

# Perceived Solutions to Youth Restiveness by Guidance Counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** - Youth restiveness is one of the popular tragedies of the 21st century with much consequence on the individual, group and communities. The phenomenon has brought a lot of threat on security and corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. This study therefore investigated perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors in Kwara State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. A total of 145 respondents were purposively selected across learning institutions in the state. A researcher-developed instrument titled "Perceived Solutions to Youth Restiveness Questionnaire (PSYRQ)" was used to collect the data for the study. The instrument possessed a reliability coefficient of 0.74. Two research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The measure of central tendency and t-test statistics were used to analyze the data. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance. The results revealed that acquiring and the use of assertiveness skills by youths was perceived as the major solution to youth restiveness while the major category of solutions is the youth-related. There was significant difference between married and single respondents in their perception of solutions to youth restiveness. It was recommended that counsellors should organize programmes where youths can be trained in assertiveness skill.

**Keywords:** Restiveness, Youth, Perceived Solution, Guidance Counsellor

## INTRODUCTION

It is a fundamental truth that no society thrives and progresses significantly with a restive population of youths who are prone to violence, unrest, wanton destruction and involvement in social vices. Youth restiveness has become a popular issue in Nigeria particularly in the recent time. Since the inception of the current democratic dispensation, the country has witnessed series of violence and violation of human rights which were perpetrated by restive youths in different parts of the country, in some cases the act has led to colossal loss of life and properties. The degree to which youth restiveness constitutes a threat to national security has become a worrisome phenomenon that constantly attracts the attention of Nigerians and international communities. The incidence of youths' involvement in political thurgery in the 2015 general election and some other acts of violence seem to have reduced the hope that youth restiveness will soon end. Thus, different groups of individuals, corporate bodies, agencies, and

professional institutions are saddled with the responsibility of proffering solutions to the spate of youth restiveness.

Guidance counsellors are professionally trained individuals who have the mandate of assisting people faced with one problem or the other that affect their functionality in the society. Guidance counsellors use various techniques to help change maladaptive behaviours that could constitute menace to the peaceful co-existence in the society. The process of ensuring peace in the society may start with resolving intrapersonal conflict in individual and advance to resolving interpersonal conflicts. Thus, the view of guidance counsellors on solution to youth restiveness becomes imperative.

Youths are significant members of the society whose contributions help to effect radical and rapid developments. A law-abiding youth creates a bright hope for any nation because he/she is regarded and perceived as a potential leader who will not only

sustain the tradition but also bring innovation to the society. However, it deserves mentioning that the definition of youth varies across individuals and societies. According to Federal Government of Nigeria [1], youth is defined as a people aged 18 – 35 while the World Bank, as cited in Adewuyi [2], defined youth as people between ages 18 and 24 years. It is a stage in life of the individual when the society where he/she functions ceases to regard the person as a child and yet has not considered the person as an adult. Youth constitutes a large proportion of the population across the globe. The total population of youth between 10 and 24 years old in Nigeria was put at 45.4 million, according to the 2006 National Census results [3] Inferring from the policy of the National Youth Service Scheme, which stipulated age 30 years as the limit for participating in the National Youth Service programme, it can be said that people within the age limit of 30 years are considered as youth.

In any case, the word “youth” describes a person who has not attained the status of an adult but no longer has a child, while restive suggested when one is unable to be still or quiet, difficult to control, especially when not satisfied with something [4]. Since youth have natural endowment of raw energy which results to bubbling in spirit, having high hopes, big dreams, aspirations and ideas of what the future owes them, they are not naturally calm often but become anxious and anticipate to know what present situation has to offer in order to fast track the future. Thus, a little disappointment or even misconception on their part, in relation to the fulfillment of aspiration, usually triggers the standby propensity for violence and more often than not turns to restiveness.

Restiveness can be viewed as a combination of actions, conduct and behaviour which constitute unwholesome and socially unacceptable response to situations by youths in the society. Such actions could be in form of sustained protestations embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome on a constituted authority by an organized body of youths [5]. Youth restiveness has become a device used by young persons to obtain what they want from relevant authority; the act is usually perpetrated in unlawful manners. It is a deliberate instrument of organized response to perceived grievances that have an increasing potency and capacity for destruction [6]. Ukwueze [7] described restiveness as a function of one’s emotional and temperamental reactions to

events or situations, due to wrong cognitive perception, appraisal and interpretation of such events with resultant state of nervousness, restlessness, uneasiness, obstinacy and uncontrollable behaviour. Thus, restiveness encompasses all forms of youth activism that pose or have the tendency of posing threat to the orderliness, life and property because it is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities.

In Nigeria, youth restiveness is not a new phenomenon and it cuts across different parts of the country with its dooms in varying degrees. According to Elegbeleye [5], youth resistance to conditions, issues and unwelcomed leadership regimes in Nigeria dates back to 1934 when Herbert Macaulay floated a political party to kick against dependency with fellow elite youths that had contact with the West. Equally in the close of 1950s and early to mid 1960s political parties such as the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), and the Action Group (AG) involved the youth in perpetrating coordinated political protests and unrests. The phenomenon has metamorphosed to the use of youths in different protests and counter-protests across Nigeria. In the South-West, the youth constitutes larger proportion of the Odua People’s Congress (OPC), an ethnic militia group; the fierce Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereignty State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the East as well as South – South regions. The World renowned insurgent group, Boko Haram in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria also has vast members, majority of who are youths [8]. In addition, the proliferation of youth association such as students’ union and other legal groups and the existence of illegal associations such as cults have turned learning institutions to danger haven where murder, looting, arson and violation of human rights are perpetrated through youth restiveness.

A number of reasons have been identified as being the causes of youth restiveness. Anasi [9] identified the following reasons as being responsible for youth restiveness: bad governance: inadequate educational opportunities and resources; unemployment; poverty, lack of basic infrastructures; and inadequate communication flow. Chukuezi [10] posited that marginalization, unemployment, exuberance and the involvement of youths in political thuggery are the major causes of youth restiveness. Elegbeleye [5]

leveled the causes on youths themselves by stating that the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, the peer motivated excitement of being a youth and the perceived victimization arising from economic exploitations are the incessant factors propelling youths to restiveness. In the common sense, the major purpose of identifying the causes of a problem is to proffer solutions. Idowu [11] opined that counselling is the best-belt for addressing problem that counselling is the best-belt for addressing problems confronting the youths before such escalate to unrest. This is because, counselling can bridge the gap of communication between the youths and relevant authorities. Adegoke (2012) recommended some solutions that can be applied to address youth restiveness and they include that: families must take time to reengage the youth within the home; parents need to spend quality time with them; educational institutions should ensure that the school is a place of trusted relationship; government at all levels should provide care and protection for all the young people; and that youths should acquire assertive skills.

### **Problem**

Youth restiveness has become one of the greatest security challenges confronting Nigeria particularly in the 21st century. The menace has posed serious threats to the human development across different parts of the country with significant effects on life, properties and corporate existence of the country. The much celebrated insurgency in the North-East, which is anchored by boko-haram group, the illegal activities of young persons under the wings of Odua People's Congress (OPC) and the incessant kidnapping and conflicts involving armed youths in the Niger Delta area are all true pictures of youth restiveness. Anywhere youth restiveness occurs there is always colossal loss, pains and agony. Elegbeleye [5] reported that youth restiveness manifests criminal behaviours such as looting, robbery attack, violent demonstrations and tribal conflicts. Babayeju [6] found that there is no difference in the expression of students of tertiary institutions on causes of youth unrest based on residential status, gender, religion and institution type. The present study therefore investigated perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors in Kwara State.

### **Research Questions**

What are the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellor?

Which is the most perceived category of solutions to youth restiveness?

### **Research Hypotheses**

There is no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on educational qualification.

There is no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on gender.

There is no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on marital status.

### **METHOD**

The research design that adopted for the study was the descriptive survey method. The design was considered because it enables the researchers to employ questionnaire, seek the perception of representative sample of the population and later made conclusion and inferences upon the population. The population for the study consists of all guidance counsellors in Kwara State. However, guidance counsellors were purposively selected in institutions of learning (that is, upper basic and tertiary institutions) since they involve in providing counselling services to students of youthful ages. Thus, the researchers specifically selected 145 persons who have bagged first or postgraduate degrees in guidance and counselling. The stratified sampling technique was adopted to categorise respondents in accordance to the moderating variables of the study. The purposive sampling enables researchers to select sample that is most relevant to the focus of the study [13].

A self-developed instrument by the researchers was used for this study. The instrument was titled "Perceived Solutions to Youth Restiveness Questionnaire (PSYRQ)". The instrument has two sections: Section A contains personal information of the respondents while B contains 20 items reflecting perception of respondents on solutions to youth restiveness. The instrument was patterned in 4-point Likert Scale Format on a continuum (Strongly Agree = 4 point; Agree = 3 points; Disagree = 2 points; Strongly Disagree = 1 point). The cut-off value was 2.50; any item that has mean score below 2.50 was regarded as not perceived as a solution to youth restiveness. The instrument possessed reliability

coefficient of 0.74, after being subjected to the test retest procedure.

The researchers directly contacted the respondents and administered the questionnaire forms to them. The respondents were provided with information required to ensure adequate completion of the questionnaire forms.

The data collected were analysed using frequency, percentages measure of central tendency and the t-test statistics. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification, Gender and Marital Status**

Variable	f	%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
First Degree	88	60.69
Postgraduate Degree	57	39.31
Total	145	100.00
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	63	43.45
Female	82	56.55
Total	145	100.00
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	51	35.17
Married	94	64.83
Total	145	100.00

The results in Table 1 showed that respondents that possessed First Degree are more than those with Postgraduate Degrees; there are more female participants than males and respondents who are married are more than those that are single.

**Research Question 1:** What are the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors?

The results in table 2 show that the most perceived solution to youth restiveness is “if youths acquire and use assertiveness skill”. The item has the highest mean of 2.91 and it is a youth-related solution. However, 14 out of the 20 items have mean scores not less than 2.50, which is the cut-off point. This implies that guidance counsellors perceived most of the items as being solutions to youth restiveness. The other items with higher mean scores are: “if there is effective counselling service in school” and “if youths develop positive self-concept” with mean scores of 2.87 and 2.72 respectively. The least ranked item

states that: “if parents adequately give financial support to youths” with a mean of 2.36, which is less than the cut-off.

**Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of Perceived Solutions to Youth Restiveness**

I think youth restiveness can be curbed if	
<b>Youth Related</b>	
Youths acquire and use assertiveness skill	2.91
Youths develop positive self-concept	2.72
Youths do not allow peer group influence	2.67
Youths often are self-confident	2.64
Youths avoid involving in drug abuse	2.52
<b>Sub-Total</b>	13.46
<b>School – Related</b>	
There is effective counselling service in schools	2.87
Youths are allowed to participate in school decisions	2.63
Sporting activities is given attention in schools	2.52
Students’ unionism is prohibited	2.44
Learning facilities are adequately provided	2.41
<b>Sub-Total</b>	12.87
<b>Home Related</b>	
Parents often engage in dialogue with youths	2.61
Parents spend more time with youth at home	2.57
Parents pay attention to career aspiration of youths	2.55
Parents show interest in educational pursuit of youths	2.50
Parents adequately give financial support to youths	2.36
<b>Sub-Total</b>	12.59
<b>Government Related</b>	
Government provide platform for dialoguing with youths	2.58
There is job opportunities for youths	2.51
Government builds recreation centres for youths	2.47
Youths are allowed to participate in governance	2.42
There is always adequate protection for youths	2.37
<b>Sub-Total</b>	12.35

**Research Question 2:** Which is the most perceived category of solutions to youth restiveness?

The results in Table 2 provide answer to research question 2. The youth – related solutions ranked highest with mean score of 13.46, which represents the mean summation of the items in that category. Thus, youth-related category is the most rated category of solutions to youth restiveness as perceived by guidance counsellors.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the perceived solution to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on educational qualification.

**Table 3:** Test of Difference on perceived Solutions to Youth Restiveness based on Educational Qualification

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Calculated t-value
First Degree	88	66.81	6.29		0.13
Postgraduate Degree	57	67.12	6.50	143	

Critical t-value: 1.96

The results in Table 3 revealed that the calculated t-value (0.13) is less than the critical t-value (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypotheses 2:** There is no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on gender.

**Table 4:** Test of Difference on perceived solutions to Youth Restiveness based on Gender

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Calculated t-value
Male	63	54.27	4.85		0.41
Female	82	54.33	6.85	143	

Critical t-value: 1.96

The results in Table 4 revealed that the critical t-value (1.96) is greater than the calculated t-value (0.41); hence the null hypothesis is thus accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness based on married status.

**Table 5:** Test of Difference on the perceived solution to Youth Restiveness based on Marital Status

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Calculated t-value
Single	51	61.37	7.12	143	4.21*
Married	94	63.81	9.76		

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$ ; Critical t-value: 1.96

The results in table 5 revealed that the calculated t-value (4.21) is greater than the critical t-value (1.96); hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, respondents who are married with mean score of 63.81 perceived the solutions identified in the instrument more than respondents who are single with mean score of 61.37.

## FINDINGS

The results revealed that acquiring and the use of assertiveness skills by youths was perceived as the

major solution to youth restiveness while the major category of solutions is the youth-related. There was significant difference between married and single respondents in their perception of solutions to youth restiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The results in Table 2 revealed that guidance counsellors perceived youths acquiring and using assertiveness skill as being a major solution to youth restiveness. This agrees with the submission of Adegoke [12] that assertiveness training is an effective counselling strategy for handling adolescence problems. Assertiveness helps individual to take decision and take responsibility for such without necessarily being aggressive. Thus, if youths could be trained in assertiveness it would help to mitigate restiveness. Furthermore, the youth-related category of solutions was the most perceived by respondents. This finding supports the study of Elegbeleye [5] who found that restiveness is caused by factors within the youths themselves and could be reduced if youths are willing to turn away from violent behaviour. Amongst the perceived solutions subscribed to by respondents are if: “youths acquire and use assertive skill”, “youths develop positive self-concept”, and “youths do not allow peer group influence”. School-related and home-related categories ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively while government-related ranked last.

The results of the null hypotheses tested revealed that respondents are similar in their perception of solutions to youth restiveness irrespective of educational qualifications. Babayeju [6] has earlier found that students of tertiary institutions were similar in their expression of causes of youth unrest. The reason for the similarity between the previous and the present studies could be that, respondents used in both studies are learned and might viewed issues in the same perspectives.

There was no significant difference in the perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on gender. Thus, both male and female respondents have similar perception on solutions to youth restiveness. Babayeju [6] has equally established similar position among students of tertiary institutions. One may not be surprise that respondents are similar in their perception because the effects of youth restiveness are not limited to a particular gender group. Thus, everyone thinks about

what step that could be taken to curb the menace and as such the perception of the solutions could be similar.

On the other hand, there was significant difference in the perception of respondents based on marital status because the null hypothesis was rejected. However, respondents who are married perceived the solutions to youth restiveness more than those that are single. The reason for the difference may not be far-fetched because those who are married would have more experience on child training and corrective measures and solutions to restiveness than those that have not married.

### CONCLUSIONS

Respondents perceived most of the items contained in the instrument as being solutions to youth restiveness. Respondents perceived acquisition and use of assertive skill by youths and effective counselling service in schools and being the major solutions to youth restiveness. The most perceived category of solutions to youth restiveness is youth-related. There is no significant difference in perceived solutions to youth restiveness by guidance counsellors based on educational qualification and gender but significant difference existed based on marital status. Respondents who are married perceived solutions to youth restiveness more than those that are single.

### Implication of Findings

The implications of this study for counselling practice and other groups in the society are evident. Counselling is a profession that is known for bringing change in behaviour and rehabilitating individual experiencing maladaptive behaviour. Thus, guidance counsellors have the mandate to join in the fight to drastically reduce all forms of threats to the security of life and properties, especially the dreadful menace of youth restiveness in Nigeria. It is apparent from the results of this study that effective counselling is required for youths in the institutions of learning. Equally, counselling profession has the responsibility to teach life building skills to youths such as assertiveness, decision-making and peer-cluster skills. Generally, it is required that individual, groups and institutions have the mandate to establish platform for constant dialogue with youths in order prevent issues from degenerating to youth restiveness.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Guidance counsellors should be in the fore front to fight against youth restiveness by organizing programme where youth can acquire assertiveness skills, decision-making skills and develop positive self-concept; It is imperative that, through counselling intervention, schools build better communication avenue where students (youths) and staff can constantly dialogue; There should be adequate platform where government in particular and various groups in the society can come together periodically to allow dialogue with the youths; Since respondents who are married perceived solutions to youth restiveness better than those not yet married, there should be seminar and other forms of lecture where the latter will be sensitized on solutions to youth restiveness; and Adequate arrangement should be put in place to provide effective counselling for youths, particularly in schools.

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