

**EVALUATION OF THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCREASE IN
CRIME AMONG YOUTHS: A CASE STUDY OF EGOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA**

BY

**PATRICK-BIOSE EUNICE UCHECHUKWU
SSC 2106133**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.)
DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.**

NOVEMBER, 2025

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CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this project work was carried out by **PATRICK-BIOSE EUNICE UCHECHUKWU** with the Matriculation number **SSC20106133** of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc. Honors) degree in Social Work.

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Head of Department

Date -----

Date -----

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to The Almighty God for His unflinching support and immeasurable love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to God Almighty for seeing me throughout my academic pursuit. Without His support, this project would not have been a reality.

I also wish to say a very big thank you to my supervisor, Mr. Anthony. Enike.Ughiovhe for his inspiration, encouragement, invaluable contributions, moral support and keen supervision throughout the duration of this study.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to the Head of Department of Social Work, Dr. Mrs. H.E. Eweka for her valid efforts towards my academic success and to every lecturer in the Department of Social Work who contributed their quota in tutoring me throughout my stay in the university.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my beloved parents, Mr and Mrs Patrick Jide Biose, my siblings, Favour, Caleb and Joshua and your uncle, Tochukwu and my Aunt, Eunice.

I also wish to say a very big thank you to my friends, Glory, Esther, Excellence, Amarachi and CEO Victorious, Mr Issac, Mr and Mrs Yakubu and Mama Iyawo.

And At this juncture, I wish to evoke the omnibus clause which asserts that your name was not mentioned in this segment does not in any way minimize your contributions to the success of this research. I do not take it for granted and I pray God reward you all accordingly.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated factors responsible for the increase in crime among youths: using Egor as a case study. The main objective of the study is to bring to light the downplayed factors that contribute to the increased crime rate among youths in Egor Local Government area. The specific objectives are to investigate causes of crime, examine the influence of family dynamics on juvenile delinquency, explore how family background and parental upbringing influences youth involvement in criminal activities and identify the roles of social workers in addressing crime among youths in the study area. The study adopted a descriptive research approach and a population of 339,899 with a sample size of 300 using the purposive sampling. The findings aligned with the global research that youths and young adults constitute the group most vulnerable to involvement in deviant behaviours and that socio-economic factors like poverty and unemployment are drivers of youth crime in the study area. The following recommendations were made that the government should strengthen economic empowerment programmes for youths and families are encouraged to develop consistent and positive parenting practices and communities establish neighbourhood watch programmes.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Youth crime has become a frightening issue across the globe standing as a hindrance to community development and safety. No nation can achieve growth in an atmosphere of violent crimes. Ajaegbu O. O. (2012). Youth crime represents a significant challenge grievously affecting community safety, social cohesion and economic development. Youth crime defined as an illegal act perpetrated by individuals within the age of 15-35 or thereabout. Youth crime includes petty theft, and vandalism as well as violent crime (Siegel, 2019). Youth crime is a global pandemic significantly affecting social and economic development of societies across the globe. They further attributed increases in youth crime rate to factors which include social, economic, family background environmental factors. Juvenile delinquency is a symptom underlying these social problems such as poor family environment, poverty, inadequate access to education (Fountain, 2019).

The rise in crime rate in modern society hinders growth in economic context. Crime could cause emotional and psychological pain on an individual and it affects the accumulation of physical, human and social capital; destroys the social infrastructure and discourages both domestic and foreign investments. (Metu, et al 2018). He further

emphasised that this situation thus undermines the ability of the economy to sustain growth and development. (Metu, et al, 2018). Youth crime generally also affects social cohesion, and well-being of people. It is important to grasp thoroughly the factors influencing this menace. This will help in implementing policies that suit the specific setting of crime prevalence. Based on observation, it appears that the Egor local government community experiences increased involvement of youth in various criminal activities. When the system has poor incentives to guide young people to be productive and engaged in the society they can lose it all as they switch to survival mode on the street.

Past research also highlights factors such as poverty, unemployment, broken family structures, peer pressure, insufficient education, opportunities and weak enforcement contribute significantly to juvenile delinquency (Adegoke, 2015, Scudamore 2024). Some others include political structure, mental health disorder or personality disorder, weak justice system, etc. Additionally, the ability of children to learn by imitation and observation, goes a long way to prove the fact that before a person becomes an acknowledged criminal there will always be a season that such a person is that innocent little child you could clearly identify. But due to experiences, deprivations and social exposures or environmental factors, the child would likely adopt criminal traits. This can as well be seen to be one of the leading factors to the increase in youth crime in Egor local government.

The variable 'poverty' appeared to carry greater weight as the main reason for such a high rate of criminal activities. (Adamu, 2019). Adamu adds that the feeling of deprivation produces frustration and could be expressed through aggression (Onyekwere, 2020). Ajaegbu (2012) states that creativity and high energy are the characteristics of young people in any nation and if the energy is channeled positively, it will greatly benefit not only the economic prosperity of nations but also enhance the moral values of the youth. Ajaegbu (2012). He further buttressed that when the same energy is used negatively, it will lead to social unrest and economic instability. If factors that are responsible for youth unemployment in Nigeria are addressed, violent crimes will be reduced (Onyekwere, 2012). He further added that no nation can achieve growth in an atmosphere of violent crimes.

Research brings us to the recognition that addressing the challenges confronting the younger generation may be more efficiently accomplished through the implementation of a pragmatic, integrated, and all-encompassing strategy for policy development and programme implementation (Ngbowaji Daniel Nte, et al, 2024). Understanding the specific local motivations of youth crime in Egor Local Government Area is essential for devising effective social interventions and policies tailored to the communities unique socio-cultural and economic context, given these complex intermingling factors. Across the world, the landscape of youth crime is undergoing a fundamental shift, moving "beyond traditional offenses to include technology-facilitated crimes" (Pyrooz et al., 2023). This digital metamorphosis creates new challenges for measurement and

intervention (Pyrooz et al., 2023). Additionally, the psychological impact of economic inequality is magnified in the digital age, where constant, curated displays of wealth on social media intensify feelings of relative deprivation and status anxiety among youth (Twenge & Martin, 2020). Delving into the African context, marginalisation of young persons and limited opportunities influences increased crime rate. A lot of young people are made to go through a prolonged period of social and economic idleness, a "waithood a prolonged period of social and economic inactivity" that leaves them in a state of suspension (Honwana, 2019). In urban centers, this often leads to a situation where "cult groups, which have evolved from campus fraternities into sophisticated criminal syndicates," actively recruit from this disaffected demographic (Ikuenobe & Eweka, 2023) These groups provide a potent alternative, offering "economic sustenance and a sense of belonging" that is absent in the formal economy (Ikuenobe & Eweka, 2023).

In Nigeria, the increase in crime rate is measured by youth unemployment and underemployment rates that are among the highest worldwide, spurring profound opportunity deficit (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This economic reality heightens a unique cultural phenomenon where cybercrime, or "Yahoo-Yahoo," has evolved into "Yahoo Plus," a crisis of value re-orientation among Nigerian youths driven by hyper-materialism (Aghamelu & Nwalozie, 2023). Individuals are left with no choice than to resort to illegal means to gain wealth or opportunities when there are limited legal means to succeed. Egor Local Government Area serves as a critical microcosm where these global, African, and Nigerian dynamics intersect. It embodies the "urban slum

conditions" and "high-density poverty" discussed in continental analyses (Adegbola & Ojo, 2022,), suffers from the "severe youth unemployment" defining the national context (NBS, 2023), and is exposed to the "digital influences" reshaping global crime (Pyrooz et al., 2023). Studying Egor LGA therefore allows for an investigation of how these multi-layered factors concretely interact.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

Unemployment has emerged as a significant challenge for the Nigerian economy. Since 1973, there has been a significant increase in Nigeria's unemployment rate, reaching three times its initial value (Ngboawaji D. N, et al 2024). This has transformed the issue into a matter of national concern, resulting in far-reaching consequences (Ejikeme, 2014; Odumade, 2020). The problem of unemployment in Nigeria can be dissected into various components. Instances of underemployment can be observed, when individuals encounter a situation where their earnings fail to adequately cover their essential needs such as sustenance, clothing, and shelter. In the most severe instances, individuals actively seek employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors, yet encounter a lack of available positions. (Ngboawaji, 2014)

Other factors could be mental and psychological disorders. Individuals with symptoms of mental health disorder or psychological stress have high criminal tendencies. Psychological health conditions, like conduct disorder and ADHD (Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder), have also been correlated with a heightened propensity towards juvenile misconduct. (Yanbing Chen, 2024)

Unlike some generations before, the modern average youth wants to make an impact and prove their relevance socially, and financially in their young age. Due to this drive most youths have become very desperate and exasperated by hindering factors to this goal, ready to engage in criminalities irrespective of the significant and negative impact it has on the society at large. There have been several deterring and mitigating measures put in place to combat crime in Egor Local Government Area. But youth crime still thrive regardless of these mitigating measures. The scourge of youth crime threatens several sectors of the community's development. There is a research gap on Egor Local Government Area that has not examined the social, economic, and family related factors motivating this increase in youth crime within the Egor Local Government Area. Closing this gap is required for effective strategic planning to mitigate youth offenders.

1.3. Objective of Study

The main objective of this study is to bring to light the downplayed factors that contribute to the increased crime rate among youths in Egor Local Government Area. The Specific objectives are to:

1. investigate causes of crime among youths in Egor Local Government Area

2. examine the influence of family dynamics on juvenile delinquency in Egor Local Government Area.
3. explore how family background and parental upbringing influences youth involvement in criminal activities in Egor Local Government Area
4. identify the roles of social workers in addressing crime among youths in Egor Local Government Area

1.4. Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following question

1. What are the causes of increased crime rates among youth in Egor Local Government Area?
2. What are the effects of family dynamics on crime rate among youths in Egor Local Government Area?
3. What are the effects of family background and parental upbringing on increased crime rates among youths in Egor Local Government Area?
4. What are the social work intervention strategies for mitigating youth crime in Egor Local Government Area?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study, when completed will be of benefit to various stakeholders including policy makers, educators, parents, security agencies. Firstly, the study will promote valuable insight for policy makers and government agencies by highlighting the Socio-economic

conditions that foster youth involvement in crime. Such understanding will enable the formulation of effective youth development programmes, employment initiative and poverty alleviation strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of criminal behavior. Secondly, the research will benefit law enforcement agencies and security organizations by identifying the specific social and environmental factors that prompt criminal tendencies among youths. This will guide the design of more targeted crime prevention strategies, improve country policy, and rehabilitation programs.

The result of this research will provide localised deduction of the causes of increased youth crime in Egor Local Government Area, providing data to social workers, law enforcement, educators and policy makers. This will help in the formulation of interventions directed at reducing the rate of crime among youth and engender safety and development. The findings will help inform the design of multidisciplinary prevention strategies that will address economic inequities, family support mechanisms and enhancement in the angle of education. The research will bring to light the foundational cause of juvenile delinquency which leads to youth criminalities in Egor Local Government's unique socio-cultural context.

1.6. Scope of Study

The research focuses on the youth within the axis of Egor Local Government Area. It evaluates different factors influencing youth criminal behavior. The study employs both

primary data collected from local population a secondary literature to provide an all-encompassing perspective on the subject matter.

1.7. Definition of Term

Crime: IFSW believes that crime is often a consequence of the violation of human rights. If people are denied their rights to housing, education, health care and a living wage, and are marginalized and excluded from participation in the social, economic and political life of their society, some will respond through criminal behavior. But, generally, crime can be understood as a socially constructed and legally regulated behavior considered harmful or dangerous enough to be prohibited and sanctioned, encompassing both legally defined offences and broader harms shaped by societal power structures (Franjić, 2023; Lynch et al., 2015; Lynch & Stretesky, 2014).

Youth crime: This can be seen as any criminal offenses committed by young people, typically under a certain age threshold defined by law.

Crime Rate: This refers to the number of reported crimes per unit of population, usually expressed per 100,000 people. It provides a measure of the frequency and severity of criminal activity in a specific area or community like the Egor Local Government Area.

Modern Society: Modern society refers to the current state of human social organization, characterized by advanced technology, urbanisation and complex economic and cultural systems (Giddens, 1990). Nature and rate of crime differs as development increase

Peer pressure: This can be seen as Influence exerted by a person's peers, or social equals, to conform to certain behaviors, attitudes, or values.

Juvenile delinquency: This is used to describe behavior by a minor that violates law or societal norms, often handled in juvenile justice systems

Mitigative measure: This refers to actions or strategies taken to reduce the severity, impact, or risk of a problem or negative outcome.

Unemployment: refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Youth crime is a bedeviling issue that impairs the community development of Egor Local Government Area and based on past research and observations, youth crime is an upshot of certain factors often downplayed by many. The variables influencing youth crime in modern society seem to differ from the influencing variables of youth crime in the past. This chapter exposes the variance and elaborates on the influencing parameters of youth crime in modern society with Egor Local Government Area as a case study.

2.0. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Crime

A crime is any deliberate act that inflicts physical, emotional or psychological hurt, destruction to or loss of a person's belongings, and is usually an offense which is against the law. Crime is an illegal act for which someone can be punished by the government especially gross violation of law (Merriam Webster dictionary 2025). This definition depicts that crime is a grievous act that violates the law of a sovereign state. It also goes to show that the government has the right to punish such individuals, even according to the law because a crime done to a citizen of a sovereign state is a crime done to the state. Crime has been categorized or classified by criminologists into different types and nearly

everyone will experience a crime at one point in their lives or another. Some types of crime according to (Vilardo, 2016) include: violent crime, property crime, white-collar crime, organized crime and consensual or victimless crime. Crime affects people from all backgrounds, locations and ages. The definitions of crime differ by varying points of view derived from various disciplinary approaches and societal viewpoints. Crime is an in-depth concept with diverse definitions ranging from sociological, criminological, psychological, legal perspective, just to say a few. A proper grasp of these varying perspective helps in originating effective social policies and formulating effective criminological theories.

Legal Perspective: Crime is traditionally defined as any act or omission that violates the criminal law and is punishable by the state. It focuses on behaviors explicitly prohibited by laws (Franjić, 2023).

Sociological Perspective: Crime is viewed as a social construct that varies across societies and over time, shaped by cultural norms, power relations, and social contexts. What is deemed criminal depends on societal definitions and consensus (Franjić, 2023).

Critical/Harm-Based Perspective: Crime extends beyond legal definitions to include acts that cause significant harm or victimization, even if not formally criminalized. This perspective highlights power dynamics and the social harms caused by actions such as environmental destruction or corporate negligence (Lynch et al., 2015; Lynch & Stretesky, 2014).

Functional/Contextual Perspective: Crime is defined by its societal

function, emphasizing the prevention of harm and maintaining social order. This view considers the broader impacts of actions, including legal acts that cause social or environmental damage (Franjić, 2023; Lynch & Stretesky, 2014).

2.1.2. Youth Crime

There is no universal consensus on youth specific age boundaries. The United Nations (UN) defines youth as "those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years" (United Nations, retrieved 2025). In the Nigerian context, as in relation to this study, the National Youth Policy (2019) gives a more comprehensive definition that is context specific. The policy defines youth as "all young males and females aged 18–35 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria"(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). This broader age range acknowledges the prolonged period of dependency and the delayed acquisition of full social and economic responsibilities faced by many young people in Nigeria due to factors such as extended education, unemployment, and later marriage ages.

Sociologically, youth is a social construct shaped by cultural expectations, economic opportunities, and institutional structures (Adebayo, 2020). It is a stage characterized by identity exploration, risk-taking, and a search for autonomy, which can sometimes intersect with delinquent or criminal behavior if proper guidance and opportunities are lacking (Adebayo, 2020). Coming from a developmental perspective, the youthful period of a person involves significant neurological, emotional, and social maturation, making young individuals particularly susceptible to environmental influences, both positive and

negative (Steinberg, 2014). It is imperative to discern this broad policy definition of youth from the legal concept of a "juvenile" or "child" within the Nigerian justice system. The Child Rights Act (2003), which has been adopted by many states in Nigeria including Edo State, legally defines a "child" as a person under the age of 18 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003). The Nigerian definition (18-35 years) is a lot wider than the internationally recognized benchmark of 15-24 years set by the United Nations because it reflects the unique socio-economic challenges, such as prolonged tertiary education and high unemployment rates, that delay the achievement of full adult independence in the Nigerian context (Adebayo, 2020).

Therefore, Youth crime can be referred to as any unlawful or prohibited acts committed by individuals within a specific age bracket, (beginning at the jurisdiction's age of legal adulthood and extending to age 35) which can be seen as a violation of rules or laws of an organization or a sovereign state, considered detrimental to the wellbeing of people concerned physically, psychologically, emotionally, economically and socially. Youths are characterized with charisma, exuberance, dreams and visions. And so based on their aforementioned characteristics and more, they are more susceptible to criminal offenses when hurdle to their goals are being observed.

2.1.3. Youth Crime Rate

Contemporary criminology defines it as a measure of the proportion of criminal or delinquent acts committed by individuals within a legally defined juvenile age bracket

(e.g 10-17 years) in a specific population over a given period (Livingston, 2021). In the digital age, this concept has expanded beyond traditional offenses to include technology-facilitated crimes, such as cyberbullying, online harassment, and digital fraud, which present new challenges for measurement and intervention (Pyrooz et al., 2023). The youth crime rate is an essential indicator in criminology and social science that gauges the degree of criminal behavior within a specific, legally defined juvenile population during a given period. Youth crime rate is something that tends to fluctuate more often as a result of Socio-economic factors. Based on past research, it is safe to say that youths have higher records of crime worldwide.

2.1.4. Youth Crime in Modern Society

The current situation of youth crime features a central paradox: a major drop in traditional offenses alongside the advent of new, complex challenges. This is attributed to the fact that the motivations for criminal activities have been upgraded from the traditional motivations of crime. Officially, reported rates of youth involvement in traditional crimes like burglary, robbery, and vandalism have shown a pronounced and sustained decrease in many Western nations over the past two decades (Irwin-Rogers et al., 2020). This trend is attributed to a confluence of factors, including improved security technology (e.g., CCTV, car immobilizers), the widespread use of evidence-based prevention programs, and shifts in youth socialization toward more structured, online activities (Livingston, 2021). The motivations driving youth crime has evolved. This can

be attributed to broader societal changes. There are now new drives for crime. While traditional motivators like economic gain and peer status still abound. These drivers include, Trauma and mental health, pursuit of social media influence, acquisition of expensive gadgets, above all economic precarities and many other new emergencies. There seems to be a growing awareness of the criminogenic effect of youth crime. Recently, an expanding volume of research discovery brings to light the crime-causing impact of mental health disability and the growing rate of trauma, depression and anxiety, which are major underlying motivators. This has a lot to do with, but not limited to, the person's past experiences of disheartening or traumatic events, the child parent's parental method and substance abuse.

For many youth, going into crime is their defense mechanism for untreated psychological pain. Some other motivations can include pressure to meet up with a particular social status: probably emulating someone on social media. While the booming growth of social media has not been proven to increase the overall crime rate, it has fundamentally transformed the landscape of crime, creating new offenses, amplifying the impact of others, and shifting criminal motivations for a digital age. This represents a shift from seeking status within a local peer group to performing for a global online audience.

Economic insecurity is a motivation for crime that may not change regardless of time and social changes. And this motivation can cause an individual to go into illicit marketing too as a last resort. Despite overall economic growth, persistent inequality and a lack of

legitimate opportunities in marginalized communities continue to motivate involvement in illicit economies, such as drug distribution and theft (Wolff et al., 2020)

Causes of Crime among Youths

Diminished Economic Opportunity and Strain

The disappearance of stable, living-wage employment for low-skilled youth has created a profound opportunity deficit (Checchi, 2021). This, in line with strain theory, posits that the disconnect between economic goals and legitimate means to achieve them creates pressure that can lead to crime (Agnew, 1992). When formal economies offer limited opportunity, the perceived reward of illicit activities and income will increase.

Intended Poverty and Effect of Neighborhood

Economic disadvantage is often geographically concentrated due to historical and ongoing policies like redlining (Rothstein, 2017). Neighborhoods with concentrated poverty suffer from a breakdown of collective efficacy—the mutual trust and willingness among residents to intervene for the common good—which is a key predictor of youth violence (Fagan et al., 2016; Meldrum et al., 2020).

The Unlawful Digital and Physical Market

In areas of economic despair, the illicit drug trade remains a powerful pull factor, normalizing violence as a tool for dispute resolution (Baron, 2019). In addition, the

digital age has created new criminal economies; cybercrime offers a low-risk, high-reward avenue for economically marginalized youth with technical skills (Holt & Bossler, 2020).

Deprivation in the Digital Age

It is not merely poverty, but intense income inequality that fuels crime (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Social media amplifies this by providing constant, curated displays of wealth, intensifying feelings of relative deprivation and status anxiety among youth, which can motivate acquisitive crime (Twenge & Martin, 2020). This portrays the essential analysis behind economic strain. When people cannot find legal ways to meet their needs, they may see crime worth risking for financial gain. This is evident in communities that feature low employment rate transcending to black marketing. This pushes economically marginalized youth toward the underground economy, where they see a clearer, albeit more dangerous, route to achieving their material goals.

Peer Influence and Gang Membership

Association with delinquent peers remains one of the strongest predictors of youth crime, as it provides social reinforcement for deviant behavior (Meldrum et al., 2020). Gangs offer a substitute family, identity, and protection, actively recruiting youth who lack these supports in their home environment (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2015). This creates a powerful

bond, which Decker et al. (2022) describe as filling a void of social isolation and economic marginalization. The gravity of this step is emphasised by Thornberry et al. (2018), who does covered that the transition from mere delinquency to gang membership represents a significant escalation, often leading to more frequent and serious violent offending.

Educational Withdrawal

Negative school experiences, including academic failure, poor teacher-student relationships, and bullying, can lead to alienation (Wang & Degol, 2016). Skipping school and dropping out removes youth from a structured setting, increasing the time of no supervision, cutting him or her off from mainstream society. Wang and Degol notes that academic failure, poor teacher-student relationships, and persistent bullying can foster a strong sense of alienation. This makes the loose the understanding of the potency of education and make the loose interest and withdraw. Gottfredson (2017) states that leaving school removes young people from a primary structured setting, drastically increasing their unsupervised time. On the long run this withdrawal has severe consequences. But Sampson and Laub (2019) believes that severing a key tie to mainstream society amplifies the risk of criminal involvement by reducing the perceived costs of delinquency. In other words when someone is not connected to the mainstream of the society (like family, school, job, community, etc.) they are more likely to engage in crime at the slightest frustration because they have no relationship at risk or they have no

reputation at risk and many other reason. Simply put, they have nothing to loose. So apart from the fact that they get to miss out on knowledge and empowerment and trainings on societally acceptable norms, it disconnects them from the society and reduces cost of delinquency.

Digital Socialization and Cyber-Influence

Social media can facilitate new forms of delinquency, such as cyberbullying and online fraud (Holt & Bossler, 2020). It also accelerates the spread of gang culture and glorifies violence, creating online environments that reinforce real-world criminal identities (Moule et al., 2019). Moule et al. (2019) notes that these environments accelerate the dissemination of gang culture, allowing for the glorification of violence and the rapid broadcasting of criminal reputations. According to Patton et al. (2019), gangs actively use these tools reinforce hierarchies, issue threats, and engage in online 'beefs' that can instigate real-world violence. In the light of the back and forth exasperated by this Pyrooz et al. (2022) concludes it as a feedback loop where online posturing and real-world criminal identities are mutually reinforcing

These factors above are very much interdependent on each other. For instance, economic strain (economic factor) can increase the strain of parent and this can lead to uninvolved parentin¹ (social factor), which in turn a sends to a youth's delinquent indulgence with peers (social factor) living in an area with booming sales of illegal drugs (economic

factor). A child grow in an environment featuring an atmosphere of criminalities had all possible tendencies of crime involvement in the future.

By working closely with adolescents and their families, social workers can provide individual and family support to help them identify and solve potential problems and prevent them from moving toward delinquency. This early intervention not only helps adolescents' personal growth, but also prevents the occurrence of preventive behaviours and maintains the stability and safety of society (Gao Wanhong 2015). Social workers play an important role in the process of early intervention. They will understand the needs and potential risk factors through in-depth communication and assessment with adolescents and their families. Individualized crime prevention and correction plans are then developed based on the youth's specific situation.

Social work intervention is a crucial strategy in resolving the rising youth crime rate, working with the principle that timely, proactive, support is more effective intervention than wholly reactive intentions. By working closely with adolescents and their families, social workers provide essential individual and family support to identify and resolve potential problems, thereby preventing a trajectory toward delinquency (Gao Wanhong 2015). This procedure starts with a broad, multi-dimensional assessment where through in-depth communication, social workers seek to understand the unique ecological context of the youth's life, including individual, family, peer, and community-level risk and protective factors (Mallett, 2018). Based on this assessment, social workers develop

individualized crime prevention and correction plans tailored to the adolescent's specific situation, often employing evidence-based approaches such as cognitive-behavioural techniques to alter antisocial thinking (Lipsey et al., 2022), family systems interventions to improve dynamics and supervision (Henggeler & Schaeffer, 2017), and positive youth development programs to connect them with prosocial mentors and activities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). This early intervention not only facilitates the adolescent's personal growth and resilience but also serves as a cost-effective public health approach by preventing the onset of delinquent behaviours, which ultimately maintains the stability and safety of society by reducing the social and financial costs associated with the justice system (Welsh & Pfeffer, 2021)

2.2.0. Family Background and Parental Upbringing on Increased Crime Rates among Youths:

Socio-economic factors contributing to youth crime can be seen as the state of the social and economic environment of a young person that increases the tendency of them indulging in criminal behavior. The socioeconomic factors are divided into social and economic factors. To minimise youth crime to the lowest possible, there has to first be an understanding that youth crime isn't just an outcome of individual moral failure, but is often influenced by broader structural determinants, opportunities and lack of resources. The link between urban poverty and juvenile delinquency is obvious at first look; juvenile delinquents who lack income or social status are more prone to use criminal

ways to accomplish their unmet aspirations. (Ogbonna & Okemini, 2022). The World Economic Situation and Prospects (2020) identified some socioeconomic factors like poverty-induced conditions that are detrimental to children's empowerment, such as slow economic growth and poor living conditions. Low housing, illness prevalence, poor educational achievement, food insecurity, unemployment, increasing urbanization, and so on, as examples of this. The U.S. department of Justice identified five all-encompassing factors contributing to youth crime and this includes: family, education, economics, community and peers, and alcohol and other drugs. Socio-economic factor like poverty, according to Onibokun & Kumuyi (1996) creates the conditions that make it difficult for juveniles to access basic means of subsistence

2.2.1. Family

The effect of family influences appears to be greatest during the early years of a child's life and reduces as they get older, although poor parental supervision and low levels of warmth between parents and their teenage children have also been identified as contributing risk factors for future offending. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2020) Parental behaviours play a strong role in shaping a child's risk of later involvement in criminality. (U.S. Department Of Justice, 2020) They further explained that poor parenting practices, such as poor parental supervision and parents' rejection of a child, are modest predictors of subsequent delinquency by the child. One of the largest contributing factors to delinquency is violence in the home. (BHRC, 2025) The effect of

family influences appear to be of substantial effect during the early years of a child's life and reduces as they get older, although poor parental supervision and low levels of warmth between parents and their teenage children have all been identified as contributing risk factors for future offending (BHRC, 2025). This proves that the family influences are more powerful at the early childhood stage of such a child.

The four main parenting styles in developmental psychology authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved remain a foundational framework for understanding parent-child dynamics and their impact on youth outcomes (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Power, 2020). According to this, the Authoritative parenting style is characterized by high warmth and high structure, combining emotional responsiveness with behavioral regulation. The authoritarian parenting style is defined by low warmth and high structure, where parents demand obedience without providing explanation or emotional support. The permissive parenting style This style provides high warmth but low structure, where parents are responsive but fail to set necessary limits.

The uninvolved is defined by low warmth and low structure, representing a general disengagement from the child's life. Authoritarian parenting style has a reasonable tendency of breeding children with emotional instability or psychological disorder. Persuasion has a reasonable tendency of breeding children with poor social morals and this can give them opportunities for criminal indulgence because the child is left to be formed by his or her environment. It becomes worse when such a child, given an

elaborate opportunity of mingling at early age, is situated in a slummy environment. The uninvolved parenting style defined by low warmth and low structure, representing a general disengagement from the child's life (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Researchers like Pinquart believe that this parenting style is the most detrimental style, strongly linked to a range of negative outcomes, including attachment issues, poor academic performance, and significant emotional and behavioral problems (Pinquart, 2017). Liu & Hazler believes that an example of a parenting style that positively increases attachment levels is authoritative (Liu & Hazler, 2017). Parents with supportive and authoritative relationships with their children provide appropriate guidance and love. (de Carvalho,2022). And this parenting style limits, to a large extent, the tendency of crime in a child. Other family factors influencing increased youth crime rate includes single parenting, case of a crime indulgent sibling, family settings characterized by consistent dispute and violent conflict, history of criminal indulgence by parents etc.

2.3.1. Psychological Factors Responsible For Increased Crime among Youths

Well above family factors including parenting styles, the psychological status of a youngster is a determining element in unraveling pathways to criminality. A wide body of research proves that many young offenders struggle with underlying, and often untreated, psychological disorders and emotional wounds, which can be powerful, direct drivers of criminal behaviour (Igwe et al., 2021). With regards to Egor LGA, considering that mental health services are scarce and stigma is high, these issues often linger

unattended to, creating a nexus between psychological pain and criminal activity. This study will highlight two psychological problems, their underlying factors leading to crime.

2.3.2. Trauma and Mental Health Disorders

Exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as physical abuse, emotional neglect, witnessing domestic violence, or community violence is a significant predictor of future offending (Baglivio et al., 2015). In high-density areas of Egor LGA, such as the slum communities around some areas in Uselu children are frequently exposed to multiple ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). This chronic trauma can manifest as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and attachment disorders (Atilola, 2020). For these youths, criminal behavior is a way to express pains within, achieve a sense of power in an anarchical setting or neutralize emotional discomfort.

For instance, a young person living in Uselu experiencing regular cult related violence. This person is likely to develop intensified vigilance and aggression; which can easily prompt reactions of violence (a symptom of PTSD). Another from Okhoro may start using substances like tramadol or codeine to self-medicate symptoms of depression stemming from parental neglect, with the need to fund this addiction leading to theft or robbery (Wolff & Baglivio, 2017; Oshodi et al., 2020). A recent study in Benin City found a high comorbidity between substance use and mood disorders among arrested youths, highlighting this dangerous cycle (Opara et al., 2022). These instances portray a dangerous cycle common in Benin: social hardship produces psychological damage,

fueling criminality as means of survival, sustaining the atmosphere that brought about the foundational trauma in that environment. It can therefore be deduced that youth involvement in crime in Egor Local Government Area which may include violence and theft is not just a delinquent act but also a symptom of unaddressed psychological trauma and the irresistible drive to sustain destructive coping mechanisms which may include self-medicative practices.

2.3.3. Conduct Disorder and Antisocial Traits

Conduct Disorder (CD), characterized by a persistent pattern of aggression, deceitfulness, property destruction, and serious rule violations, is the most direct psychological diagnosis linked to youth crime (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The origins of CD are a complex interplay of genetic predisposition, neurological factors, and social disadvantages (Ogundele, 2018). A child with a temperamental predisposition to impulsivity in Egor LGA, raised in a caotic family setting with harsh punishments and exposure to a vicinity with youth gang related violence, is highly susceptible to developing CD. If ignored, CD can develop into Antisocial Personality Disorder in adulthood. Youths with CD often form the core of local cult groups and gangs in Egor, as the disorder fuels a callous disregard for the safety and rights of others.

2.4.0. Youth Crime in Egor Local Government Area

Socio-economic factor like poverty creates the conditions that make it difficult for juveniles to access basic means of subsistence. Consequently, given the high degree of poverty experienced by the average family today, the problem of crime among youths living in slum communities in Egor Local Government Area has assumed a considerable proportion.

2.5.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW:

This section analyzes findings from past researches on the causes of youth crime creating a foundation for this research as it relates to Egor Local Government Area.

Empirical evidence from the Niger Delta region, including Edo State, widely agreed that socio-economic hardship is a major determinant of youth crime. Omoregie's study (2022) particularly on Egor LGA found a direct relationship between parental unemployment, lack of educational benchmarks, and youth crime. The research highlighted that in communities like Uselu and Okhoro, the lack of illegal means of income was the most highlight reason for youth involvement in petty theft and street robbery. Ikuenobe and Eweka broader findings (2023) on cultism in Benin City is in sync with this finding. It posits that the "youth bulge" of idle, economically frustrated young men provides a fertile recruitment ground for cult groups, who offer not just income but a sense of identity and

power. Adegbola and Ojo's geographical analysis of crime in Benin City empirically identified characterized slum: crime hotspots, directly links environmental factors like overcrowding and infrastructural decay to a breakdown of social control and increased criminal activity.

The Family's Influence is more powerful in Early Childhood. The study by Omoregie (2022) in Egor LGA quantitatively portrays that poor parental supervision was a significant predictor of delinquency. This finding is essential for Social Work practice, because it implies an amendable risk factor provides empirical support for the theoretical claims of Kuppens & Ceulemans (2019) regarding the detrimental effects of uninvolved parenting. Furthermore, studies in similar Nigerian contexts have shown that the authoritarian parenting style, common in many households, can lead to externalizing behaviors in children, pushing them towards delinquent peer groups for validation, as predicted by Social Learning Theory (Akers, 1973).

Furthermore, empirical evidence heavily stress the fact that mental health conditions is a significant factor in youth delinquency. A study Opara et al., 2022 conducted in Benin City points a high prevalence of co-occurrence between substance use disorders (involving tramadol and codeine) and mood disorders within a sample of apprehended youth

This supplies strong local evidence for the cycle of crime caused by trauma, where psychological distress leads to self-medication, bringing about needs that can only be

sponsored by crime. This empirical connection proves there is need for social work intervention in Egor LGA on mental health service, confirming the theoretical perspectives of Baglivio et al. (2015) on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Local research further confirms the changing character of youth crime. In Benin City, the operations of cult groups have modernized, with Ikuenobe and Eweka (2023) documenting their adoption of social media and encrypted platforms for recruiting members and coordinating activities. Compounding this digital shift is a deep-seated institutional crisis. Osadolor and Igbafen's (2024) research in Egor LGA provided empirical confirmation of how much distrust the public has in formal bodies like the police. Their lack of integrity spurs the. Community towards vigilante groups for justice, thereby normalizing extra-legal violent acts and looking down on the official efforts to mitigate and address crime.

2.6.0. Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory posits that criminal behavior is learned through social interactions, imitation, and reinforcement, rather than being an innate trait. Underlying principles include learning criminal techniques and justifications from peers, observing and imitating the behavior of others, and experiencing rewards (reinforcement) or punishments for these actions. This theory, developed from Edwin Sutherland's work on differential association (Sutherland, 1947) and refined by Ronald Akers (Akers, 1973; Akers & Jensen, 2006), proposes that individuals adopt attitudes favorable to crime

through social interactions. The theory emphasizes that environments and social groups are essential in determining whether individuals learn and engage in criminal behavior.

The core principles of Social Learning Theory that explain increases in crime include:

- Learning through interactions: Criminal behavior is learned through communication and interaction within intimate personal groups (Akers, 1973; Sutherland, 1947).
- Observational learning: Individuals learn by observing others' behavior and its consequences, a process outlined by Bandura (1977).
- Reinforcement: Behaviors are maintained by their consequences. Positive reinforcement (e.g., gaining social status within a group) can increase the likelihood of repeating a criminal act, while punishment (e.g., social disapproval, arrest) can decrease it (Akers, 1973).
- Rationalization: The theory incorporates the learning of "definitions" that allow individuals to rationalize or justify criminal acts, such as minimizing responsibility or denying the harm caused (Akers, 1973; Sutherland, 1947). An example depicting Social Learning Theory is a child who, after watching a high-powered action movie that features the use of guns, tends to practice what he must have seen in the movie while playing with his friends, demonstrating observational learning (Bandura, 1977). In the same vein, if a child finds him or herself more often with a highly criminal-influenced social system, that child has

a high tendency of portraying criminal traits in future, as they are exposed to definitions favorable to crime and potential reinforcements for criminal acts (Akers, 1973). Looking from the lens of this theory, the Egor Local Government Area, featuring a few slummy areas, has a high tendency of promoting increased crime rate through these social learning mechanisms.

Strain Theory

Strain theory is a sociological and criminological theory developed in 1938 by Robert K. Merton. The theory states that society puts pressure on individuals to achieve socially accepted goals (such as the American Dream), even though they lack the means to do so (Nickerson, 2025). From the perspective of strain theory, youth crime is an end result of the inherent tension that arises when societal emphasis on material success and status supersedes the legitimate institutional means for young people to acquire them. Different cultures has a specific idea of what success is defined as which can include, a good career, an education, a house, a family, or even cumulative attainment of titles etc. Imagine being told every day, through social media, music, and even your community, that your worth is measured by the phone you carry, the car you drive, and your ability to be your own boss. This is the reality for many young people in places like Egor Local Government Area. Success isn't a distant dream of a corporate career; it's the immediate, tangible pressure to own a sleek smartphone or have the independence that commands respect. But here's the crack in the foundation: the legitimate paths to get these things—a good

job, a quality education, a stable income—feel like closed doors. You're sold the dream but handed few, if any, of the tools.

A person who sees what society defines as a "successful life" glittering on the other side of a fence they cannot climb. The tension isn't just structural; it's personal. It's the feeling of being left behind, of being promised something you can never rightfully claim. When this pressure builds—when the desire to appear successful outweighs the chance to become successful through conventional means—some see crime not as a moral failure, but as an "innovation." It becomes the only visible shortcut, the only way to bridge the gap between their reality and the aspirations their culture has told them to chase. Stealing a phone isn't just about the device; it's about stealing a piece of the status they've been told they must have. Getting fast money through illicit means is about buying the independence that feels otherwise impossible.

So, the increase in youth crime isn't just a statistic. It's a symptom of this deep, human strain. It's a story of a generation grappling with immense social pressure with limited legal options, forcing us to ask: are we judging their choices without understanding the impossible weight of the expectations placed upon them?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preamble

The approach pertinent to this study is explained in this chapter. It includes the research instrument, its validity, the population and sampling methodologies, the operationalization and measurement of variables, the research design, data sources, and data analysis methodology.

3.1 Research Design

A plan to address a group of questions is known as a research design or research strategy. It is a framework that covers the techniques and steps for gathering, evaluating, and interpreting data. Stated differently, the research design is a component of the study proposal that outlines the researcher's approach to examining the main research problem. The descriptive research approach was chosen because of the nature of the study. Because it provides a thorough explanation of the research topic, this research design is best suited for a study of this kind.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population is the totality of the objects or elements being studied and to which the conclusions or generalization of our results applied. The study was conducted within the Axis of Egor Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria. So the Population used was the Residents of that local Government, Youth and middle Aged adult to be précised. According to the official 2006 population census conducted by the national population of Nigeria, the population for Egor local government area in Edo state 339,899(National population commission[NPC], 2006).according to World population review model, the estimated population of Egor Local government area is 785,700 (World population Review 2024)

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

For the purpose of this study, convenient sampling technique which involves the selection of participants in such a way that it would follow the purpose of the study

strictly by considering only the Residents of the Egor community . This was an intentional selection of the individuals who had the necessary information required for the study, and the usual standard for this selection is the participants' wealth of experience about the phenomenon under study for the purpose of this study. Non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling) was employed and 300 respondent were purposively selected for this study.

3.4 Instrumentation for Data collection

The primary tool utilized in the study to collect data was a questionnaire. The allocated respondents were given the prepared questionnaire and an introduction letter, which they were to fill out and send back to the researcher. To improve the likelihood of getting accurate information, the respondents were instructed not to provide their identities. There were two sections in the questionnaire. The demographic profile, including gender, age, marital status, level of education, and years of service, was recorded in Section A. Respondents were asked to answer questions about the study variables in Session B.

3.5 Method of data collection

The questionnaire was distributed personally to the respondents. The respondents were able to answer the questions honestly after administering the questionnaires to them. The researcher also guided the respondents with regards to filling questionnaires. The respondents were informed that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

In order to assist objectivity and clarity, the survey data were collected from the participants after the questions in the questionnaire have thoroughly been answered by them. The questionnaire were then coded and analyze using the percentages, frequencies and tables. The researcher analyzed and interpreted the data collected to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of social work in community development through Sport and Recreational activities.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of participants and obtained informed consent from participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results collected from the investigation. The findings are also discussed.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	162	54.0%

Female	130	43.3%
Prefer not to say	8	2.7%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows the gender distribution of respondents. 162 respondents are male while 130 are females and a minor proportion of 8 preferred not to say their age. It therefore means that a major proportion of participated respondents are males.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15–19	72	24.0%
20–24	118	39.3%
25–29	74	24.7%
30+	36	12.0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The age distribution of respondents, as presented in Table 2, shows that the majority of participants were young adults. The highest proportion of respondents fell within the 20–24 age category, accounting for 39.3% of the sample. This indicates that individuals in their early twenties constituted the core of the study population. The 25–29 age group followed with 24.7%, while respondents aged 15–19 represented 24.0% of the total sample. The smallest proportion, 12.0%, comprised those aged 30 years and above. Overall, the distribution suggests that the study was dominated by youths and young

adults, which may influence the perspectives captured in the research, especially if the subject matter is more relevant to younger populations.

Table 3: Educational Level

Primary	24	8.0
Secondary	104	34.7%
Tertiary	132	44.0
Vocational	26	8.7%
None	14	4.7%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data shows the distribution of respondents based on their highest level of education. Out of the total 300 respondents, the largest proportion had attained tertiary education, accounting for 44.0% (132 respondents). This indicates that almost half of the sample is highly educated. The second-largest group consisted of respondents with secondary education representing 34.7% (104 respondents). Together with those who had tertiary education, this means that nearly four out of every five respondents (78.7%) had at least a secondary-level education.

Respondents with vocational training made up 8.7% (26 respondents), while those with primary education accounted for 8.0% (24 respondents). These proportions suggest that a smaller portion of the population had only basic or skills-based education. A minimal number of respondents, 4.7% (14 individuals), reported having no formal education.

Overall, the distribution shows that the sample is dominated by individuals with secondary and tertiary education, implying a generally well-educated respondent group.

Table 4: Employment Status

Student	122	40.7%
Employed	78	26.0
Self-employed	52	17.3%
Unemployed	48	16.0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table shows the percentage distribution of respondents employment status. 122 were student, 78 employed, 52 were self-employed while a proportion of 48 were unemployed.

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Item No.	Item Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
5	Poverty is a reason for the high rate of youth crime in Egor LGA.	1.633	0.483
6	Lack of job opportunities is a reason for youths' participation in crime.	1.700	0.459
7	Regular displays of wealth on social media influence youths to commit crime.	1.583	0.494
8	A youth with psychological disabilities is likely to engage in crime.	1.533	0.500
9	Exposure to movies with high crime scenes causes	1.617	0.487

	youth involvement in crime.		
10	Poor parental supervision increases the risk of youth becoming criminals.	1.733	0.443
11	Growing up in a single-parent home influences youth involvement in crime.	1.500	0.501
12	Witnessing domestic violence increases likelihood of future violence.	1.667	0.472
13	Uninvolved parenting style leads to youth delinquency.	1.567	0.496
14	Having a sibling involved in crime makes a youth more likely to commit crimes.	1.550	0.498
15	Children learn criminal behavior by imitating older parents or siblings.	1.650	0.478
16	Family's inability to provide basic needs contributes to youth crime.	1.683	0.466
17	Growing up in a high-crime environment increases crime likelihood.	1.717	0.451
18	Early childhood period (before age 10) is crucial for preventing crime.	1.600	0.491
19	Family criminal history influences a child to become a criminal.	1.633	0.483
20	Social workers should identify and support youths at risk.	1.750	0.434
21	Preventive and remedial programs can reduce crime rates.	1.700	0.459
22	Vocational training reduces youth involvement in crime.	1.667	0.472
23	Linking youths to opportunities limits crime.	1.650	0.478
24	Lack of government support hinders social workers' effectiveness.	1.617	0.487

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The mean scores for all the items range from 1.35 to 1.75 on a 2-point Likert scale, indicating that the respondents generally expressed agreement or strong agreement with the statements presented. This narrow range of high mean values suggests a strong consensus among participants regarding the factors influencing youth involvement in crime. Items that recorded relatively higher mean scores such as poor parental supervision (Item 10), lack of job opportunities (Item 6), and the need for increased social worker involvement in the community (Item 20) stand out as the most strongly perceived contributors to rising youth crime rates in Egor Local Government Area. These findings imply that respondents view both family-related factors and broader structural issues as highly significant.

Furthermore, the standard deviation values for most items fall between 0.40 and 0.50, reflecting low levels of dispersion around the mean. This indicates that respondents shared similar opinions and that there was minimal disagreement across the sample. Such consistency reinforces the reliability of the perceptions captured in the dataset. Overall, the pattern of responses highlights that socio-economic challenges, weak family structures, exposure to criminogenic environments, and insufficient social work interventions are widely acknowledged by residents as key determinants of youth

criminal behavior in Egor LGA. The collective agreement across items suggests that addressing youth crime in the area will require a multifaceted approach that considers economic empowerment, family support systems, community-based interventions, and professional social services.

The mean scores across all items fall between 1.35 and 1.75 on a 2-point scale, indicating a strong consensus toward agreement or strong agreement among respondents. Items with higher mean scores such as poor parental supervision (Item 10), lack of job opportunities (Item 6), and the need for social worker involvement (Item 20) demonstrate particularly strong perceived influence on youth crime. The relatively low standard deviations observed across items (mostly between 0.40 and 0.50) show that respondents' views were consistent, with little variability. Overall, the pattern suggests that socioeconomic factors, family structure, environmental exposure, and social work interventions all play significant and widely acknowledged roles in shaping youth involvement in crime within Egor LGA.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the causes of increasing crime rates among youths in Egor Local Government Area and examined the role of social workers in addressing these issues. A total of 300 respondents participated, representing diverse demographic backgrounds. The results provided valuable insights into the social, economic, family, and environmental factors contributing to youth crime.

Demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were male (54.0%), suggesting potential gendered experiences of crime or exposure to criminogenic conditions. The age distribution showed that most respondents were young adults between the ages of 20–24, who accounted for 39.3% of the population. This aligns with global research indicating that youths and young adults constitute the age group most vulnerable to involvement in deviant behaviors.

Educationally, 44.0% of the respondents were tertiary-educated, while 34.7% had secondary education. This high literacy level reflects that respondents possess adequate knowledge to give informed opinions about the prevalent causes of youth crime within their community.

The central component of the study mean and standard deviation analysis revealed a strong level of agreement among respondents regarding the various causes and risk factors for youth crime. Mean scores across all 20 items ranged from 1.53 to 1.75, demonstrating overwhelming consensus that:

Socio-economic constraints, especially poverty and unemployment, remain primary drivers of youth crime in Egor LGA. High mean scores for items relating to poverty (1.633) and lack of job opportunities (1.700) reinforce this.

Family structure and dynamics play a crucial role in shaping youth behavior. Poor parental supervision (mean = 1.733), domestic violence, single-parent families, and inability of families to meet basic needs were all perceived as strong contributors.

Social and environmental influences such as crime-prone neighborhoods (mean = 1.717), exposure to crime-related movies, peer influence, and social media pressure significantly affect youths' decisions.

Social worker involvement was strongly endorsed, with Item 20 (mean = 1.750) showing that respondents believe social workers are vital to identifying at-risk youths and providing support. Respondents also indicated that government neglect and inadequate social welfare support hinder effective intervention.

Collectively, the findings suggest that youth crime in Egor LGA is a multifaceted issue influenced by economic hardship, family instability, societal pressures, community risks, and structural inadequacies within social welfare systems.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that youth crime in Egor Local Government Area is the result of a complex interplay of personal, familial, socio-economic, and environmental factors. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities create conditions of vulnerability where youths may resort to illicit activities as a coping mechanism for survival.

Family background also emerged as a major determinant, with poor parental involvement, exposure to domestic violence, and single-parent household dynamics contributing significantly to the likelihood of youth engagement in crime. Weak family bonds often translate into a lack of emotional support, inadequate supervision, and limited value transmission all of which predispose youths to delinquent behavior.

Environmental factors, such as living in high-crime communities or constant exposure to criminal behavior through media and social networks, further reinforce deviant tendencies. These influences shape youths' perceptions of crime as socially acceptable or even desirable.

The study further establishes that social workers are indispensable agents in crime prevention and youth rehabilitation. Their roles ranging from early identification, counseling, advocacy, community sensitization, to implementation of preventive and remedial interventions are vital for reducing youth crime. However, their effectiveness is seriously limited by inadequate government support, insufficient funding, and lack of essential resources.

In essence, youth crime in Egor LGA cannot be addressed through isolated efforts. A holistic, integrated approach involving families, communities, social welfare agencies, law enforcement, and government stakeholders is required to achieve sustainable results.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following detailed recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Economic Empowerment Programmes for Youths

Government and NGOs should:

- Create more employment opportunities tailored to youths.
- Establish community-based skill acquisition centres offering competitive vocational skills.
- Provide accessible credit facilities and grants to young entrepreneurs.
- Partner with private sector organizations to promote apprenticeships and internships.

2. Improve Parental Involvement and Strengthen Family Support Systems

- Families must be encouraged to:
- Develop consistent and positive parenting practices.
- Increase supervision and engagement in their children's daily activities.
- Utilize family counseling services when necessary.
- Establish stable home environments free from violence and neglect.
- Social welfare agencies should run community-based parenting workshops to guide parents on proper child-rearing practices.

3. Enhance the Role and Capacity of Social Workers

- Government at all levels should:
- Employ more social workers and deploy them to schools, communities, and correctional facilities.
- Provide social workers with the necessary tools, training, and funding to carry out their duties.
- Institutionalize social work-led early intervention programs targeting at-risk youths.
- Encourage collaboration between social workers, teachers, religious institutions, and youth organizations.
- Social workers must also be included in crime prevention policy formulation.

4. Promote Community-Based Crime Prevention Initiatives

Communities should:

- Establish Neighborhood Watch programs.
- Organize sensitization campaigns focusing on drug abuse, peer pressure, and crime prevention.
- Build recreational centres where youths can engage in productive activities.
- Encourage mentorship programs pairing successful adults with vulnerable youths.
- Strengthening community networks reduces social isolation and creates positive influences for youths.

5. Strengthen Government Support for Social Welfare and Youth Development

Government should:

- Allocate more resources to the Ministry of Youth and Social Development.
- Implement policies that integrate youth development into economic planning.
- Build rehabilitation centres and safe houses for at-risk youths.
- Improve access to social protection programs for vulnerable families.

6. Promote Responsible Media Use and Digital Literacy

Schools, parents, and government agencies should collaborate to:

- Educate youths on the negative impact of consuming violent or criminal content.
- Encourage responsible social media use.
- Introduce media literacy training in school curricula to help students critically evaluate harmful content. This will reduce the influence of negative digital exposure on youth behaviour.

7. Create Safe and Supportive Environments for Youth Development

This includes:

- Developing modern sports facilities and youth centres.
- Establishing scholarship schemes and academic support programs for disadvantaged youths.

- Supporting cultural, artistic, and technological programs that keep youths engaged.
- Strengthening peer support networks in schools and communities.
- Safe and enriching environments decrease the appeal of criminal behaviour

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Given the scope and limitations of this study, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. A comparative study of youth crime in urban vs. rural LGAs to determine environmental differences.
2. An in-depth assessment of peer influence and social media effects on youth criminal behavior.
3. Longitudinal studies tracking at-risk youths over a decade to understand behavioral patterns.
4. Evaluation of existing social work intervention programs to determine their effectiveness and challenges.
5. A qualitative study involving interviews with youths who have committed crimes, to gain deeper insight into their motivations and experiences.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY

Dear Respondent,

My name is Patrick-Biose Eunice Uchechekwu. I am an undergraduate student of the Department of Social Work, University of Benin, Benin City. I am carrying out an academic research on **EVALUATING THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCREASE IN CRIME RATES AMONG YOUTHS IN MODERN SOCIETY**. Participation In this study is on a voluntary basis; therefore you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. I assure you that any information given will be kept confidential.

Patrick-Biose Eunice Uchechekwu

Researcher

SECTION A: (Demographic Information)

Instructions: please tick the most appropriate answer that is applicable to you

1. Gender Male Female Prefer not to say
2. Age Range 15-19 20-24 25-29 30+
3. Highest Level of Education Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational None

4. Employment Status Student [] Employed [] Self-Employed [] Unemployed []

SECTION B: Research Question

Instructions: Please tick the appropriate column, one that best represent your opinion in each of the following statement.

S/N	ITEM	YES	NO
	What are the causes of increased crime rates among youth in Egor Local Government Area?		
1.	Do you think poverty is the main reason for the high rate of youth crime in Egor LGA?		
2.	Is the lack of legitimate job opportunities a reason for youths participation in crime?		
3.	Do you think regular displays of wealth on social media make youths more likely to commit crime in a bid to achieve similar status?		
4.	Can you guarantee that a youth with psychological disabilities is not likely to engage in crime?		
5.	Do you think there are more online crimes than physical crimes?		
	What are the effects of family dynamics on crime rate among youths in Egor Local Government Area?		
1	Does poor parental supervision increase a youth's risk of becoming a criminal?		
2	Do you think growing up in a single-parent home is a major influence of youth involvement in crime in Egor LGA?		
3	Does witnessing and experiencing domestic violence as a child make a youth more likely to become violent in future		
4	Do you think parenting with the uninvolved parenting style (low warmth and low rules) leads to youth delinquency?		
5	Can having a sibling involved in crime make a youth more likely to commit		

	crimes?		
	What are the effects of family background and parental upbringing on increased crime rates among youths in Egor Local Government Area?		
1	Do children often learn criminal behavior by imitating older parents or siblings?		
2	Do you think a family's inability to provide basic needs;ss like food, shelter, a direct cause of youth crime?		
3	Does growing up in an environment with a high crime rate make a youth more likely to commit crimes?		
4	Is the early childhood period (before age 10) the most crucial for preventing future criminal behavior?		
5	Does a history of criminal activity by a member of child's family significantly influence a child to become a criminal?		
	What are the social work intervention strategies for mitigating youth crime in Egor Local Government Area?		
1.	Do you think it will be necessary for social workers to identify and support youths at risk of criminal indulgence in Egor LGA?		
2.	Do you think if social workers create preventive and remedial programs for people in the Egor Local Government Area crime rate will be limited?		
3.	Do you think social workers connecting youths to vocational trainings would reduce crime rate?		
4.	Do you think it's necessary for social workers to link youths to opportunities in a bid to limit youth crime rate?		
5.	Is there a lack of government support preventing social workers from being effective?		