period. Furthermore, suicide was not recorded in police records, despite the fact that 1.27% of respondents in the victimization survey said they had witnessed suicide in their neighbourhood. During a survey of the area's social and physical characteristics, it was discovered that the majority of crimes were reported to family members, Community Development Committees (CDC), or the council of chiefs. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that rape and suicide are underreported to the police authority in the study area. This could also be due to the unique nature of these types of crimes. Victims of rape and other forms of sexual victimisation may refuse to report their crimes due to social stigma, fear of retaliation from their attackers, or a lack of trust in the criminal justice system.

Factors Responsible for Crime Prevalence in Bayelsa West Senatorial District

Table 5 presents the factors responsible for the occurrence of crime on respondents and/or their

members by criminals. All the variables that are responsible for the causes of crimes in the study area are relatively important. Though, there is variability in the contributions of each of these factors which could be clearly seen as the eigenvalues are greater than one. From Table 4.5, considering the eigenvalues and cumulative per cent, it is reasonable to retain the first four PC's that explained up to 69.21% of the causes of high crime rate in the study area. It can be observed generally, that poverty (1.45) is the leading causes of high incidence rate of crime occurrence followed by unemployment with eigenvalue 1.24 in the study area. These factors accounted for 38.42% of the total variance explained with its significant positive loading. The characteristics of these factors, lean towards the fact that more people commit crimes when they are unable to earn good standard of living to meet their family needs. The findings corroborates with an earlier report by Ajayi and Ajayi (2014) that 40.4% of the respondents in Ibadan attributed the leading causes of high crime rates in the surrounding motor packs in the city to unemployment and poverty. Adewuyi et al. (2017) also reported that 79.1% of the respondents posited that high rate of unemployment and poverty were the major causes of high crime rate in Abuja Municipal, Nigeria. This could be attributed to the fact that 48% of the respondents in this study earn less than 18,000 naira (see Table 3). This

signifies that the area is characterised by unemployment with low income earners. This shows

that the residents are highly susceptible to higher levels of thefts and other crime types.

Table 5: Factors Responsible for Crime Level

Factors	Eigenvalue	Individual %	Cumulative %
Poverty	1.453	20.759	20.759
Unemployment	1.236	17.659	38.418
Low level of education	1.113	15.898	54.316
Real need (A motivating force that compels action for its satisfaction)	1.042	14.889	69.206
Greed	0.948	13.542	82.748
Financial motive	0.79	11.289	94.036
Lack of parental upbringing	0.417	5.964	100

Source: Field Survey (2019)

More importantly and again, low level of education accounted for 15.9% of the total variance explained. This factor leads to meagre income of the household heads which affects the meeting of their obligations or family responsibility. The family educational attainment may affect children’s academic achievement at an early stage which may affect subsequent criminal decisions by these children when grown to adulthood.

Solutions to Crime Prevalence in Bayelsa West Senatorial District

The study further unravelled the likely solutions for this trend of crime and victimisation rate in the study area. The solutions to crime reduction for each measure are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Responses on Solutions to Crime Reduction

Solutions to Crime Reduction	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Eradicate poverty	174	43.5	1 st
Provide employment	172	43.0	2 nd
Better education and upbringing of children	65	16.3	3 rd
Behavioural interventions programmes	57	14.3	4 th
Youth counselling	53	13.3	5 th
Stricter alcohol/drugs policies	51	12.8	6 th
Hotspots-policing	45	11.3	7 th
Others (Electricity, perimeter fencing)	3	0.8	8 th

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The findings in Table 6 revealed that 43.5% of the respondents indicated eradication of poverty which ranked 1st as the major solution for crime reduction strategy. Any person who lives below \$1.25 a day is living below the poverty line. Poverty can propel residents towards crime as a way to make ends meet. Sometimes, a person who is poor might believe that kidnapping or other illegal acts could provide the necessary money to start a new life. This is closely followed by provision of employment which ranked 2nd with 43% of the respondents who indicated its importance in crime reduction strategy. Therefore, an unemployed cash-strapped individual may believe that when he kidnaps someone who is rich, he may be able to become rich himself. 16.3% of the respondents identified better education and upbringing of children while only 11.3% of the respondents indicated hotspots-policing as a factor

for reduction of criminal victimisation in the area. The study further revealed that only 0.8% of the respondents identified other factors such as electricity, perimeter fencing as the factors to reduce victimization rate in the area.

5. Conclusion

The socio-demographic features associated with the incidence of crimes in the Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, Nigeria have been investigated in this study. It showed the pattern of crime as indicated by the respondents. The primary objective was to define certain distinctive patterns of occurrence of crime and to investigate the contributing factors with the frequency of these crimes. All the forms of crime encountered in the region were largely the same although the incidences

of their occurrence varied. The study showed that theft/stealing was the most prevalent type of incidence of crime encountered across the region's settlements. The research further revealed that the major factors responsible for the occurrence of crime were poverty and lack of employment. Equally, the eradication of poverty and the provision of employment have been identified as the main solution to the reduction of crime in the study area.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

A large number of the respondents were of the productive age; by extension, this implies that most of people who involve in criminal activities are of the productive age; therefore, the Bayelsa state government and Multinational oil companies and other stakeholders from the communities should establish poverty alleviation programmes targeted to women and youths in modern farming system and other vocational skills. This could be achieved by making Agric-business to be exciting, creative and innovative enough to stir and spur youth interest through awareness campaign e.g. media, fliers. Also, government should invest massively in agriculture and encourage youths into this direction. In addition, growth policies should not be politicised so that the real people in need of the programmes would benefit immensely from it and not the other way round.

The results of the analysis show that low level of education as the third leading factor responsible for crime occurrence in the area. Thus, occurrences of crime involve sociocultural, ethno-religious and ethical characteristics, it is therefore important that greater attention should be given to the moral education of the general populace. This could be achieved through the collaboration of the schools authorities, parents, teachers and the LGCs members of the area by ensuring that the populace imbibes the ethics of hard work and genuine living.

A large number of the respondents have adduced poverty and unemployment as the major causes of crime in the study area. It is therefore needful for the Bayelsa State Government, multinational oil companies, and the local government councils to provide viable employment opportunities for the youth and channelling their energies into the development of sustained livelihoods which can reduce current tensions and crime in the local communities of the study area. This could be achieved by reviving the traditional economic activities and coming up with poverty alleviation

programmes and employment opportunities, targeting youths who are likely to involve in crime due to economic frustration such as unemployment.

Finally, it is also recommended that there should be improvement in the neighbourhoods policing by the residents which will go a long way to abate crime as suggested by some of the residents that were interviewed whom attributed crime in their neighbourhood to erratic power supply and lack of hotspots policing.

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