

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME IN ADAMAWA NORTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PAWECA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect Youth Unemployment on Crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District: Assessing the Role of PAWECA. The study was anchored on Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory, which explains how blocked legitimate opportunities may create pressure that can encourage deviant behaviour. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents across Mubi North, Mubi South, Maiha, Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas. A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula, while proportionate stratified sampling was used to allocate the sample across the selected Local Government Areas. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test. The findings of the study revealed that youth unemployment is driven by inadequate skills, insecurity, poor infrastructure, inadequate government funding, and limited employment opportunities, and is associated with crime such as theft, burglary, cybercrime, kidnapping, and political violence. The study also established that PAWECA poverty-alleviation, skills acquisition, and entrepreneurship programmes have the potential to reduce youth unemployment and associated crime, although their effectiveness is constrained by inadequate funding, poor implementation, limited coverage, political interference, favouritism, and weak monitoring mechanisms. The study therefore recommends strengthening PAWECA interventions through adequate funding, transparent beneficiary selection, expanded skills acquisition and entrepreneurship programmes, improved access to loans and grants, effective monitoring, and stronger collaboration among government, the private sector, development partners, and community stakeholders to promote sustainable youth employment and reduce crime.

Keywords: *Crime, Unemployment, Youth Unemployment, PAWECA, Adamawa Northern Senatorial District*

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment has become a major security and socio-economic challenge in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, where rapid population growth, limited employment opportunities, inadequate skills, and weak economic conditions have made it difficult for young people to secure sustainable livelihoods. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024) reports that young people continue to face greater difficulties in accessing decent employment than adults, with many being engaged in informal, insecure, or low-paying activities. In Nigeria, the

problem is particularly significant because a large proportion of the population consists of young people, while the economy has not generated sufficient productive employment opportunities to absorb the growing labour force. The World Bank (2024) notes that Nigeria needs stronger job creation, improved human capital development, and greater private-sector opportunities to address the employment challenges confronting its growing youth population. Persistent unemployment can create economic hardship, social exclusion, frustration, and vulnerability among young people, thereby increasing the risk of their involvement in antisocial activities.

The relationship between youth unemployment and crime has attracted considerable attention because prolonged unemployment and economic deprivation may expose young people to conditions that encourage criminal behaviour leading to committed crime. Lack of income and limited legitimate opportunities can increase frustration and make some unemployed youths vulnerable to activities such as theft, drug-related offences, fraud, violence, and other forms of crime. However, unemployment does not automatically cause crime; rather, the relationship is influenced by poverty, social exclusion, family conditions, peer influence, weak institutions, and access to alternative economic opportunities. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023) emphasizes that socioeconomic exclusion and limited opportunities can contribute to vulnerability to crime and violence, particularly among young people. Similarly, the African Development Bank (2024) stresses that expanding decent employment, entrepreneurship, and skills-development opportunities for young Africans is important for reducing socioeconomic vulnerability and promoting social stability. Consequently, interventions that equip unemployed youths with employable skills, entrepreneurship opportunities, financial support, and access to productive activities can play an important role in addressing both unemployment and its associated social consequences.

In Adamawa State, particularly the Adamawa Northern Senatorial District, youth unemployment is a significant concern because young people constitute an important segment of the population while opportunities for formal employment and sustainable livelihoods remain limited. The effects of unemployment may be compounded by poverty, insecurity, limited access to vocational training, and inadequate private-sector employment opportunities. In response to these challenges, organizations and youth-focused initiatives such as the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Agency (PAWECA) have an important role to play in reducing unemployment and improving the socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable populations through skills acquisition, entrepreneurship development, empowerment programmes, and other livelihood interventions. The Adamawa State Government has continued to emphasize youth empowerment, skills development, and employment creation as strategies for improving livelihoods and reducing social vulnerability (Adamawa State Government, 2024). However, the extent to which PAWECA's programmes have

contributed to reducing youth unemployment and preventing crime in the Adamawa Northern Senatorial District requires empirical assessment. Therefore, this study examines youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District, with particular emphasis on assessing the role of PAWECA in providing employment-related opportunities and reducing the vulnerability of youths to criminal activities.

Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment and crime constitute major socio-economic and security challenges in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. The problems include the high rate of youth unemployment, limited employment opportunities, increasing involvement of unemployed youths in criminal activities, poverty, economic hardship, and inadequate intervention mechanisms to address youth unemployment and crime. These challenges have raised concerns about the relationship between unemployment and crime and the effectiveness of interventions such as the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Agency (PAWECA) in addressing them.

Youth unemployment can create economic frustration, dependency and vulnerability among young people, particularly where opportunities for decent employment and livelihood are limited. Prolonged unemployment may expose youths to poverty, financial dependance, social exclusion and mental health problems thereby increasing their susceptibility to criminal activities such as theft, burglary, drug-related offences, cybercrime, political violence and other forms of crime. Despite various government and non-governmental interventions, these challenges remain a concern in the district, making it necessary to examine whether youth unemployment has a significant effect or association with crime and whether interventions undertaken by PAWECA aimed at improving livelihoods and economic opportunities within communities is yielding a positive and concrete result. As the extent to which such efforts have contributed to reducing youth unemployment and its associated crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District remains unclear.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Unemployment

Unemployment has been widely conceptualized as a condition in which individuals who are able and willing to work cannot find suitable employment within the labour market. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) defines unemployment in statistical terms as comprising individuals of working age who are without work, available for work, and actively seeking employment. This definition captures both the visible and often hidden struggles of people shut out of the labor market. In the Nigerian context, the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) further applies

this definition to measure both open unemployment and underemployment, acknowledging that joblessness extends beyond the complete absence of work to include situations of inadequate or insufficient employment. Ojo (2021) emphasizes that unemployment is not only an economic indicator but also a social problem with far-reaching implications for poverty, insecurity and crime.

Youth Unemployment

The concept of youth unemployment is multi-dimensional, encompassing not only the complete absence of employment but also underemployment, where young people engage in jobs far below their skill levels or capacities. This form of employment often leads to job dissatisfaction, reduced productivity, and a loss of motivation among youth (Ezeani & Okeke, 2021). Underemployment also disguises the true extent of the problem, making it harder for governments to address it adequately (UNDP, 2022). Youth unemployment has therefore emerged as a critical challenge in many developing and developed economies, posing significant threats to social cohesion and economic development, this problem is not merely about lack of jobs but also about the mismatch between the skills of young people and the needs of the labor market (Obi & Salami, 2022).

Empirical Review

A number of studies had been conducted on the implications of youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria and some other part of the country with results majorly in harmony. Wajim (2020) conducted a study titled Youth Unemployment: The Cause of Ethnic Conflict and Criminal Activities in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study adopted Strain Theory and a cross-sectional design, using questionnaires from 120 unemployed youths and simple percentages for analysis. The findings showed that unemployment encouraged youths to engage in ethnic conflict, theft and armed robbery, recommending job creation to reduce criminal activities.

Egbewole and Lamidi (2021) examined Effect of Youth Unemployment on the Rate of Crime in Nigeria: A Study of DSTV Viewing Centres in Two Local Government Areas in Nigeria. The study adopted Strain Theory and a descriptive survey design, with 194 valid questionnaires analysed using multiple regression. The findings revealed that youth unemployment had a significant effect on crime proneness, highlighting the need for effective employment programmes.

Obianagwa, Ngoka, Uwaechia, Ezugwu, Okpala, and Ayadiuno (2023) conducted a study titled Youth Unemployment and Cybercrime in Nigeria. The study was based on Youth Bulge Theory and employed ex-post facto and time-series designs using secondary data. The findings showed that persistent youth unemployment contributed significantly to cybercrime, recommending employment creation and productive engagement of youths.

Anyanwu (2024) studied Youth's Unemployment and Cybercrime in Nigeria using Merton's Strain Theory and a qualitative approach based on secondary data. The study found that unemployment, economic hardship and limited opportunities encouraged youths to engage in cybercrime as an alternative source of income. It recommended job creation, skills acquisition and improved social infrastructure.

Bako, Ari, and Adigizi (2026) examined Poverty, Youth Unemployment and Criminality in Kanam Local Government Area: An Empirical Analysis, 2019-2023. Anchored on General Strain Theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods design using questionnaires, interviews and documentary sources. The findings showed that unemployment and poverty were associated with theft, drug abuse, armed robbery and violent activities, recommending sustainable employment and skills-acquisition programmes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Various Criminology and Sociological theories can be applied to frame a study of this nature. However, strain theory was adopted due to its explanatory, descriptive, and its predictive capacities of the variables under study.

Strain Theory (Robert Merton)

Strain theory, proposed by American sociologist Robert K. Merton, in 1938, suggests that individuals in society experience strain when they are unable to achieve culturally societal approved goals through legitimate means. Merton argued that when societal expectations are unattainable through conventional pathways, individuals may resort to deviant behavior or crime. The theory identifies five modes of responses and adaptation to strain viz, conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion.

Assumption of the Theory

The theory assumes that every society promotes certain culturally approved goals such as wealth, success, education, and social status, and individuals are expected to strive toward achieving these goals. However, the theory further assumes that access to legitimate means of achieving these societal goals is not equally available to everyone. Due to factors such as poverty, unemployment, poor educational opportunities, and social inequality, some individuals are denied lawful opportunities for success. This unequal distribution of opportunities creates frustration, pressure, or strain among individuals who are unable to achieve expected goals through acceptable means.

Relevance of the Theory

Strain theory appears the most relevant to this study, because the core premise of strain theory lies in the fact that youth experiencing blocked opportunities may resort to crime to achieve success aligning closely with the situation of most if not all unemployed youth. It also directly addresses the psychological and societal pressures that lead to criminal behavior when legitimate opportunities are unavailable.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the relationship between youth unemployment and crime and assess the role of PAWECA in reducing youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect and describe data on the experiences, opinions and perceptions of respondents regarding youth unemployment, crime and PAWECA interventions without manipulating the study variables. The design therefore provides a systematic description of the existing conditions and relationships among the variables under study.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised youths, parents, government officials and community leaders in Mubi North, Mubi South, Maiha, Michika and Madagali LGAs of Adamawa State. Based on the Population census figures of National Population Commission 2006, the five LGAs had a combined total projected population of 1,140,980 which served as the basis for determining the study sample size (NPC, 2024).

The study further adopted the population proportion estimation method, a standard demographic technique, to estimate the youth population. Based on Nigeria's National Youth Policy (2019), which defines youth as persons aged 15-29 years, the youth proportion was estimated at 15/65 (23.1%) of the total projected population and applied accordingly.

The formula used:

$$Y = P \times r$$

Where:

Y = Estimated youth population

P = Total projected population

r = Proportion (percentage share) of youth in the total population

For the study:

Youth age bracket = 15-29 years = 15 years span

Assumed total population age span = 0-64 years = 65 years

Therefore:

$$r = \frac{15}{65} = 0.231 \text{ (23.1\%)} \quad Y = P \times 0.231$$

Table 1: Projected Total Population and Youth Population of the Selected Local Government Areas

S/No.	LGA	Total Population (2024)	Youth Population (15-29) 2024
1.	Mubi South	217,407	50,221
2.	Mubi North	253,473	58,552
3.	Maiha	184,315	42,577
4.	Michika	259,702	59,991
5.	Madagali	226,083	52,225
Total		1,140,980	263,566

Source: National Population Commission 2024 projections

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, which provided a mathematical approach for selecting an adequate sample size from a given population. Given the total projected youth population of 263,566 for 2024 as derived from the projected total population of each LGA using the National Youth Policy (2019) definition of youth age bracket (15-29 years), applying an estimated proportional share of 23.1% of the total population at the five (5) selected Local Government Areas viz: Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South and Maiha Local Government of the northern Senatorial District of Adamawa state, the formula for determining sample size is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = Total population

e = standard error/level of acceptance

n = sample size

N = 263,566

$$n = \frac{263,566}{1 + 263,566 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{263,566}{1 + 263,566 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{263,566}{659.915}$$

$$n = 399.3938 \approx 400$$

The questionnaires were further distributed across the five selected LGAs using Bowley's (1926) proportionate stratified sampling allocation formula to ensure that each LGA was represented according to its population size.

Table 2: Distribution of the Study Sample across the Selected Local Government Areas and Wards

Local Government Area	No. of Political Wards	Target Respondents	Average Respondent Per Ward
Mubi South	10	76	8
Mubi North	11	89	8
Maiha	10	65	7
Michika	16	91	6
Madagali	10	79	8
Total	57	400	

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026.

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive, proportionate, stratified, and simple random sampling methods. The selected Local Government Areas were first purposively chosen based on their relevance to the study, after which youth respondents aged 15–29 years were proportionately allocated using Bowley's formula. The LGAs were further divided into political wards as strata, from which respondents were selected through simple random sampling to ensure fair geographical representation and equal opportunity of selection.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through a structured questionnaire administered personally by the researcher and trained research assistants to selected youths, parents, government officials and community leaders in Mubi North, Mubi South, Maiha, Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas of Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. The questionnaire focused on youth unemployment, crime and the role of PAWECA in addressing these issues. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness and organized for analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic Variable of the Respondents

Table 3: Biodata of Respondents

Category	Profile of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	247	68.0
	Female	116	32.0
	Total	363	100.0
Age	15 - 19yrs	50	13.8
	20 - 24yrs	224	61.7
	25 - 29yrs	89	24.5
	Total	363	100.0
Educational Qualification	Non-Formal	33	9.1
	Primary	31	8.5
	Secondary	113	31.1
	Tertiary	186	51.2
	Total	363	100.0
Occupation	Student	100	27.5
	Employed	50	13.8
	Unemployed	154	42.4
	Self-employed	59	16.3
	Others	-	-
	Total	363	100.0
Local Government	Madagali	72	19.8
	Michika	85	23.4
	Mubi North	75	20.7
	Mubi South	70	19.3
	Maiha	61	16.8
Total		363	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The demographic profile of the 363 respondents indicates that males constituted the majority, with 247 respondents (68.0%), while females accounted for 116 respondents (32.0%), showing greater male representation in the study. In terms of age, most respondents were between 20–24 years, with 224 respondents (61.7%), followed by those aged 25–29 years with 89 respondents (24.5%), while 50 respondents (13.8%) were aged 15–19 years. Regarding educational qualification, 186 respondents (51.2%) had tertiary education, 113 (31.1%) had secondary education, 33 (9.1%) had no formal education, and 31 (8.5%) had primary education, indicating that more than half of the respondents had tertiary education. The occupational distribution shows that 154 respondents (42.4%) were unemployed, 100 (27.5%) were students, 59 (16.3%) were self-employed, and 50 (13.8%) were employed, highlighting a substantial level of unemployment among the respondents. In terms of Local Government Area, Michika had the highest representation with 85 respondents (23.4%), followed by Mubi North with 75 (20.7%), Madagali with 72 (19.8%), Mubi South with 70 (19.3%), and Maiha with 61 respondents (16.8%). Overall, the distribution provides representation across the five Local Government Areas and reflects the characteristics of the respondents included in the study.

Table 5: Relationship between Youth Unemployment and Crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District

S/N	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Youth unemployment contributes to increased crime among youths in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.	3.92	1.23	Accepted
2	Lack of employment opportunities encourages youths to engage in criminal activities.	3.82	1.27	Accepted
3	Unemployed youths are more vulnerable to involvement in theft, drug abuse and other forms of crime.	3.83	1.28	Accepted
4	Poverty resulting from youth unemployment increases the likelihood of criminal behaviour.	3.82	1.25	Accepted
5	Lack of sustainable income-generating opportunities contributes to youth involvement in crime.	3.85	1.29	Accepted
6	There is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and crime in the study area.	3.86	1.26	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5 presents the relationship between youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. The results show that all the statements were accepted, as their mean scores exceeded the benchmark of 3.00. The statement that youth unemployment contributes to increased

crime among youths recorded the highest mean score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 1.23, indicating strong agreement among respondents that unemployment is associated with increased criminal activities. This was followed by the statement that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and crime in the study area, which recorded a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.26. Similarly, lack of sustainable income-generating opportunities had a mean of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.29, while unemployed youths being more vulnerable to theft, drug abuse and other forms of crime recorded a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.28. Lack of employment opportunities and poverty resulting from youth unemployment both recorded a mean of 3.82, with standard deviations of 1.27 and 1.25 respectively, and were also accepted. Overall, the findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that youth unemployment, limited employment opportunities, poverty and lack of sustainable income-generating activities contribute to criminal behaviour among youths in the study area. The standard deviation values, ranging from 1.23 to 1.29, indicate moderate variation in respondents' opinions, while the overall pattern of accepted responses suggests that youth unemployment is perceived as an important factor associated with crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.

Table 6: Forms of Crimes Commonly Associated with Unemployed Youths in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District

S/N	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Youth unemployment is associated with increased cases of theft in the community	3.18	1.44	Accepted
2	Youth unemployment contributes to burglary and other property-related crimes	3.60	1.58	Accepted
3	Unemployed youths are more vulnerable to crime and drug-related offences	3.52	1.49	Accepted
4	Youth unemployment has contributed to youth involvement in cybercrime	3.66	1.50	Accepted
5	Youth unemployment has contributed to youth involvement in kidnapping, and other violent criminal activities.	2.87	1.41	Rejected
6	Youth unemployment has contributed to youth involvement in political thuggery and election-related violence.	3.79	1.37	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6 indicates that youth unemployment is significantly perceived to be associated with various forms of criminal behaviour in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. Five of the six items recorded mean scores above the 3.00 decision benchmark and were therefore accepted. Political thuggery and election-related violence had the highest mean score (3.79), followed by cybercrime (3.66), burglary

and property-related offences (3.60), drug-related offences (3.52), and theft (3.18). These findings suggest that prolonged unemployment may increase youths' socioeconomic vulnerability and exposure to illicit activities, particularly where alternative livelihood opportunities are limited. However, kidnapping and other violent crimes recorded a mean of 2.87 and were rejected, indicating that respondents did not consider youth unemployment alone a sufficient explanation for such offences. The grand mean of 3.44 demonstrates an overall agreement that youth unemployment is associated with crime in the study area, although the strength of this relationship varies across different forms of criminal activity.

Table 6: Contribution of PAWECA in Reducing Youth Unemployment and Crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District

S/N	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	PAWECA interventions have the potential to reduce youth involvement in crime by improving their economic opportunities.	3.50	1.44	Accepted
2	PAWECA programmes have created employment opportunities for youths in the district.	2.03	1.37	Rejected
3	PAWECA financial assistance and entrepreneurship programmes has enabled youth beneficiaries to start or expand their existing businesses.	2.20	1.41	Rejected
4	PAWECA skills acquisition programmes have improved youths' employability	2.24	1.49	Rejected
5	PAWECA programmes have contributed to reducing youth unemployment and its associated crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.	2..18	1.31	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6 assesses respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of PAWECA interventions in addressing youth unemployment and associated crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. Only one of the five statements was accepted, while four were rejected based on the 3.00 benchmark. The accepted statement, which assessed PAWECA's potential to reduce youth involvement in crime through improved economic opportunities, recorded a mean of 3.50. This suggests that respondents recognize the potential of PAWECA interventions to influence youth involvement in crime positively when they provide sustainable economic and livelihood opportunities.

However, the four rejected statements, with mean scores ranging from 2.03 to 2.24, indicate that respondents did not perceive PAWECA as having generated substantial employment opportunities,

strengthened youth businesses, improved employability, or significantly reduced youth unemployment and associated crime. The grand mean of 2.43, which falls below the 3.00 benchmark, therefore indicates an overall negative assessment of the programme's actual effectiveness. The findings point to a gap between the perceived potential of PAWECA interventions and their practical outcomes, suggesting the need for improved programme coverage, accessibility, funding, implementation, monitoring, and sustainability to achieve meaningful reductions in youth unemployment and crime.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.

Table 7:

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Mean	t- calculated	df	Decision
Youth unemployment and crime	400	3.85	1.26	3.00	13.49	399	Reject H_{01}

Decision: Since the calculated t-value of 13.49 indicates a significant difference between the observed mean of 3.85 and the test mean of 3.00 at the 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the study concludes that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02} : PAWECA has no significant contribution to reducing youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.

Table 8:

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Mean	t-calculated	df	Decision
Contribution of PAWECA	400	2.43	1.40	3.00	-7.77	399	Retain H_{02}

Decision: Since the calculated t-value of -7.77 indicates a significant difference between the observed mean of 2.43 and the test mean of 3.00 at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is retained. The study therefore concludes that PAWECA has no significant contribution to reducing youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District, although respondents acknowledge its potential to address unemployment and crime through improved economic opportunities.

Consequently, the study retains the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and concludes that the available evidence does not establish that PAWECA has made a significant effective contribution to reducing youth unemployment and crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. Rather, the findings indicate that PAWECA possesses potential as an intervention mechanism, but its actual impact has been constrained, suggesting the need for improved implementation, wider programme coverage, adequate funding, better targeting of beneficiaries, effective monitoring, and stronger sustainability mechanisms.

Summary of Findings

- i. The study revealed that youth unemployment significantly contributes to youth involvement in crime as unemployment posed serious socio-economic consequences on unemployed youths, resulting to widespread poverty, increased financial dependence on relatives, poor mental, social and economic well-being, social exclusion, and a general decline in the standard of living of many youths. In total agreement with the responses of the respondents agreeing that unemployment increases youths' vulnerability to crime due to lack of legitimate income and employment opportunities. poverty, frustration, and idleness.
- ii. The findings further reveals that Several forms of crime such theft, burglary, illicit drug-related offences, cybercrime, kidnapping, political thuggery, and election-related violence as major forms of crime commonly associated with unemployed youths. with youth unemployment emerging as dominant, though not exclusive contributor to crime. As the findings further revealed that economic hardship, idleness, frustration, peer influence, poverty, insecurity, poor governance, and limited socioeconomic opportunities interact with unemployment to increase youths' vulnerability to criminal networks and antisocial behaviour.
- iii. The study finally revealed a significant gap between the existence of PAWECA youth employment and empowerment programmes design to address youth idleness and unemployment and their actual accessibility, implementation, and effectiveness, many unemployed youths remain excluded due to limited programme coverage,

inadequate awareness, weak implementation, favouritism in beneficiary selection, political interference, inadequate funding, and weak monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Conclusion

The study concludes that youth unemployment is a significant security and socio-economic challenge associated with increased vulnerability to crime in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District, particularly where young people face limited employment opportunities, poverty, inadequate income-generating activities and restricted access to productive livelihoods. Establishing that PAWECA plays a positive role in addressing these challenges through skills development, vocational training, empowerment programmes, entrepreneurship support and employment-related opportunities. These interventions can improve youths' economic independence and provide alternatives to criminal activities. Therefore, strengthening and expanding PAWECA programmes, alongside broader government efforts in job creation, skills acquisition and youth entrepreneurship, is essential for reducing youth unemployment and its associated social and security consequences in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings the following recommendations were made;

- i. Adamawa State Government, educational institutions, and development partners should collaborate to strengthen vocational education and skills acquisition programmes in all institutions of the state particularly in the Northern senatorial district. Expand and strengthened the already existing vocational training centers and align training programmes with current labour market demands to improve youths' employability and self-reliance.
- ii. Adamawa State Government, local government councils, security agencies, traditional institutions, religious groups, community leaders, and relevant stakeholders should work together collaboratively to strengthen security measures across Adamawa Northern Senatorial District by creating a peaceful and conducive environment, promoting positive values, civic responsibility and productive engagement, for economic activities and job creation to thrive while preventing the occurrence of all forms of crime.
- iii. Adamawa State Government, Local Government Councils, and PAWECA should collaboratively work together to strengthen the capacity of the agency to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate all youth employment and empowerment programmes by the agency. Expanding its empowerment programmes by providing more vocational training, start-up

support, financial assistance and follow-up monitoring to ensure that beneficiaries establish sustainable livelihoods and remain less vulnerable to engage in any form of crime.

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