# Leadership, Youth Unemployment, Poverty, and Crime in Nigeria: An Examination of their Interconnections

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the intricate interconnections between leadership, youth unemployment, poverty, and crime in the context of Nigeria. By exploring how leadership influences the dynamics of youth unemployment, poverty, and crime, this research aims to provide valuable insights into addressing these pressing socio-economic challenges. The yearly time series data covering the period from 1985 to 2021 was used in the analysis. The Toda Yamamoto Granger causality and the vector autoregressive model were two of the statistical and economic methods used in the study. The computed VAR findings demonstrated a statistically significant association between poverty and crime, and the Toda Yamamoto granger causality demonstrated that poverty granger causes crime. The results also showed that there is a unidirectional causal relationship between the variables that influence crime and poverty. In order to create the necessary economic climate for both local and foreign private investors, the report suggests that the government prioritize providing jobs for the teeming young. One effective tactic to lower unemployment and hence the rate of violence and poverty in the community would be to build labor-intensive enterprises that can take in the young people without jobs. soft loans to independent contractors to increase their output and services. The results might influence tactics and policy choices aimed at enhancing the lives of Nigeria's young and promoting sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Youth Unemployment, Poverty, Crime, Nigeria*

**Introduction:**

Nigeria, renowned for its vast human and natural resources, stands at a critical crossroads in the 21st century. With a youthful population characterized by vibrancy and potential, it possesses the ingredients for economic growth and sustainable development. Nevertheless, the stark reality is that Nigeria grapples with deep-seated challenges, including youth unemployment, poverty, and crime, which pose significant hurdles to the nation's progress. The role of leadership in addressing these challenges is a subject of paramount importance. This research embarks on a journey to explore the multifaceted relationships between leadership, youth unemployment, poverty, and crime in the Nigerian context.

*The Nigerian Conundrum*

Nigeria, often called the "Giant of Africa," boasts of its rich endowment of natural resources, a large and youthful population, and a rich cultural heritage. However, it also confronts some of the most daunting socio-economic issues. Youth unemployment, in particular, has emerged as a formidable challenge. A significant youth population characterizes the demographic structure of Nigeria, and this demographic bulge presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The potential demographic dividend of a young and dynamic workforce could spur economic growth, but when youth unemployment is rampant, it becomes a ticking time bomb.

Accompanying youth unemployment is poverty, which often serves as its unwelcome companion. Despite the nation's wealth of resources, a considerable portion of the population lives in poverty. Deprivation, in turn, is intricately linked to crime. The confluence of youth unemployment and poverty can result in a heightened susceptibility to various forms of criminal activities. Understanding this complex interplay is crucial for devising effective policy and leadership strategies to alleviate the suffering of Nigeria's youth and steer the nation toward sustainable development.

*The Role of Leadership*

At the heart of this exploration is the pivotal role that leadership plays in shaping the destiny of nations. Leadership, both in the public and private sectors, wields tremendous influence over policy decisions, resource allocation, and the overall socio-economic climate. Effective leadership has the potential to uplift communities, promote equitable opportunities, and mitigate the consequences of youth unemployment, poverty, and crime. However, the influence of leadership is not unidimensional. Poor leadership decisions and governance can exacerbate the challenges faced by youth, deepening the fault lines of inequality and socio-economic disparities. Recognizing this dichotomy, this research seeks to unravel how leadership, whether through its actions or inactions, contributes to or alleviates the issues of youth unemployment, poverty, and crime in Nigeria. The backdrop is set for a comprehensive exploration of these complex interconnections. By investigating the role of leadership in this intricate web of challenges, this research aspires to shed light on potential solutions and strategies for building a more prosperous and just Nigeria. It is within this context that the statement of the problem is framed.

**Statement of the Problem:**

*Youth Unemployment: A Looming Crisis*
Nigeria's youth unemployment crisis is an ever-looming threat to the nation's socio-economic stability. The high youth unemployment rate poses challenges on various fronts, including economic, social, and political dimensions. The problem is exacerbated by a disconnect between the skills possessed by young Nigerians and the demands of the labour market. It is estimated that approximately 33.3% of Nigeria's youth are unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), and the consequences are far-reaching.
Youth unemployment not only robs young Nigerians of opportunities for personal and professional growth but also hampers economic productivity and stability. The disenfranchised youth are often vulnerable to criminal activities, lured by the prospect of immediate financial gains, exacerbating the issue of crime in the nation.

*Persistent Poverty and Inequality*
The coexistence of youth unemployment and poverty is another pressing issue. Poverty, particularly among young Nigerians, is a result of limited access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This perpetuates inequality and deprives many youth of a fair shot at realizing their potential. Poverty is not only an issue of material deprivation but also one of dignity and social justice. The marginalized youth population, grappling with poverty, is more likely to engage in criminal activities as a means of survival. Thus, the cycle of poverty and crime intertwines with youth unemployment, creating a complex problem that demands a comprehensive approach.

*Crime as a Consequence and a Catalyst*
The consequences of youth unemployment and poverty extend to the realm of crime. The rise in criminal activities among young Nigerians is a worrisome trend that poses significant challenges to public safety and the nation's overall well-being. Crime takes various forms, from petty theft and cybercrime to more severe offences such as robbery and drug-related activities. The relationship between youth unemployment, poverty, and crime is multifaceted. Youth who are unemployed and impoverished are often at a higher risk of being drawn into criminal activities as a means of economic survival. The implications of this are not limited to the affected individuals; they extend to communities and the nation, undermining social cohesion and public safety.

*Leadership as a Central Factor*
Leadership, both within the government and private sector, is at the crux of these challenges. It is the responsibility of leaders to formulate and implement policies that address youth unemployment and poverty. Effective leadership can create an environment that fosters economic growth, job creation, and equitable opportunities for the youth. Conversely, poor leadership decisions can perpetuate youth unemployment and poverty, exacerbating the problem of crime.
This research aims to dissect the role of leadership in this intricate landscape, exploring the impact of leadership decisions on the nation's youth, economy, and social fabric. It also

seeks to understand how leadership can force positive change, mitigating the challenges young Nigerians face and steering the nation towards a more prosperous and equitable future.

In summary, the problem encompasses the multifaceted relationships between leadership, youth unemployment, poverty, and crime in Nigeria. These complex interconnections necessitate a comprehensive examination to inform effective policies, leadership strategies, and pathways to sustainable development.

## Research Questions

Considering the above problems, the following research questions become relevant to the study.

1. What is the causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate in Nigeria?
2. Does youth unemployment influence poverty in Nigeria?
3. Is there a causal linkage between poverty and crime in Nigeria?

## Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to examine youth unemployment, crime and poverty in Nigeria. The specific goals are:

1. To investigate the causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the relationship between youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.
3. To evaluate if there is a causal linkage between poverty and crime in Nigeria.

## 1esearch hypotheses

The study shall test three hypotheses stated in the null form below:

**H01:** There is no causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate in Nigeria.

**H02:** There is no relationship between youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

**H03:** There is no casual linkage between poverty and crime in Nigeria.

## Scope of the study

The paper examines the causal link between crime, GDP growth rate, inflation, young unemployment, and poverty in Nigeria, as driven by the mounting pressure and trends brought on by recent national and international crises. Thus, this research looks at more than just the direct link between young unemployment, poverty, and criminality. It also examines whether these variables and other macroeconomic factors are causally related. Using data from 1985 to 2021, the causal connection and its presence are experimentally evaluated. The selection of the reference period is vital since issues related to young unemployment, poverty, exchange, and criminality were given careful policy consideration. This period includes significant turning points both before and during the development of our democratic political system, which faced many obstacles to effective government.

**Limitations of the Study**

The research encountered some limitations, such as getting published data on the topic, and it is precisely limited to the Nigerian economic environment. However, related issues to the study helped in building the research work. Data were collected from the studied variables that are related based on annual data due to irregularities.

**Unemployment/Youth Unemployment**

*Cyclical Unemployment:* When there is insufficient aggregate demand in the nation to provide jobs for all job seekers, it is also referred to as inadequate demand or Keynesian unemployment. Because of the decline in demand for most products and services, there is a need for less output, which requires fewer workers. Wages remain sticky and do not fall below the equilibrium level, leading to widespread unemployment.

*Frictional Unemployment*: This is caused by industrial friction in which jobs may exist, yet the workers may be unable to fill them either because they do not possess the necessary skills or because they are not aware of the existence of such jobs. Therefore, the employable may remain unemployed.

*Residual Unemployment*: This is caused by personal factors such as age, physical or mental disability, poor work attitude and inadequate training.

*Technological Unemployment*: This is caused by changes in the technique of production. Technological changes are occurring constantly, leading to an increased mechanization of the production process. These changes can lead to the displacement of some labour that has become obsolete and cannot meet up with the trend changes in production methods.

**Poverty**

Poverty can be referred to as a situation that encompasses different dimensions of deprivation related to human capabilities, including consumption and food security, health, education, rights, voice, safety, dignity, and decent work.

Adebayo (2013) referred to poverty as an enemy of man, and a multi-dimensional phenomenon that affects many aspects of human conditions ranging from the physical and moral to the psychological humiliates and dehumanizes its victims. It is a state of being deficient in money or means of basic subsistence's such as safety, water, sanitation, solid waste collection, health care, schools, and security. The World Bank (2003) described poverty as a decimal of choices, a violation of human dignity and lack of

essential capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living and not having access to credit insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities' susceptibility to violence, and living in marginal or fragile environments without access to clean water or sanitation.

**Crime**

Kenny (2020) in his view said that crimes are wronged whose sanction is punitive and is in no ways remissible by any private person but is remissible at all; this concept has evoked criticism on the ground that there are indeed several compoundable offences that are remissible by the consent of the pities. Expressing his view on the concept of crime, he commented that a final concept of crime is impossible because the law is a living and

changing thing, which may at one time be based on the sovereign will and at another time juristic science, which may be uninformed and another time give much room for judicial discretion which may at one time be more specific in its prescription and at another time much more general.

**Theoretical review**

*Maxian Theory of Unemployment*
According to Karl Mark, unemployment is inherent within the unstable capitalist system, and periodic crises of mass unemployment are to be expected. The function of the proletariat within the capitalist system is to provide a reserve army of labour that creates downward pressure on wages. This is accomplished by dividing the proletariat into surplus labour (unemployed) and under-employment (unemployed)—this reserve army of labour fights among themselves for jobs with lower wages. At first glance, unemployment seems inefficient since unemployed workers do not increase profits. However, unemployment is profitable within the global capitalist system because unemployment lowers wages, which are costs from the owners' perspective. From this perspective, he said lower wages benefit the system by reducing economic rents, yet it does not benefit workers.

*Neoclassical and Keynesian Theories of Unemployment*
 These theories believe that unemployment rises like full employment; however, it does not mean that there is no unemployment at its end at the going wage rate. He cited an example by saying that if a worker thinks that the disutility of work is greater than the benefits of work or the utility of the real wage, this worker will decide not to work, which is called voluntary unemployment.

*Unemployment in the Theory of Innovations*
This theory was developed by a German economist, Von Mangold, and cited by Ekelund and Herbert (2007), who wrote a book about entrepreneurial profits in 1855 which connected profits to risk. He provided several ways by which the entrepreneur can make profits. These ways are finding markets, acquiring productive agents, skillful combination of factors of production, successful sales policy and innovations.

*Search Theory of Unemployment*
This seeks to understand unemployment in the context of a model in which the optimizing behaviour of workers and firms gives rise to an equilibrium unemployment rate. It explains that while millions of workers are unemployed, firms are simultaneously looking to fill millions of jobs. In its simple observation that searching is costly into the theory of labour markets and has resulted in a rich set of models which have helped us not only to understand how unemployment responds to various policies and regulations but also to gain a better understanding of other labour, issues including job creation and destruction, business cycle, characteristics and effects of labour markets, and policies on the aggregate economy more generally.

### Behavioural Theory of Poverty

According to this theory, money can alleviate the harsh conditions of poverty and leverage changes in behaviour when it is used properly. However, it will have little lasting effect. When it is not managed correctly, not only does behaviour matter, but it matters more than it used to, from the growing gaps between the rich and poor in recent times that have been aggravated by a separation in the behaviour of the two groups. People living in poverty are a diverse group. Some are poor primarily because they persist in perverse and anti-social behaviour, while others have done the best they can with limited resources and concluded that people's behaviours or unfavourable circumstances lead to their poverty. (David, 2019)

### Cultural Theory of Poverty

Development plays a central role in poverty in any advancing country. Some authors feel that the national mindset plays a role in the ability of a country to develop and, thus, reduce poverty. Lindsay (2001) claims the difference between development-prone and developed resistance nations is attributed to mental models, which, like values, influence the decisions humans make. Mental models are also cultural creations (Grondon et al., 2000). All feel that with development-orientated values and mindsets, nations will find it more accessible, if possible, to develop efficiently and that some cultural change will be needed for nations to reduce poverty.

### Keynesian/Neo-Liberal Theory of Poverty

This theory assumes that market inefficiency is a significant obstacle to economic development, which triggers individuals into poverty. The theory stresses the role of government by stimulating macro-level variables such as aggregate investment, unemployment, inflation, debt, and asset market bubbles to enhance growth and address issues of poverty. Jung and Smith (2007) state that poor capital (Human and physical), poor infrastructure, and lack of suitable institutions are considered the primary sources of underdevelopment that leads to poverty (Sachs, 2005).

### Structural Theory of Poverty

Structural explanations contend that the macro-levied labour market and demographic conditions put people at risk of poverty. Cross-sectional and overtime differences in these structural factors account for variations in poverty.

### Labelling theory of poverty

This theory was developed by Howard Becker, if everyone has a label; these labels are given to us by higher members of society. He cited an example: teachers may label a child as 'naughty'; therefore, the child will act up to this label they have been given and will misbehave.

### Conflict theory of crime

This is a sociological theory that suggests deviant behaviour resulting from a social group. In response to these inequalities, certain groups will act deviancy that engendered their

circumstances or act out against their oppressors (Brain, 1989). An example of conflict theory would be that of ENDSARS protesters who were fed off the extreme inequalities in Nigerian society, which made them demand greater accountability for better governance and a more equitable society despite having enough wealth to improve lives in Nigeria.

**The classical theory of crime:**

This theory assumes that the individual's free will causes crime because humans are fractioned and make decisions freely without understanding the consequences. Crime is an immoral form of human behaviour; such behaviour weakens society. *Punishment* is a necessary evil sometimes intended to deter criminals and serve as an example to those who would violate the law, which also assumes that the choice to commit a crime arises out of a logical judgment of cost versus reward.

**Biological theory of crime**

It assumes that the biological nature of human beings determines whether they commit criminal acts or not based on physical or at least purely biological characteristics; a typology of criminals and non-criminals could be established according to which criminals are to be distinguished from non-criminals with regards to their genetics, neurology, or physical constitution (Stephen, 1997).

**Social disorganization theory of crime**

A person's physical and social environments are primarily responsible for the behavioural chores that person makes. A neighbourhood that has a fraying social structure is more likely to have high crime rates. Such a neighbourhood may have poor schools, vacant and vandalized buildings, high unemployment, and a mix of commercial and residential poverty. Shaw and McKay suggest that crime was a function of neighbourhood dynamics and not due to individual actors and their actions.

**Strain theory of crime**

Most people have similar aspirations, but they do not all have the same opportunities or abilities. When people fail to achieve society's expectations through approved means such as hard work and delayed gratification, they may attempt to succeed through crime. Robert, in his ideas, explained criminality and deviance and that crime occurs when there is a gap between the cultural goals of society by citing an example of mental health and status, and the instrument means to achieve these is through education and employment.

**Rational choice theory of crime**

The view of this theory conceptualized that people generally commit crimes because of their self-interest and make decisions to commit crimes after weighing the potential risks, including getting caught and punished against the rewards. Stephen (1997) In the same vein, James and Charles said individuals are rational actors and are given the chance to make their own choices, which includes choosing to commit a crime. Individuals weigh up the likely benefits and disadvantages of each action. According to this theory, individuals not only decide to commit a crime but also decide when and where to commit a crime (James & Charles, 1990).

**Tagged theory of crime**

According to this theory, official attempts to control crime in many cases or instances have the sequence of increasing crime: individuals who are arrested, prosecuted, and punished are tagged as criminals, and others then see and behave towards these people as criminals, and this raises the likelihood of subsequent crime for different reasons. Tagged individuals may have challenges obtaining legal employment, which raises their strain level and reduces their stake in conformity.

**Social learning theory of crime**

According to this theory, people learn to participate in crime primarily through relationships. They are strengthened for crime, they learn beliefs that are commendatory to crime, and they are exposed to criminal styles. As a result, they come to see crime as something beneficial or at least justifiable in certain situations. This theory also assumes that juveniles learn to participate in crime like they learn to conform to behaviour through their relationship with others.

**Choice theory of crime**

This theory gives particular importance to stressing an individual's power to influence his or her own feelings and actions and educate the idea that all behaviour is chosen. The theory posits that all human behaviour is controlled by the aspiration to meet the expectations of five basic human desires: the desire to be loved and conspired right, the desire for power, the desire for freedom, the desire for pleasure, and the desire to remain alive. Disagreements or discord emerge because humans can only control their behaviour.

**Economic theory of crime**

  The economic theory of criminal behaviour is an application of the neoclassical theory of demand formalized by Gary Becker in 1968; it pointed out that criminals are economically rational and respond significantly to the deterring incentives by the criminal justice system. Looking at this concept, we see that criminals are economically rationed and respond significantly to the deferring system.

**Empirical review**

Odumade (2020) investigated the effects of the youth unemployment rate and its consequences on economic growth in Nigeria. A descriptive research design of survey type was used, while multi-stage sampling techniques were employed in selecting 600 respondents. Data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and Pearson product moment correlation. The result showed a significant relationship between the youth unemployment and Nigeria's economic growth.

Ihiensekhien and Ovenseri-Ogbomo (2017) examined the relationship between the total unemployment rate and economic growth rate in low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The study adopted panel least squares and ordinary least squares techniques to estimate the model based on annual data from 1991 to 2013. The result indicated the existence of a negative relationship between the unemployment rate and economic growth in the panel data model, while in the individual countries' cases, some countries were found

to have a positive relationship between the two variables of unemployment rate and economic growth rates indicating a case of non-inclusive growth.

Garba et al. (2020) examined the long-run relationship between violent crime rates and unemployment in Nigeria for the period 2004 to 2016. The autoregressive distributes lag (ARDL) bounds testing approach was used to determine the co-integration between unemployment and crime rates. The results showed that unemployment and crime (Murder, Armed Robbery, robbery, Assaults, Sexual offences and cultism) are co-integrated. The long-run coefficient results indicated that the unemployment rate had a positive and significant effect on murder, sex violence assaults, and cultism.

Ihiensekhien and Erhi (2018) examined the relationship between the Economic growth rate and unemployment rate in Nigeria from 1991 to 2015, using economic growth rate as the dependent variable while total unemployment, youth unemployment, male and female unemployment rates as independent variables, using the reverse form of the first difference equation of Okun's model. The study employed the ordinary least squares (OLS) and policy simulation analyses to determine the influence and reduction in various categories of unemployment rates on economic growth. The result indicated the reverse of Okun's law in Nigeria, meaning that the unemployment rate increased with an increased growth rate regarding the total unemployment rate and the male unemployment rate, but for youth and female unemployment rates, Okun's law did not hold.

## Gaps in the existing literature

The issues of youth unemployment and crime have continued to receive broader attention in recent times because of the level of poverty and criminality in Nigeria. The literature reviewed shows that many researchers had only focused on investigating the relationship between unemployment and crime, unemployment and economic growth, unemployment and economic development, crime and economic growth and violent crime on economic development and other related studies, leaving a gap in the area of youth unemployment and crime with other macroeconomic variables chosen for this study.

However, the few studies done by Brain (2000), Tunca and Gulel (2019), Longe (2016) and Alabi (2014) on youth unemployment and crime with different variables were disaggregated data, creating a gap in the study with the variables aggregated. Their studies were carried out based on questionnaires, interviews and simple random sampling techniques to ascertain the effects of crime on youth unemployment and found a negative significant relationship between youth unemployment and crime.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is a causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime and other explanatory variables like poverty, inflation, and the gross domestic product. To do this, the study will use the vector auto-regressive model (VAR), the error correction model (ECM), and the ordinary least square technique (OLS). Previous research has yet to use these methods to analyze the dynamic causal relationship between these variables empirically. Is causality required? It is unclear how young unemployment influences the likelihood of criminal behaviour in Nigeria; this relationship has received little research, and it is also doubtful based on the rational/choice theory of crime.

**Theoretical Framework**
There is doubt if youth unemployment and crime have a causal relationship and to what extent the relationship exists between them based on the rational choice theory of crime and choice theory of crime under review in this study. Why do the youths decide to choose crime as an option or choice?
According to the rational choice theory of crime, people generally commit crimes because of their self-interest and make decisions to commit crimes after weighing the potential risks, including the caught and getting caught and punished against the rewards (Stephen, 1997). In the same vein, James and Charles (1990) said individuals are rational actors and are given the chance to make their own choices, which includes choosing to commit a crime. Individuals weigh up the likely benefits and disadvantages of each action.

**Model Specification**
In line with the study's objectives, a model seeking to examine the relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate in Nigeria has been developed. Accordingly, the study shall adopt Pelumi *et al.* (2018) and Garba *et al.* (2020) by employing the vector autoregressive model. The model is specified as follows:
$$CRMRt = \beta 0 + CRMRt\text{-}1 + PINDt\text{-}1 + UNEMPt\text{-}1 + GDPGRt\text{-}1 + INFt\text{-}1 + \varepsilon t\text{-}1 \quad 3.1$$
$$PINDt = \beta 0 + PINDt\text{-}1 + CRMRt\text{-}1 + UNEMPt\text{-}1 + GDPGRt\text{-}1 + INFt\text{-}1 + \varepsilon t\text{-}1 \quad 3.2$$
$$UNEMPt = \beta 0 + UNEMPt\text{-}1 + CRMRt\text{-}1 + PINDt\text{-}1 + GDPGRt\text{-}1 + INFt\text{-}1 + \varepsilon t\text{-}1 \quad 3.3$$
$$\varepsilon = Sto\text{*}chastic\ Error\ term$$

**Sources of Data**
The relevant data for this study were obtained from World Development Indicators (WDI), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), statistical bulletins of various issues and the World Population Review. The dataset ranged from 1985-2021.

**Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics**

|  | CRMR | UNEMP | PIND | INF | GDPGR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 63.47805 | 10.77630 | 61.59996 | 19.02347 | 4.234356 |
| Median | 64.93000 | 9.704000 | 65.60000 | 12.55496 | 4.230061 |
| Maximum | 75.88000 | 19.66500 | 71.50000 | 72.83550 | 15.32916 |
| Minimum | 45.14000 | 8.218000 | 34.90000 | 5.388008 | -2.035119 |
| Std. Dev. | 8.043527 | 2.879071 | 10.46608 | 17.46256 | 3.861423 |
| Skewness | -0.824164 | 2.222976 | -0.952240 | 1.784505 | 0.458945 |
| Kurtosis | 3.391515 | 6.570982 | 2.888961 | 4.861475 | 3.397211 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jarque-Bera | 4.424996 | 50.13253 | 5.610696 | 24.97950 | 1.542129 |
| Probability | 0.109427 | 0.000000 | 0.060486 | 0.000004 | 0.462521 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sum | 2348.688 | 398.7232 | 2279.198 | 703.8685 | 156.6712 |
| Sum Sq. Dev. | 2329.140 | 298.4058 | 3943.401 | 10977.87 | 536.7811 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 37 |

**Source:** *Author Compilation (2022)*

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study. The mean, Median, maximum, and minimum values of the variables are as shown above in Table 4.2, where Crime rate (CRMR) and Poverty Index (PIND) showed a negative skewness, which implied that they had more variables below the mean variable. While unemployment, inflation rate and Gross domestic product growth rate were positively skewed. This implies that the variables showed a long right tail. Also, the kurtosis of the variables UNEMP and INF showed that the variables had a leptokurtic distribution with a kurtosis value more significant than three, which implied high peaks. While that of CRMR, PIND and GDPGR with a kurtosis value of approximately three was observed to be Mesokurtic, the kurtosis indicated a flat peak of the distribution of variables. The results of the Jarque Bera, which illustrates the normality of their distribution of variables, revealed that UNEMP and INF were normally distributed given the probability value of <0.05, while CRMR, PIND and GDPGR were not generally distributed given the Jarque-Bera and their respective probability value of >0.05 at the 5 percent level of significance.

**Correlation Analysis**
**Table 4.3** Correlation Matrix

|        | CRIME   | UNEMP   | PIND    | INF     | GDPGR |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| **CRMR**  | 1       |         |         |         |       |
| **UNEMP** | 0.1183  | 1       |         |         |       |
| **PIND**  | 0.0091  | 0.3274  | 1       |         |       |
| **INF**   | -0.1079 | -0.1114 | -0.2316 | 1       |       |
| **GDPGR** | 0.0480  | -0.3465 | -0.1631 | -0.3194 | 1     |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

Table 4.3 provides the Pearson's correlation matrix of the model. The results showed that the pairwise Pearson's correlation coefficients ranged from -0.32 to 0.11. This indicated that all the pairwise Pearson's correlation coefficients were less than 0.8. The implication is to expect an absence of multicollinearity among regressors in the estimated regression model. This supports the assumption of no multicollinearity in the estimated results.

**Stationarity Test**
**Table 4.4**       Augmented Dickey Fulley Test for Unit Root Test

| Variable | Levels statistics | | First Difference | | Order of Integration |
|----------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
|          | ADF Stats | 5% critical Value | ADF Stats | Critical value 5% |            |
| **CRMR** | -0.854273 | -2.967767 | -4.653689 | -2.967767 | I(1) |
| **UNMP** | -1.602044 | -2.945842 | -4.344440 | -2.948404 | I(1) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PIND** | -2.472524 | -2.945842 | -6.157335 | -2.948404 | I(1) |
| **GDPGR** | -4.048913 | -2.945842 | | | I(0) |
| **INF** | -2.399536 | -2.967767 | -3.245000 | -2.976263 | I(1) |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

Table 4.4 displayed the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test of the variables. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test confirms that all variables were stationary after the first difference except for GDPGR, which was found to be stationary at the levels. It means that Crime rate (CRMR), youth unemployment (UNEMP), Poverty index (PIND) and inflation rate (INF) were integrated of order one [I(1)]. At the same time, the GDP growth rate (GDPGR) was integrated of order zero [I(0)].

**Co-integration Test**

**Table 4.5**     Engle-Granger Co-integration Test

| Variable | t-stats | 5% critical value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| ECT | -1.858809 | -2.971853 | 0.3459 |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

The Engle-Granger Co-integration test results are presented in Table 4.5 above. The results show there exists no Co-integration among the variables since the residual series was not found to be stationary at levels. We, therefore, limit the study to the Vector autoregressive model.

**Vector Autoregressive Model**

**Table 4.6**     Lag Length Criteria

| Lag | LogL | LR | FPE | AIC | SC | HQ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | -559.7716 | NA | 1.84e+08 | 33.22186 | 33.44632 | 33.29841 |
| 1 | -483.2054 | 126.1090* | 9046043. | 30.02333* | 31.53534* | 30.64785* |
| 2 | -455.3966 | 37.62366 | 8490797.* | 30.18855 | 32.49244 | 30.86537 |
| 3 | -447.4962 | 8.365213 | 30773800 | 31.02919 | 34.62062 | 32.25397 |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

The optimal lag length criteria using the VAR approach are presented in Table 4.6 above. This selection is based on the LR test statistic, Akaike information criterion (AIC), Schwarz information criterion (SC) and Hannan-Quinn information criterion (HQ). Lag one was selected based on the recommendations of the above criteria.

The Wald test offers safety when deciding the number of lags from the selection criteria. The common P-value of the variables in the model indicates the possibility of adopting the chosen lag if its significant level is below 0.05.

**Table 4.6.1 Lag Exclusion Wald Test**

|        | CRMR     | GDPGR    | INF      | PIND     | UNEMP    | Joint    |
|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Lag 1  | 1.900714 | 5.081444 | 10.55044 | 14.70451 | 39.49770 | 81.56371 |
|        | [ 0.8627] | [ 0.4060] | [ 0.0611] | [ 0.0117] | [ 0.0000] | [ 0.0000] |
|        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Lag 2  | 8.408355 | 4.492195 | 15.68061 | 2.181514 | 7.108776 | 46.42076 |
|        | [ 0.1351] | [ 0.4809] | [ 0.0078] | [ 0.8235] | [ 0.2127] | [ 0.0057] |
| df     | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5        | 25       |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

The variables in Table 4.6.1 above reveal a common p-value of 0.0000 at lag 1. This reinforces the decision to choose one lag as prescribed by the lag selection criteria. Going further, it is also essential to ascertain the stability of the VAR model.

**Vector Autoregressive Results**

**Table 4.7 Vector Autoregression Estimate**

|              | CRMR       | GDPGR      | INF        | PIND       | UNEMP      |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| CRMR(-1)     | -0.284883  | -0.139364  | 0.174234   | -0.044237  | 0.071633   |
|              | (0.17159)  | (0.07559)  | (0.26831)  | (0.14982)  | (0.01988)  |
|              | [-1.66021] | [-1.84374] | [ 0.64938] | [-0.29528] | [ 3.60329] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| GDPGR(-1)    | -1.015141  | 0.702887   | -1.048604  | -0.189128  | -0.052338  |
|              | (0.42089)  | (0.18540)  | (0.65812)  | (0.36747)  | (0.04876)  |
|              | [-2.41189] | [ 3.79119] | [-1.59334] | [-0.51467] | [-1.07338] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| INF(-1)      | -0.301713  | -0.086309  | 0.475552   | -0.360487  | -0.006074  |
|              | (0.08804)  | (0.03878)  | (0.13767)  | (0.07687)  | (0.01020)  |
|              | [-3.42700] | [-2.22563] | [ 3.45440] | [-4.68957] | [-0.59554] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| PIND(-1)     | -0.097417  | 0.086001   | -0.624064  | 0.689464   | 0.033851   |
|              | (0.14216)  | (0.06262)  | (0.22228)  | (0.12411)  | (0.01647)  |
|              | [-0.68528] | [ 1.37336] | [-2.80755] | [ 5.55506] | [ 2.05527] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| UNEMP(-1)    | 1.521476   | -0.234485  | -0.371265  | 1.804711   | 1.033566   |
|              | (0.63819)  | (0.28112)  | (0.99789)  | (0.55719)  | (0.07393)  |
|              | [ 2.38405] | [-0.83410] | [-0.37205] | [ 3.23895] | [ 13.9795] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| C            | 88.22674   | 8.978632   | 45.82440   | 23.02071   | -2.829646  |
|              | (15.5013)  | (6.82836)  | (24.2382)  | (13.5339)  | (1.79583)  |
|              | [ 5.69156] | [ 1.31490] | [ 1.89058] | [ 1.70097] | [-1.57568] |
|              |            |            |            |            |            |
| R-squared    | 0.635781   | 0.575923   | 0.550656   | 0.580406   | 0.910089   |
| Adj. R-squared | -0.608256 | 0.555244  | 0.475766   | 0.510474   | 0.895104   |

| Sum sq. resids | 1992.218 | 386.5735 | 4870.820 | 1518.605 | 26.73801 |
| F-statistic | 7.942682 | 2.286416 | 7.352811 | 8.299533 | 60.73249 |

**Source:** *Authors Computation, (2022)*

From the Crime rate model in the table above, it is observed that a year lag value of the Crime rate CRMR (-1) influences current crime negatively. This was significant, judging by its t ratio, greater than 2. The results thus show that ceteris paribus, a percentage in crime rate, will translate to a 28 percent decrease in crime rate. A year lag of GDP growth rate (GDPGR (-1)) decreased the Crime rate; this is indicated by the negative relationship between GDPGR and CRMR given by a negative coefficient value. The results showed that a 1 unit increase in GDPGR would lead to a 1.02 unit decrease in crime rate, holding all other variables constant. This relationship was significant given the t ratio greater than 2.

The inflation rate (INF (-1)) was found to be negatively related to crime and further found to be statistically significant given the statistic of greater 2. This shows that an inverse relationship exists between inflation and crime rate. Similarly, a year lag of poverty negatively impacts the crime rate, which was statistically non-significant with a t-value of less than 2. This further shows that as poverty decreases, so does the crime rate, as shown by the empirical findings.

A year lag of youth unemployment (UNEMP (-1)) increased the Crime rate; the positive coefficient of UNEMP indicates this. The results showed that a 1 unit increase in UNEMP would translate to a 1.5 unit increase in crime rate, holding all other variables constant. This relationship was significant given the t ratio greater than 2.

The coefficient of determination is 0.64 in the model for Crime rate, while the adjusted R-squared was 0.61 when adjustments were made for the degree of freedom. This implies that all the explanatory variables explained 64.5 percent of the variations in crime rate. This is a good fit as only about 46.5 percent of the systematic variation is unexplained. We characterize this unexplained variation to variables not explicitly included in the model and measurement errors, both of which the stochastic error term captures effects.

The F-test is a test of the overall significance of the model. It tests the hypothesis that all the variables taken together are not significantly dissimilar from zero. The value of the F-statistic is 7.94. Accordingly, the F-statistic shows that the model is statistically significant since the value of F statistics is greater than the 2 rule of thumb. This implies that the overall model is significant in explaining the variations in the equation. Given the soundness of goodness of fit as analyzed above, we can rely on the estimated parameters of the variable.

The Poverty index model in the table above reveals that a year lag value of the poverty index captured as PIND (-1) impacts current poverty positively. This shows the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria. This was significant, judging by its t ratio, greater than 2. The results thus show that ceteris paribus, a percentage of poverty in the previous year, will translate to a 68.9 percent increase in the poverty index in the current year. A year lag of crime rate (CRME (-1)) decreased the poverty index; this finding negates the apriori expectation. It was similarly found to be non-significant with a t-ratio of less than 2. The findings imply that crime negatively impacts the poverty index. GDP growth rate GDPGR (-1) showed a

negative and non-significant relationship with the poverty index in Nigeria during the period under study. These findings support the apriori expectation, which explicitly means that as the economy grows, the poverty index declines.

The inflation rate (INF (-1)) was found to be negatively related to the poverty index and further found to be statistically significant given the t-stats of greater 2. This shows that an inverse relationship exists between inflation and the poverty index.

A year lag of youth unemployment (UNEMP (-1)) increased the poverty index in Nigeria; the positive coefficient of UNEMP indicates this. The results showed that a 1-unit increase in UNEMP would translate to a 1.8 percent increase in the poverty index, holding all other variables constant. This relationship was significant given the t ratio greater than 2.

The coefficient of determination is 0.58 in the model for the poverty index, while the adjusted R-squared was 0.51 when adjustments were made for the degree of freedom. This implies that all the explanatory variables explained 58.0 percent of the variations in the poverty index. This is a good fit, as more than 50 percent of the systematic variation was captured in the model. We characterize this unexplained variation to variables not explicitly included in the model and measurement errors, both of which the stochastic error term captures effects.

The F-test is a test of the overall significance of the model. It tests the hypothesis that all the variables taken together are not significantly dissimilar from zero. The value of the F-statistic is 8.3 accordingly; the F-statistic shows that the model is statistically significant since the value of F statistics is greater than the 2 rule of thumb. This implies that the overall model is significant in explaining the variations in the equation. Given the soundness of goodness of fit as analyzed above, we can rely on the estimated parameters of the variable.

The youth unemployment (UNEMP) model in the table above indicates that a year lag value of youth unemployment UNEMP (-1) impacts current youth unemployment positively. This was significant, judging by its t ratio, greater than 2. The results thus show that ceteris paribus, a percentage increase in youth unemployment in the previous period translated to a 1.03 percent increase in youth unemployment in the current period. Also, a year lag of crime rate (CRMR (-1)) increased youth unemployment; this holds due to the positive coefficient of crime rate. The results showed that ceteris paribus, a 10 percent increase in crime rate would lead to a 0.7 percent increase in youth unemployment rate. This relationship was significant given the t ratio greater than 2.

Further, the finding revealed that the GDP growth rate negatively correlated with youth unemployment in Nigeria. These findings were in tandem with the apriori sign expectation. However, the impact was insignificant, given a t-ratio of less than 2. The inflation rate (INF(-1)) was found to be negatively related to youth unemployment and further found to be non-statistically significant, given the t-stats of less than 2. Finally, a year lag of poverty positively impacts youth unemployment, which was found to be statistically significant with a t-value of greater than 2. This goes further to show that as poverty increases, so does youth unemployment, as observed in the empirical findings of this study.

The coefficient of determination is 91.0 in the model for youth unemployment, while the adjusted R-squared was 0.895 when adjustments were made for the degree of freedom. This implies that all the explanatory variables explained 91 percent of the variations in

crime rate. This is a good fit, as only 9 percent of the systematic variation was unexplained. We characterize this unexplained variation to variables not explicitly included in the model and measurement errors, both of which the stochastic error term captures effects.

The F-test is a test of the overall significance of the model. It tests the hypothesis that all the variables taken together are not significantly dissimilar from zero. The value of the F-statistic is 60.7. Accordingly, the F-statistic shows that the model is statistically significant since the value of F statistics is greater than the 2 rule of thumb. This implies that the overall model is significant in explaining the variations in the equation. Given the soundness of goodness of fit as analyzed above, we can rely on the estimated parameters of the variable.

**Post Diagnostic Test**
The next step taken in this study will be to run a diagnostic test on the model to ensure the absence of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity in the estimate. The LM test and the white heteroscedasticity test are applied to achieve this, and the results are displayed in the table below.

**Table 4.8 VAR Residual Serial Correlation LM Tests**

| VAR Residual Lag | LRE* stat | Df | Prob. | Rao F-stat | df | Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 29.29508 | 25 | 0.2518 | 1.207696 | (25, 79.5) | 0.2596 |
| 2 | 31.02835 | 25 | 0.1881 | 1.292066 | (25, 79.5) | 0.1951 |

*Source: Authors computation, (2022)*

Table 4.8 contains the diagnostic results of the VAR estimation. The result for the LRE statistic, as well as the Rao F statistics, indicated that there was no threat of serial correlation in the estimated model since both statistics were not significant at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no serial correlation is accepted.

**Table 4.9 VAR Residual Heteroskedasticity Tests**

| Chi-sq | df | Prob. |
|---|---|---|
| 141.1604 | 150 | 0.6851 |

*Source: Authors computation, (2022)*

There was also no heteroskedasticity problem in the estimated chi-square value of 141.16, which was not significant at the 5% significance level. The study, therefore, accepts the null hypothesis of no heteroscedasticity in the model. It follows, therefore, that all the underlying assumptions of the regression analysis were not violated. Hence, the estimates from the model are reliable for decision-making.

**Toda-Yamamoto Granger Causality Test.**
The version of Toda-Yamamoto is more reliable because it is justifiable regardless of whether the variables are not co-integrated or co-integrated in a random order or with the

orders of I(0) and I(1), respectively. Hence, the variables showed no evidence of Co-integration; the study adopted the Toda-Yamamoto Granger causality test to establish if there exists a causal relationship among the variables of interest.

**Table 4.10 Causality for Crime Rate**

| Dependent variable: CRMR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Excluded | Chi-sq | df | Prob. |
| GDPGR | 5.809751 | 1 | 0.0159 |
| INF | 7.844806 | 1 | 0.0051 |
| PIND | 1.791842 | 1 | 0.0914 |
| UNEMP | 2.024374 | 1 | 0.0359 |

*Source: Authors computation, (2022)*

Table 4.10 displays the Toda-Yamamoto results for the crime rate. The results show that GDP growth rate, inflation rate, and youth unemployment granger cause crime in Nigeria during the period under study. This is shown by the chi-square of greater than two and a p-value of less than 0.05% level. However, the poverty index was observed to have greater causes of crime at the 10% level of significance as indicated by the p-value.

**Table 4.11 Causality Test for Poverty Index**

| Dependent variable: PIND | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Excluded | Chi-sq | df | Prob. |
| CRMR | 0.000113 | 1 | 0.9915 |
| GDPGR | 0.806135 | 1 | 0.3693 |
| INF | 2.297884 | 1 | 0.0452 |
| UNEMP | 2.368876 | 1 | 0.0436 |

*Source: Authors computation, (2022)*

Table 4.11 above presents the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test for the poverty index model. The results show that the inflation rate and unemployment granger cause poverty in Nigeria. This is indicated by their respective chi-square and p-value of less than 5%, while crime rate and GDP growth do not guarantee cause poverty in Nigeria.

**Table 4.12 Causality Test for Youth Unemployment**

| Dependent variable: UNEMP | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Excluded | Chi-sq | df | Prob. |
| CRMR | 1.986512 | 1 | 0.0496 |
| GDPGR | 2.756844 | 1 | 0.0350 |
| INF | 0.518582 | 1 | 0.4714 |
| PIND | 2.364352 | 1 | 0.0461 |

*Source: Authors computation, (2022)*

Table 4.12 shows the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality results for the youth unemployment. The results show that the crime rate, GDP growth rate and poverty index granger cause youth unemployment in Nigeria except for the inflation rate. The significance of these variables can be seen by the resultant p-values, which are less than the 5% significance level.

**Test for Hypotheses.**
The null hypotheses stated earlier in this study were evaluated in this section. The evaluation was based on the results obtained and presented above.
*H01:   There is no causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime rate in Nigeria.*
The estimated VAR results showed that youth unemployment significantly increases the crime rate; this is further buttressed by the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test, which indicates that youth unemployment Granger causes crime in Nigeria. From the preceding, the study shall reject the null hypothesis for the alternative hypothesis.
*H02:   There is no relationship between youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.*
From the results, unemployment has a significant positive relation with poverty; this is further shown by the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality that youth unemployment Granger causes poverty. The second null hypothesis was therefore rejected in place of the alternative hypothesis.
*H03:   There is no casual linkage between poverty and crime in Nigeria.*
The estimated VAR results show that poverty has a significant relationship with crime; in this case, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. However, the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality shows that poverty Granger causes crime at the 10% level of significance. On the flip side, crime does granger cause poverty. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

**Discussion of Findings**
From the estimated results, it was established that youth unemployment had a significant relationship with the crime rate and was sufficiently confirmed by the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test that youth unemployment granger causes crime in Nigeria. The findings of this study align with those of Garba, Ahmed and Sunday (2020), who established that unemployment and crime are co-integrated, and that unemployment significantly impacts the crime rate in Nigeria. Further, the study aligns with that of Longe (2016) and Mahmood (2011), who both stated that there is a causal link between unemployment and crime in their various studies.
Further, the study examined the relationship between unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The VAR estimation results show that unemployment has a significant impact on poverty in Nigeria. Similarly, the results of the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality indicated that unemployment granger causes poverty in Nigeria. These findings align with those of Egunjobi (2014), who found that unemployment positively correlates with

poverty. Also, Farouk and Joseph (2019) confirm a proportionate relationship between poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

The study also evaluated the relationship between crime rate and poverty in Nigeria. The results found that a negative, non-significant relationship exists between them. The Toda Yamamoto Granger causality further confirms that crime does not granger cause poverty in Nigeria. These findings refute that of Adenuga and Abdul-Razak (2016), who established the existence of the short-run impact of crime on poverty and a unidirectional causality of crime affecting poverty in Nigeria.

**Policy Implication**

The t-ratios demonstrated the significant importance of the variables youth unemployment (UNEMP), crime rate (CRMR), poverty index (PIND), inflation rate (INF), and GDP growth rate (GDPGR) derived from the Vector Autoregressive model (VAR) findings. This means that proper consideration must be given to the other variables found in the study for the reduction of the crime rate, poverty rate, or unemployment rate in Nigeria to be conceivable, realized, or completed. This suggests that issues such as prior young unemployment, poverty, or crime rates should be taken into account when developing policies aimed at enhancing any of these same variables (CRMR, UNEMP, and PIND) in Nigeria.

The policy recommendations outlined above have profound implications for Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. If implemented effectively, they can lead to:

1. A significant reduction in youth unemployment, providing young Nigerians with opportunities to secure their financial future and contribute to the nation's development.
2. A more equitable society with reduced poverty fosters social cohesion and reduces the incentives for engaging in criminal activities.
3. Improved public safety and the creation of safer communities, allowing individuals and businesses to thrive without fear of crime.
4. A strengthened rule of law and greater trust in public institutions can contribute to more stable and inclusive governance.

However, the successful implementation of these policies depends on the commitment of leaders at all levels, as well as the active participation of the private sector, civil society, and the international community.

**Summary of findings**

This study has exposed several findings, including establishing a causal linkage among crime, youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The estimated VAR results showed that youth unemployment significantly increases the crime rate; this is further buttressed by the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test, which indicated that youth unemployment Granger causes crime in Nigeria. To state explicitly, the study revealed that youth unemployment promotes crime in Nigeria and vice versa. Hence, the causal relationship between youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria. From the VAR results, unemployment had a significant positive relation with poverty; this is further strengthened by the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test, which indicated that youth unemployment Granger

causes poverty. The results indicated a bidirectional causality between unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Finally, the estimated VAR results show that poverty has a significant relationship with crime, and the Toda Yamamoto Granger causality shows that poverty Granger causes crime at the 10% level of significance. The results revealed a unidirectional causality between the variables moving from poverty to crime and not the other way around.

## Conclusion

The interconnections between leadership, youth unemployment, poverty, and crime in Nigeria are deeply complex, but they also offer opportunities for transformation. Effective leadership is at the heart of the nation's ability to address these challenges and foster sustainable development. Nigeria is poised to harness the potential of its youthful population, but doing so requires strategic and comprehensive policies. To reduce youth unemployment, the nation must invest in education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship. To combat poverty, social welfare programs and progressive taxation are essential. To address crime, there must be a focus on strengthening law enforcement, community policing, and rehabilitation.

Successful implementation of these policies depends on transparent governance, the fight against corruption, and a deep commitment to the welfare of the Nigerian people. It is essential that leadership at all levels rises to the challenge and seizes the opportunity to create a more prosperous and just Nigeria.

## Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributed to the body of knowledge in several ways. First, it investigated the nexus between youth unemployment, poverty and crime in Nigeria. It attempted to examine the relationship that exists between each variable, that is if there is a causal relationship between variables of interest. Several studies have focused on either one or two of the variables. However, this study goes forward to examine the three variables simultaneously through the VAR model and also a causality model. This study, therefore, strengthens the position of the relationship between these variables. This study thus adds value to the body of literature by establishing the relationship that exists among these variables.

## Recommendations
### *Addressing Youth Unemployment:*

1. **Invest in Education and Skill Development:** Government and private sector collaboration is essential to provide quality education and vocational training. These programs should equip young Nigerians with the skills needed to meet the demands of a changing job market. Additionally, efforts to improve access to affordable and quality education at all levels must be intensified.

2. **Promote Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses:** Encourage entrepreneurial initiatives by providing incentives and financial support for young entrepreneurs. Policies should reduce bureaucratic hurdles, provide access to affordable credit, and foster a supportive business environment.

3. **Create Job Opportunities through Infrastructure Development**: The government should invest in infrastructure projects, which not only create jobs directly but also stimulate economic activities in related sectors. This includes roads, transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure.
4. **Strengthen Labor Market Information Systems:** Develop and maintain a comprehensive information system to provide real-time information on job openings, skill requirements, and employment opportunities. This can help match job seekers with available positions more efficiently.

*Addressing Poverty and Inequality:*
1. **Targeted Social Welfare Programs**: Expand and improve social welfare programs to provide a safety net for vulnerable populations. These programs should include measures to ensure that benefits reach their intended beneficiaries and are not subject to corruption or mismanagement.
2. **Progressive Taxation**: Implement a progressive taxation system that places a heavier tax burden on the wealthy while relieving low-income individuals and small businesses. The revenue generated can be reinvested in social programs and infrastructure development.
3. **Access to Healthcare and Education**: Ensure universal access to quality healthcare and education by addressing affordability and availability issues. Healthy and educated individuals are better equipped to escape the cycle of poverty and contribute to the nation's development.
4. **Financial Inclusion**: Expand financial inclusion initiatives to reach the unbanked and underbanked populations, providing access to financial services to help families save, invest, and build a foundation for financial stability.

*Addressing Crime and Public Safety:*
1. **Strengthen Law Enforcement and Judicial Systems**: Invest in law enforcement agencies, providing them with the necessary resources, training, and technology to combat crime effectively. Simultaneously, reforms should ensure a transparent and accountable justice system that upholds the rule of law.
2. **Community Policing**: Promote community policing models that build trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. This can help identify and address the root causes of crime more effectively.
3. **Youth Engagement and Rehabilitation:** Develop programs that engage at-risk youth in positive activities, such as sports, arts, and mentorship programs. Additionally, invest in rehabilitation programs for those involved in criminal activities, offering them a chance to reintegrate into society.
4. **Prevent Corruption and Ensure Transparency**: Implement anti-corruption measures, improve transparency in government operations, and strengthen accountability mechanisms. Corruption undermines efforts to address crime and poverty and must be addressed at all levels of society.

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