

## Youth Violence and It's Implications on Sustainable Development in Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa State

Undutimi Johnny Dudafa<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Department of Sociology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

The study was designed to examine youth violence and its implication on sustainable development in Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa state. Related literatures were reviewed based on the objectives of the study. To give a theoretical background to the study, frustration aggression theory was used to explain youth violence and its implication on sustainable development; the research design used for this study was cross-sectional design, while the sampling techniques used were multi-stage sampling technique. The primary data consisted of mainly; the instrument of questionnaire. The study sampled a total of two hundred (200) respondents in the two clans. The analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics (mean and simple percentage) through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study concluded that youth criminality is at its peak in the study area and would continue to increase if the economic condition of youths is unattended to. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the government should open economic windows through job creation, by creating skill acquisition programmes among others.

**Key words:** Bayelsa; Youth Violence; Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

Youth violence has been identified as a major economic, social welfare, health, and governance issue on a

global scale. According to studies, persistent violence and restiveness in Nigeria's six geopolitical zones are detrimental to growth and stifle economic development (Ewetan & Urhie 2014). Youth gangs and cult groups have been present in Nigerian cities for a long time, according to Oruwari and Opuene (2006). Since the early 1970s, there has been a noticeable increase in the occurrence of youth violent crimes, as well as the heinous nature of these crimes, particularly the use of dangerous weapons and killings.

In 2015, 22.6 percent of high school students in the United States reported being in a physical fight in the previous year, and 16 percent reported carrying a weapon in the previous 30 days (CDC, 2016). For some adolescents, violent behaviour progresses from physical fighting in early adolescence to more lethal forms, such as violence with a weapon, in later adolescence (Dahlberg & Potter, 2001). Adolescent violence is a significant risk factor for future violence in young adulthood (Dahlberg & Potter, 2001; Herrenkohl et al., 2000). Members of certain demographic groups, particularly men and African Americans, are more likely to be involved in serious forms of violence and the negative consequences that follow (e.g., homicide, incarceration) (Herrenkohl et al., 2000). Homicide is the leading cause of death among African American youth (CDC, 2016). In 2014, the homicide rate among males was six times higher than that of females, and the homicide rate among African American youth aged 10 to 24 was three to fourteen times higher than that of other groups of youth (CDC, 2016). Males are subjected to higher levels and more serious forms of violence than females (CDC, 2012). Nonetheless, females' rates of violence and delinquency are rising (Zahn et al, 2008). Furthermore, females may engage in less physical but more relational aggression than males (Borowsky, Widome, & Resnick, 2008).

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The phenomenon of youth violence has emerged one of

Nigeria's major concerns, particularly in Bayelsa state. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of cases of killing, armed robbery, rape, clashes between rival cult groups, politically motivated killings, and street invading by various cult groups during broad daylight and evening hours in Yenagoa metropolis. There have also been reports of various criminal activities at various market points, particularly in Swali, Opolo, and Tombia: business owners and operators close their doors earlier than usual in order to avoid becoming victims of these criminal events.

Similar activities are exemplified by the killing and kidnapping of oil workers in the Niger-Delta region. Those involved in these activities were said to be between the ages of 18 and 20. (Yusuf, 2014). Furthermore, the government's unwillingness to curb the phenomenon exacerbated the situation. In a nutshell, the problem bedeviling the Nigerian country is insecurity, which is manifested through the activities of youth, and this has hampered the country's long-term development.

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## RESEARCH QUESTION

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- What are the causes of youth violence in Yenagoa LGA?
- To what the extent has youth violence impact on sustainable development in Yenagoa LGA?
- What role does the government play in curtailing youth violence in Yenagoa LGA?
- What are the steps taken in combating youth violence in Yenagoa LGA?

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## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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- To examine the causes of youth violence in Yenagoa LGA
- To ascertain the extent to which youth violence impacts on sustainable development in Yenagoa LGA
- To explore the role government have play in curtailing youth violence in Yenagoa LGA
- To seek out solutions to youth violence in Yenagoa LGA

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## THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: THE FRUSTRATION AGGRESSION THEORY (FAT)

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Ted Robert Gurr expanded on a theory developed by John Dollard and his research associates in 1962. However, it appears to be the most common explanation for violent behaviour caused by a failure to meet needs. Furthermore, in an attempt to explain aggression, particularly armed conflict, scholars highlight the difference between what people believe they want or desire and what they actually

get, referred to as the "want-get ratio" (Ferdinand), as well as the difference between expected and actual need satisfaction (Davies, 1962) In a nutshell, the norm or culture of relative deprivation, frustration, and aggression among youths creates a gap between value capacities that predispose them to armed conflict.

It is also a lack of satisfaction in the course of water pollution, deforestation, and land degradation caused by dissatisfaction between aspirations that causes resource-oriented tension (Milardsky, 1975). In other words, tensions arise when what is expected, such as employment, falls short of expectations in terms of value and impact on youths. These unfulfilled aspirations, if not properly satisfied, can lead to aggression, which is usually directed at the party perceived to be the source of deprivation and can lead to criminality. According to Gurr (cited in Shedrack, 2006), the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what appears attainable, the greater the chances that anger and violence will result. As a result, it is not unreasonable to argue that in the Niger Delta, where youths are denied access to legitimate occupations such as fishing, hunting, pottery, and agricultural activities, youths may express their rage through violence directed at those responsible or people who are indirectly or directly related to them.

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## METHODOLOGY

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The study was conducted in Yenagoa Local Government Area, Bayelsa State. The cross sectional design was adopted. The study population comprised individuals (both sexes) that reside in Yenagoa metropolis. The sample size of 400 was determined using Taro Yamane formula. This was calculated from the population size of 352,285 as put by National Population Commission in 2006 census. However due to largeness of the calculated sample size and the difficulty of covering this huge sum in the survey, the calculated sample size was further divided by  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Therefore,  $400 \times \frac{1}{2} = 200$ . Hence, the sample size was reduced to 200. The study adopted multi-stage sampling technique. Firstly, cluster sampling was used to divide the population into two clans namely; Epie, and Atissa clan respectively. Secondly, the simple random technique was used to select two communities from each of selected clans. Which include: Agudama, and Akenfa for Epie clan and while for Atissa clan Ovom and Amarata were selected respectively; making a sum total four (4) communities. It is very important to state here that the simple random sampling technique without replacement was employed to ensure that communities in each clan are given equal opportunity of being selected. Lastly, the accidental sampling technique was used to locate respondents in all the selected clans and communities. This was done due to the absence of a well-structured sample frame. This study made use of two sources of data collection. The first

method is the secondary sources of data collection which was used to gather literature relating to the subject under study. They include; books, journals, statistical surveys and publications, internet sources etc. The second source is the primary method of data collection. In using primary method, the study made use of structured questionnaire. The essence of using this method was to enable the researcher gather more information of the issues involved in the study. In determining the validity of the research instruments (questionnaire) the researcher presented the instrument to experts in measurement and evaluation for vetting, correction and approval before distributing them to respondents for data collection. On the basis of reliability, the study adopted Cronbach's Alpha which indicates that a variable measurement of 0.7 and above is strongly reliable, while anything less would be assumed to be unreliable. In analyzing the data collected from the field, the researcher adopted the use of quantitative tool of data analysis since the study was basically a quantitative study. The analysis of the data for this study was based on the measurement scale used for the measurement of data collected, this is to say that data were nominal in nature were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as; mean, frequencies, percentages and pie charts. Based on this, frequencies, percentages and the pie charts were used in analyzing the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents since these data are nominal and qualitative in nature. On the other hand, the data that are ordinal and quantitative in nature were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For the descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation was adopted, while for the inferential statistics, Chi-Square was used, through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which served as the inferential statistics used in testing the hypotheses in this study. For the qualitative data, content analysis was the major instrument utilized as complements to the quantitative method of data analysis.

## RESULTS

**Table 1**  
**Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Items	F=200	Percentage (%)=100
Respondents' Sex		
Male	97	48.5
Female	103	51.5
Respondents Age		
18-27	68	34.0
28-37	40	20.0
38-47	27	13.5
48-57	33	16.5
58 and above	32	16.0
Respondents' Marital Status		
Single	46	23.5
Married	107	53.5
Divorced/Separated	26	13.0
Widow/widower	21	10.5

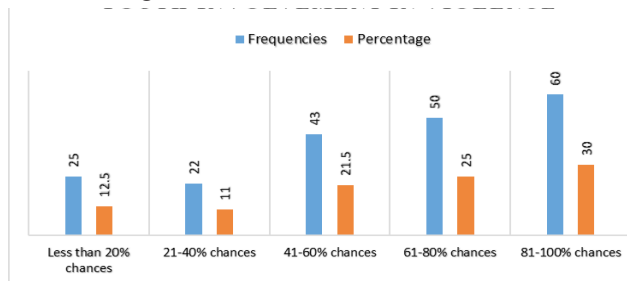
Items	F=200	Percentage (%)=100
Respondents' Educational Attainment		
No Formal Schooling	-	-
Primary School	33	16.5
Secondary School	81	40.5
UNI/COE	86	43.0
Respondents' occupation		
Civil servant	43	21.5
Student	29	14.5
Trader	21	10.5
Fisher/farmer	42	21.0
Artisan	36	18.0
Others	29	14.5
Respondents' clan in Yenagoa		
Epie	100	50.0
Atissa	100	50.0
Respondents Community		
Agudama	50	25.0
Akenfa	50	25.0
Ovom	50	25.0
Amarata	50	25.0
Respondents' Religion		
Christianity	160	80.0
Islam	12	6.0
ATR	28	14.0

## ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are measured by making use of variables such as respondents' clans, respondents' community, respondents' sex, respondents' ages, and respondents' educational attainment, respondents' marital status, respondents' religion, as captured in table 4.2 below. To this effect, revealed that that 48.5% of the population were male while 51.5% of them were female. With regards to respondents' ages, the analysis indicated that 34.0% of the population fall between the age brackets of 18-27 years. 20.0% of the population were between the ages of 28-37 years, 13.5% of them were between the ages of 38-47 years, 16.5% of them were between the ages of 48-57 years while 16.0% of them, were between the age brackets of 58 years and above.

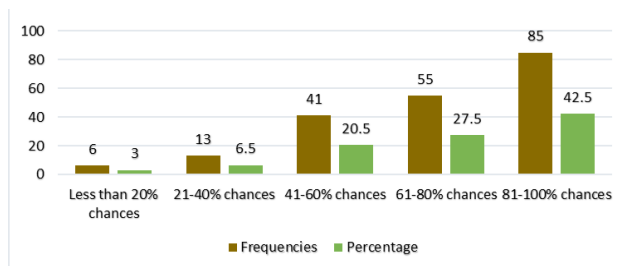
The table also indicated the marital status of respondents, as such it revealed that 23.0% of them are still single, 53.5% of them are married, 13.0% of the population are divorced and separated; while the 10.5% are widows/widowers. With regards to the educational qualification of the respondents the table indicated that 16.5% of them had obtained a primary school education, 40.0% of them had obtained a secondary education, while 43.0% of the population were graduate and graduate in view. In terms of the occupation of the respondents the table clearly shows that 21.5% of them are civil servants; 14.5% students; 10.0% are traders; 21.0% are fish men/farmer; 18.0% of them are artisans while 14.5% of them do other job for a living. With regards to the clans

of the respondents, the table shows that 50.0% of the respondents were from Epie clan, while 50.0% of the respondents were from Atissa clans. Also, with regards to the communities of the respondents reside, it indicated that 25.0% of the population reside in Amarata; 25.0% reside in Agudama; 25.0% reside in Akenfa; And 25.0% reside in Ovom respectively. Lastly, the table showed the religion status of the respondents, it revealed that 78.0% of them are Christians, 10.0% of them are of Muslims, while 12.0% of the population worship other African tradition religion.



**Figure 1**  
The chance that abject poverty is directly link with youth involvement in violence

Figure 1 above, showed indicated the probability of abject poverty directly linked with youth involvement in violence. Vividly, the survey revealed that 11% of the respondents affirmed that it is 21%-40% chances that abject poverty is linked with youth involvement in violence. Also, 12.5% of the population affirmed that it is less than 20% chances that abject poverty is linked with youth involvement in violence. In the same vein, 21.5% of the respondents affirmed that it is 41%-60% chances that abject poverty is linked with youth involvement in violence. 25% affirmatives that it is 61%-80% chances that abject poverty is linked with youth involvement in violence. Obviously, majority of the population affirmed, with 30% affirmatives that it is 81%-100% chances that abject poverty is linked with youth involvement in violence.



**Figure 2**  
The chance that you involvement with substance abuse is link with youth involvement in violence

Figure 2 above showed indicated the probability of substance abuse being linked with youth violence. Vividly, the survey revealed that 3% of the population affirmed that it is less than 20% chances that substance abuse is linked with youth involvement in violence.

Also, 6.5% of the respondents affirmed that it is 21%-40% chances that substance abuse is linked with youth involvement in violence. In the same vein, 20.5% of the respondents affirmed that it is 41%-60% chances that substance abuse is linked with youth involvement in violence. 27.5% affirmatives that it is 61%-80% chances that substance abuse is linked with youth involvement in violence. Obviously, majority of the population affirmed, with 42.5% affirmatives that it is 81%-100% chances that substance abuse is linked with youth involvement in violence.

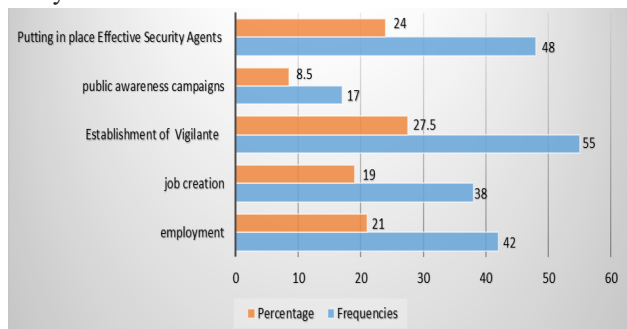
**Table 2**  
Impact of Youth Violence On Sustainable Development

Variables	F=200	Percentage (%)=100
Youth involvement in violence as a major threat to sustainable development in Yenagoa.		
Yes	111	55.5
No	47	23.5
I don't know	42	21.0
How would you rate the negative impact of youth violence on the development in Yenagoa?		
Very High	55	27.5
High	99	49.5
Moderate	22	11.0
Low	17	8.5
Very Low	7	3.5
The violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment in Yenagoa.		
Strongly Agree	51	25.5
Agree	100	50.0
Neutral	25	12.5
Disagree	15	7.5
Strongly Disagree	9	4.5
Youth involvement in violence is major threat to economic growth in Yenagoa.		
Yes	154	77.0
No	46	23.0
I don't know	-	-

## ANALYSIS FOR THE IMPACT OF YOUTH VIOLENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

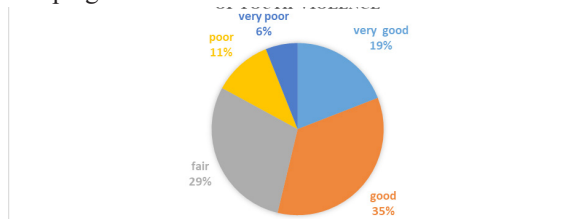
Table 4.7 below shows the analysis for the impact of youth violence on sustainable development in study area. Hence, the table statistically revealed that, majority of respondent with 55.5% affirmed that, youth involvement in violence is a major threat to sustainable development; 23.5% of them affirmed that, youth involvement in violence do not threaten sustainable development; while 21.0% of them of them affirmed they don't know if youth involvement in violence is a major threat to sustainable development. With regards to the negative impact of youth violence on the development in study area, 49.5% constituting majority of the population affirmed that, the negative impact of youth violence on the development is high; 27.5% of them affirmed that is very high; 11.0% affirmed is moderate; 8.5% of them affirmed is low; while 3.5% of them affirmed is very low. Also with regards to

the hypothetical statement of violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment in the study area, 50.0% of them constituting majority of the population agree that, violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment in the study area; 25.5% of them strongly agree that view that, violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment in the study area; 12.5% of them were neutral in their view on if violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment in the study area. On the contrarily, 7.5% of them disagree that violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment; while 4.5% of them strongly disagree to the view that, violent activities of youth have resulted to low underdevelopment. Lastly, with regards if youth involvement in violence is major threat to economic growth in the study area, 77.0% of the population affirmed that, youth involvement in violence is major threat to economic growth while 33.0% of youth involvement in violence do not cause threat to economic growth in the study area.



**Figure 3**  
**The measures government has taken to reduce youth violence**

Figure 3 above indicated that, 27.5% constituting majority of the population affirmed that, government has reduced youth violence through the establishment of vigilante; 24.0% of them affirmed that, government has reduce youth violence by putting in place effective security agencies; On the other hand, 21.0% of the population affirmed that, the government has reduce youth violence through youth employment. Interestingly 19.0% of the population affirmed that, government has reduced youth violence by creation job opportunities. And lastly, 8.5% of the population affirmed that, the government has reduced youth violence through public awareness campaigns.



**Figure 4**  
**Government effort toward the reduction of youth violence**

Figure 4 above revealed that, 35.0% constituting majority of the population affirmed that, government effort toward reduction of youth violence is good; 29.0% of them affirmed that, government effort toward reduction of youth violence is fair; On the other hand, 19% of the population affirmed that, government effort toward reduction of youth violence is very good. Interestingly 11% of the population affirmed that, government effort toward reduction of youth violence is poor. And lastly, 6% of the population affirmed that, government effort toward reduction of youth violence is very poor.

**Table 3**  
**The Solutions to Youth Violence**

Items	Responses	F= 200	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma$	RD
Creation of employment will help reduce youth violence.	Strongly Agree	67	3.8	1.9	Accepted
	Agree	39			
	Undecided	51			
	Disagree	21			
Youth empowerment can reduce violence among youths.	Strongly Agree	74	4.2	2	Accepted
	Agree	85			
	Undecided	41			
	Disagree	-			
Enforcing appropriate law and order can help reduce youth violence	Strongly Agree	80	3.9	2	Accepted
	Agree	56			
	Undecided	36			
	Disagree	16			
Public awareness campaigns	Strongly Agree	55	3.8	1.9	Accepted
	Agree	99			
	Undecided	22			
	Disagree	17			
Putting in place Effective Security Agents can reduce youth violence	Strongly Agree	85	4	2	Accepted
	Agree	54			
	Undecided	47			
	Disagree	14			
Establishment of Vigilante Group will Reduce youth violence activities.	Strongly Agree	70	3.8	1.9	Accepted
	Agree	51			
	Undecided	46			
	Disagree	33			
	Strongly Disagree	-			

## ANALYSIS FOR THE SOLUTIONS TO YOUTH VIOLENCE IN YENAGOA

In ascertaining the solutions to youth violence in the study area, positive assertions are used as determinants the impact of crime. To this effect, it revealed that all the variables measured were accepted due to the mean scores obtained that is above the criterion mean of  $\bar{x} = 3.00$ . Specifically, the survey affirmed that t creation of employment will help reduce youth violence ( $\bar{x} = 3.8$ ). Also, it affirmed that youth empowerment can reduce

violence among youths ( $\bar{x}$ =4.2). Similarly, the survey affirmed that enforcing appropriate law and order can help reduce youth violence ( $\bar{x}$ =3.9). In addition, the survey affirmed that public awareness campaigns ( $\bar{x}$ =3.8). The survey affirmed that putting in place effective security agents can reduce youth violence ( $\bar{x}$ =4). Lastly, the survey affirmed that establishment of vigilante group will reduce youth violence activities ( $\bar{x}$ =3.8). Critically, all variables linked with the impacts of youth crime were accepted.

## FINDINGS

Firstly, the study discovered that there has increase in the rise of youth involvement in violence and that the rate at which youths engages in violence is second to none in the history of the country. It is one of the discoveries that peers influence unemployment (joblessness) and lack of skills, lack of youth empowerment, government reluctance to put in place mechanisms to combat violence are majority factors that cause youths to be engaged in violence crime. Critically the study, uncovered that abject poverty, and substance abuse among youths are some of the factors that directly links to youth's involvement with violence in the state. More so, the study discovered that youth involvement in violence as a major threat to sustainable development in study area. The violent activities of youth resulted to low underdevelopment and economic growth. This is not to say that there is no other impact of youth violence at all.

Additionally, the study uncovered the levity on how government has curtail youth violence in study area. It showed that the government have done a little in curbing the rate of youth violence. Especially, the study revealed that, the government has through putting in place effective security agencies and the establishment of vigilante to curtailing youth violence. Critically the study, uncovered the government has also try to reduce youth engagement in violence through youth employment, creation job opportunities and public awareness campaigns. Lastly, the study out listed solutions to youth violence. The solutions include; creation of employment, youth empowerment, enforcing appropriate law and order, public awareness campaigns, putting in place effective security agents, establishment of vigilante group. Hence, this does not mean that there are no other solutions to youth violence.

## CONCLUSION

On the issue of prevalence of youth crime, it is hereby concluded based on the data received and analyzed that youth criminality is at its peak in the study area and would continue increase as long as the economy and social setting remain the same. There is need for change. Also, on the issue of the causes of youth involvement in violence, the study hereby concluded that no one factor

is responsible for the increase rate of youth involvement in violence. It vividly, obvious that factors, such as peers influence unemployment (joblessness) and lack of skills, lack of youth empowerment, government reluctance to put in place mechanisms to combat violence, abject poverty, and substance abuse among youths will continue to drag youths into violence if nothing is done about it. More also, with regard to the impact youth involvement in violence to sustainable development, the study concluded that, the involvement of youth in violence, threatens development and economic growth. Thereby, resulting to underdevelopment and low economic growth. Additionally, as a result from the finding from the study, it was concluded that government have done a little in curbing youth violence. In curtailing youth violence, government have try by engaging more effective security agencies and also by establishing vigilante groups. And also government have try in an effort to reducing youth violence, develop programs for youth employment and empowerment. But yet the rate of youth involvement in violence is still high.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the government should draw its attention to the latent causes of youth violent in the society. Latent causes may include, good leadership, promulgating of good economic policies, reducing poverty and engaging in viable youth empowerment programmers. That the government should adopt strategic method of dealing with crimes. End the double standard system of crime fighting. Redefining sanctions for the various crimes among others.

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