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YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN IKOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between youth restiveness and sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically investigated the causes, manifestations, and effects of youth restiveness on community development. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected primarily through a structured questionnaire administered to 200 respondents selected from the study area. In addition, qualitative insights were obtained through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with six groups and in-depth interviews with 20 key stakeholders, including youths and community leaders, to complement the quantitative data. The findings reveal that youth restiveness in the study area is largely driven by unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, weak institutional support, and perceived social inequality. It was also found that youth restiveness manifests in forms such as violent protests, vandalism, substance abuse, and other antisocial behaviours, all of which negatively affect peace and development in the community. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure and limited government intervention were identified as major constraints to sustainable community development in the area. Based on the findings, the study concludes that youth restiveness significantly hinders sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area. It is therefore recommended that the Federal and State Governments, in collaboration with the Ikom Local Government Council, should prioritize job creation,

strengthen educational and vocational training systems, implement effective youth empowerment programmes, and improve infrastructure development. In addition, community leaders and civil society organizations should enhance youth engagement and participation in decision-making processes to reduce restiveness and promote sustainable development.

Keywords: Community Causes, Development, Impact, Youth restiveness

Introduction

Youth restiveness is increasingly recognized as a major social challenge affecting development across many parts of the world. In simple terms, it refers to the ways young people express frustration through protests, agitation, or sometimes violence when they feel excluded from opportunities and decision-making processes in society. From a broader perspective, it reflects deeper structural problems such as inequality, unemployment, and weak governance systems that limit youth participation in development (UNDP, 2022; World Bank, 2021).

Globally, youth restiveness has been widely linked to issues of unemployment, social exclusion, and lack of trust in governance institutions. In many societies, both developed and developing, young people often respond collectively when they perceive injustice or limited access to economic and political opportunities. This has been evident in youth-led movements and protests across regions such as Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, where demands for fairness, accountability, and inclusion have shaped public policy discussions (ILO, 2023; Castells, 2015).

In Africa, the situation is more severe due to persistent poverty, weak institutional structures, and high levels of unemployment. Many countries struggle to provide adequate education, healthcare, and job opportunities for their growing youth population. In Nigeria, youth restiveness has become a recurring social issue, strongly associated with structural inequality and limited access to socio-economic opportunities (Okafor, 2011; Emeh, 2012).

Empirical studies show that youth restiveness often manifests in forms such as vandalism, theft, cultism, and other antisocial behaviours. These actions are largely driven by unemployment and underemployment, which create feelings of frustration, exclusion, and hopelessness among young people (Aluede, Adeleke, & Adele, 2020; Nnana & Iloka, 2025). In many cases, these behaviours are not just individual choices but reflections of deeper systemic failures.

Another major factor contributing to youth restiveness is limited access to quality education and vocational training. When young people lack relevant skills and educational support, their chances of meaningful employment reduce significantly. This situation not only affects individual development but also weakens the availability of skilled human capital needed for community development (Ibe, 2018; Olawale & Ogungbamila, 2017).

In addition, poor infrastructure and inadequate social services continue to worsen the problem. The absence of basic amenities such as healthcare, electricity, potable water, and good transportation systems often increases feelings of neglect and marginalization among youths. This, in turn, weakens trust in government institutions and fuels social tension (World Bank, 2022; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2024).

Specifically, in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, these challenges are clearly visible. The area continues to face issues such as unemployment, weak infrastructure, low investment, and limited youth participation in development activities. As a result, youth restiveness in Ikom is often expressed through agitation and antisocial behaviours such as vandalism and theft, reflecting deeper structural problems within the community.

Overall, youth restiveness should be understood not just as a behavioural issue, but as a development challenge rooted in socio-economic inequality, weak institutions, and limited youth inclusion. This study therefore examines its causes and implications for sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to examine youth restiveness and its implications for sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the factors responsible for youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area.
2. Examine the manifestations of youth restiveness in the study area.
3. Assess the effects of youth restiveness on sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area.
4. Propose strategies for reducing youth restiveness and promoting sustainable community development in the study area.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area.
2. H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between lack of education/skills acquisition and youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area.
3. H_{03}: Youth restiveness does not significantly affect sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area.
4. H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between poor infrastructure and youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area.

Literature Review

The Concept of Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness refers to a range of disruptive behaviours and actions exhibited by young people as a response to perceived social, economic, and political exclusion. It is often expressed through protests, unrest, violence, vandalism, or other forms of resistance, especially in environments where youths feel marginalized or left out of development processes. In most cases, it reflects deeper structural problems within society rather than mere behavioural misconduct. Scholars have linked youth restiveness to unmet expectations and limited opportunities in society. Agba et al. (2020) note that it becomes more pronounced when young people are unable to translate their aspirations into reality due to unemployment, poverty, and weak institutional support. In a similar view, Okafor (2021) describes youth restiveness as a form of social reaction where young people express frustration against systems they perceive as unjust or exclusionary.

In Nigeria, the issue is closely tied to socio-economic hardship. Eze and Okoye (2022) observe that widespread poverty, lack of access to quality education, and limited job opportunities often push young people into various forms of social unrest. This situation is further worsened by weak governance structures and inadequate youth inclusion in decision-making processes. Ibrahim (2023) adds that when young people feel politically and socially excluded, they are more likely to engage in protest behaviours as a way of demanding attention and change.

Furthermore, youth restiveness should not be viewed only as a security challenge but as a reflection of deeper developmental gaps. It highlights the need for stronger institutions, inclusive governance, and improved access to education and employment opportunities for young people.

Causes of Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness is a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by restlessness, dissatisfaction, and agitation among young people, often leading to social unrest and disruptive behaviors within communities. Understanding the causes and manifestations of youth restiveness is crucial for developing effective interventions and policies to address this issue. This section explores some of the key causes and manifestations of youth restiveness, such as unemployment, poverty, and limited economic opportunities are major contributors to youth restiveness (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2024). Lack of access to quality education, skills training, and job prospects leave many young people feeling marginalized and frustrated. Interms of social inequality, the high level disparities in wealth distribution, social status, and opportunities can create a sense of injustice among the youth, leading to restiveness (Ibe, 2018). Perceptions of social exclusion and marginalization exacerbate these feelings. All these regenerates to political instability, corruption, and inadequate governance paving ways to youth restiveness giving birth to a disillusioned political system, leading to frustrations and a lack of trust in the authorities as a result of maladministration (Olawale & Ogungbamila, 2017).

These processes often lead to military intervention in governance or, in other cases, trigger widespread protests and civil unrest among youths, who express dissatisfaction through public media and organized demonstrations. Such activities reflect the discontent and frustration of young people with prevailing socio-economic conditions (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2024). These conditions are usually obvious in criminal behaviors as a result of restiveness, such as drug abuse, cultism, and gangsterism, violence, and theft. These activities further contribute to community instability can escalate into social unrest and conflicts within communities. These conflicts may arise from intergroup tensions, resource competition, or clashes with law enforcement agencies (Aluede, Adeleke & Adele, 2020 and Ibe, 2018).

Impacts of Youth Restiveness on Community Development

Youth restiveness, characterized by social unrest and disruptive behaviors among young people, can have significant impacts on community development. These impacts affect various aspects of community life and hinder progress towards sustainable development. This section explores some of the key impacts of youth restiveness on community development, such as disruption of social order within communities. Protests, demonstrations, and acts of violence can destabilize communities, create fear among residents, and hinder daily activities (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2024). Such disruptions impede community cohesion and hinder progress towards development goals (Nnana, Olofu & Runyi, 2024).

Economically, youth restiveness can have detrimental effects on the local economy. Disruptions in business activities, vandalism, and looting during unrest can result in the closure of businesses, loss of jobs, and reduced investment in the community (Aluede et al, 2020). These economic consequences further exacerbate social inequalities and hinder community development efforts. In terms of social services, youth restiveness can negatively impact the provision of essential social services in the community. Infrastructure damage, such as the destruction of schools, hospitals, and public facilities, disrupts access to education, healthcare, and other vital'services (Olawale & Ogungbamila, 2017). This impedes human development and hinders progress towards sustainable community development as it

is capable of eroding social capital within the community as well as social trust, cooperation, and collective action may diminish as a result of increased tensions and conflicts. This hampers community engagement, collaboration, and the ability to mobilize resources for development initiatives (Ibe, 2015).



The Role of Youth Empowerment in Mitigating Restiveness

Youth empowerment plays a crucial role in addressing and mitigating the restiveness "among young people. Empowering youth with the necessary skills, resources, and opportunities: not only helps them realize their full potential and aspiration but also enables them to become active participants in community development. Therefore, skill development programmes are meant to empower and energies the youths on skill development, vocational training, and entrepreneurship which provide young people with the tools to create economic opportunities for themselves (Kadiri, 2021). Equipping youth with marketable skills enhances their employability and reduces their susceptibility to restiveness arising from unemployment and limited economic prospects (Nnana, Lilian, Okomisor & Runyi, 2025).

These programmes are tailored towards empowering youth to engage in. civic activities and participate in decision-making processes gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility within their communities (Ibrahim & Adetunde, 2018). Engaged youth are more likely to be active agents of positive change, advocating for their rights and contributing to community development initiatives. These initiatives give the youths the enablement and skills in becoming mentors in guiding young people in navigating , societal challenges and thereby meeting the mainstream needs in society, through informed decisions and developing positive aspirations for their future (Oyewole and Oguniyi, 2016). Mentors serve as role models and provide support, guidance, and advice, which can help redirect restive behaviors towards more constructive and productive orientedness which triggers sustainable growth and development of youths (Nnana, Nwadike & Okomisor, 2025).

Youth empowerment entails all-round programmes that are focused on strengthening young people. Therefore, education and economic opportunities are usually on the fore. Hence, in ensuring access to quality education remain a vital aspect of youth empowerment as education equips young people with knowledge, critical thinking, skills, and the ability to pursue higher aspirations (Ahmed, Abdullahi & Bello, 2019). Education empowers youth to overcome barriers, fosters their personal development, and reduces the likelihood of engagement in restive behaviors.

In creating avenues for youth to access economic opportunities, such as entrepreneurship programs, microfinance, and financial literacy training, can alleviate restiveness arising from economic disparities (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). Economic empowerment enables youth to become financially independent and actively contribute to community development. By prioritizing -youth empowerment initiatives, communities can provide young people with the tools and opportunities necessary to channel their energy and potential towards positive outcomes. Empowered youth are more likely to be agents of change, fostering social cohesion, economic growth, and sustainable community development.

Theoretical framework

Relative Deprivation Theory

This study is anchored on the Relative Deprivation Theory, as advanced by Ted Robert Gurr (1970) and further developed in subsequent sociological and political studies. The theory posits that social unrest and deviant behavior arise when individuals or groups perceive a disparity between their expectations and their actual socio-economic conditions. When people believe they are unjustly deprived of opportunities, resources, or privileges relative to others, feelings of frustration, resentment, and anger are likely to emerge, often culminating in conflict or anti-social behavior (Walker & Smith, 2002; Crosby, 1976). In the context of Nigeria, particularly in Ikom Local Government Area, Relative Deprivation Theory provides a strong analytical lens for understanding youth restiveness. The prevailing socio-economic realities such as unemployment, poverty, weak educational systems, and inadequate healthcare create conditions in which youths perceive themselves as marginalized and excluded from the benefits of development (Ake, 1996; Ucha, 2010). Despite increased awareness of better living standards elsewhere, many youths in Ikom LGA lack access to similar opportunities, thereby intensifying their sense of deprivation.

This perceived inequality is further compounded by the deterioration of infrastructure and social amenities in the area. The absence of essential services such as electricity, potable water, healthcare facilities, and employment opportunities reinforces the perception of neglect by government and societal institutions (Todaro & Smith, 2015). As a result, accumulated frustration often manifests in agitation, protests, vandalism, and other forms of anti-social behavior, which are key indicators of youth restiveness (Elegbeleye, 2005). Relative Deprivation Theory also explains the psychological and emotional dimensions of youth restiveness. Feelings of alienation, rejection, and abandonment tend to arise when youths compare their conditions with societal expectations or with more privileged groups. Such perceived injustice can erode trust in institutions, weaken social cohesion, and increase the likelihood of instability and conflict (Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). In this regard, youth restiveness becomes not only a response to economic hardship but also a reaction to perceived social inequality.

Furthermore, the theory highlights the role of limited access to quality education and skill acquisition programmes in deepening youth deprivation. When young people are unable

to acquire relevant skills for participation in the labor market, they are effectively excluded from economic opportunities, which exacerbates feelings of hopelessness and frustration (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This exclusion diminishes their capacity to contribute meaningfully to community development and increases their vulnerability to deviant activities. In relation to community development, Relative Deprivation Theory suggests that persistent inequality and perceived injustice can significantly undermine development efforts. In Ikom Local Government Area, youth restiveness disrupts economic activities, discourages investment, and weakens the social structures required for sustainable development. When a large segment of the youth population feels deprived, their disengagement or resistance can stall development initiatives and perpetuate a cycle of underdevelopment.

However, Relative Deprivation Theory provides a comprehensive explanation for the relationship between socio-economic inequality and youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area. It underscores the importance of addressing both material deprivation and perceived inequality through inclusive governance, equitable resource allocation, and youth empowerment initiatives. By tackling these issues holistically, it becomes possible to reduce restiveness and foster sustainable community development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design. Specifically, the descriptive survey design was employed because it enables the systematic collection of data from respondents using a structured questionnaire. This design is considered appropriate for examining opinions, perceptions, and behavioural patterns within a defined population.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Ikom Local Government Area (LGA), Cross River State, Nigeria. Ikom LGA is one of the eighteen local government areas in the state and is located in the central senatorial district. It comprises both urban and rural communities with a blend of residential, commercial, and agricultural activities. The area is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups including the Ejagham, Ofutop-Bakor, Yala, and Eburutu, and is noted for its cultural diversity and economic activities.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all residents of Ikom Local Government Area. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023 projection), the estimated population of Ikom LGA is approximately 220,000 people. This population formed the basis for inference in the study.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) statistical formula for sample size determination, which is appropriate for finite populations. Based on this formula, a total of 200 respondents was selected for the study.

Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. In the first stage, Ikom Local Government Area was stratified into its ten (10) political wards to ensure adequate geographical representation. In the second stage, the sample size of 200 respondents was proportionately allocated across the ten wards based on estimated population distribution.

In the third stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents within each ward. A sampling frame of eligible residents was obtained, and respondents were selected using a lottery method. Names of potential respondents were written on pieces of paper, folded, thoroughly mixed, and drawn at random without replacement until the required number of respondents per ward was obtained. This ensured that each eligible respondent had an equal chance of selection.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A contained demographic information of respondents such as age, sex, marital status, occupation, and religion. Section B contained items designed to measure the key variables of the study.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through the administration of questionnaires to selected respondents. The questionnaire consisted of twenty (20) items structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized in the study to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages, while chi-square was used in testing the hypotheses done manually.

Formula: $X^2 = \frac{\sum(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$

Where:

X^2 = Chi-square
$\sum$ = Summation sign
Fo = Frequency observed
Fe = Frequency expected
Df = Degree of freedom

Findings

Table 1: Socio-demographic data of the respondents

S/N	Demographic variables	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Sex	Male	110	55%
		Female	90	45%
	Total		200	100%
2	Age	18-21	40	20%
		22-26	70	35%
		27-31	50	25%
		32 and above	40	20%
	Total		200	100%
3	Marital status	Single	80	40%
		Married	60	30%
		Divorced	20	10%
		Widowed	40	20%

	Total		200	100%
4	Religion	Christian	172	36%
		Muslim	0	0
		Traditional African	.28	14%
		Others	0	0
	Total		200	100%
5	Occupation	Teachers/Management	50	25%
		Students	50	25%
		Farmers (business)	50	25%
		Self-employed	50	25%
Total			200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that out of 200 respondent 110 representing 55% of the respondents were males while 90 representing 45% of the respondent were females. Therefore, it can be seen that the number of females that participated in the study were lesser than the number of males. Also, evident from the table below indicates that out of the 200 respondents 40 representing 20% of the respondents were between the ages of 18-21, 70 representing 35% of the respondents were between ages of 22-26. 50 represent 25% of the respondents were between the ages of 27-31 while 40 representing 20% were between the ages 32 years and above. Out of the 200 respondents 80 representing 40% of the respondents were single, 60 representing 30% of the respondents were married, while 20 representing 10% of the respondents were divorced and 40 representing 20% of the respondents were widowed. The table also revealed that, 172 representing 86% of out the 200 respondents were Christians, while 28 representing 14% indicated African traditional religion, 50 represent 25% out of the 200 respondents were teachers, 50 representing 25% were from senior secondary school, 50 representing 25% were from business (farmers) and 50 representing 25% from self-employed.

Causes and Manifestations of Youth Restiveness

The mean and standard deviation scores of male youths were 28.42 and 7.76 respectively regarding the causes of youth restiveness in Ikom LGA, while those of female youths were 26.75 and 7.75 respectively, as shown in Table 2. These results, however, show that both male and female youths in the study area agreed that youth restiveness in Ikom Local Government Area is principally caused by unemployment, poverty, bad governance, inadequate education, the role of politicians in employing youths, marginalization of the less privileged, economic exploitation, and inadequate skills development programmes within communities in the Local Government Area.

Table 2: Causes and Manifestations of Youth Restiveness

Cause	Male Respondents Mean	Std	Decision	Female Respondents Mean	Std	Decision
Unemployment	4.11	0.89	Agreed	4.08	0.95	Agreed
Poverty	3.05	1.03	Agreed	3.18	0.96	Agreed
Bad Governance	3.34	1.04	Agreed	3.98	1.06	Agreed
Inadequate Education	3.23	1.01	Disagreed	3.09	0.94	Disagreed
Role of Politicians in Employing Youths	3.00	0.92	Agreed	3.98	0.90	Agreed
Marginalization of Less Privilege	3.93	0.97	Agreed	3.06	0'.89 '!	Agreed

Economic Exploitation	3.77	1.01	Agreed	2.42	1.10	Agreed
Inadequate Skilled Programs	3.99	0.89	Agreed	2.96	0.95	Agreed
Total	28.42	7.76	Agreed	26.75	7.75	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2026

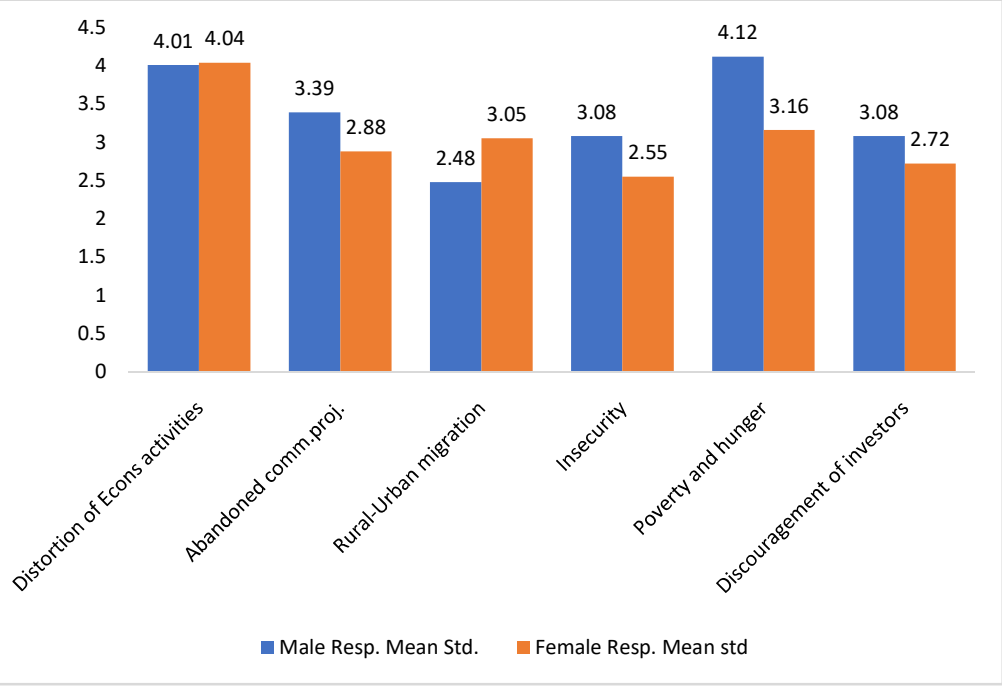
Impacts of Youth Restiveness on Community Development

The mean and standard deviation scores of male youths on the impact of youth restiveness on community development were 20.16 and 4.95 respectively, while those of female youths were 18.40 and 5.33 respectively, as shown in Table 3. The results as displayed in the table also indicate that distortion of economic activities, abandonment of community projects, rural–urban migration, insecurity, poverty and hunger, and discouragement of investors in Ikom Local Government Area are all impacts of youth restiveness on community development within the study area.

Table 3: Showing Impacts of Youth Restiveness on Community Development

Item	Male Respondents Mean	Std.	Decision	Female Respondents Mean	Std.	Decision
Distortion of Economic - Activities	4.01	0.84	Agreed	4.04	0.87	Agreed
Abandoned Community Projects	3.39	0.89	Agreed	2.88	0.96	Agreed
Rural-Urban Migration	2.48	0.81	Agreed	3.05	0.89	Agreed
Insecurity	3.08	0.87	Agreed	2.55	0.88	Agreed
Poverty and Hunger	4.12	0.74	Agreed	3.16	0.81	Agreed
Discouragement of Investors	3.08	0.80	Agreed	2.72	0.92	Agreed
Total	20.16	4.95	Agreed	18.40	5.33	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2026





The story of 14 abandoned E-Block

Progress in Community Development in Ikom LGA

The male and female respondents were also assessed to determine the level of community development progress over the past 3 to 5 years in Ikom Local Government Area, indicating "Yes" (if there has been notable progress) or "No" (if there has been no notable progress) in community development. As shown in Table 4 below, the mean response and standard deviation for male (youth) respondents who said "Yes" were 20.01 and 4.84 respectively, while those for female respondents who said "Yes" were 26.04 and 0.87 respectively. Meanwhile, the mean response and standard deviation for male respondents who said "No" were 11.39 and 0.89 respectively, while those for female respondents who said "No" were 10.88 and 0.96 respectively.

Furthermore, the total mean response and standard deviation for both male and female respondents who said "Yes" were 46.05 and 5.71, while the total mean and standard deviation for those who said "No" were 22.27 and 1.85 respectively. This suggests that youth restiveness has negatively impacted community development in recent times.

Table 4: showing Progress in Community Development in Ikom LGA

	Male responders		female responders			
Response	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	Total (x)	Mean std
Yes	20.01	4.84	26.04	0.87	46.05	5.71
No	11.39	0.89	10.88	0.96	22.27	1.85
Total (y)	31.40	5.73	36.92	1.83	68.32	7.56

Source: Field survey, 2026

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the causes and manifestations of youth restiveness reveal a strong consensus among both male and female respondents. The results show that unemployment, poverty, bad governance, marginalization, economic exploitation, and inadequate skills acquisition programmes are the major drivers of youth restiveness. This aligns with existing literature, which identifies unemployment and limited economic opportunities as key contributors to youth frustration and agitation (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2024). The high

mean scores recorded for unemployment and poverty further reinforce the argument that economic deprivation remains a central factor in youth restiveness. When young people lack access to jobs and sustainable livelihoods, they are more likely to engage in anti-social behaviours as alternative means of survival.

The findings also support the view that social inequality and marginalization contribute significantly to youth restiveness. The agreement among respondents on issues such as the marginalization of the less privileged and economic exploitation reflects the argument by Ibe (2018) that perceived inequality and exclusion can generate feelings of injustice among youths. These feelings often manifest in agitation, protests, and other disruptive activities, which were also identified in the study as common expressions of youth restiveness.

Furthermore, the role of governance emerged as a critical factor. Respondents agreed that bad governance and the involvement of politicians in manipulating youths contribute to restiveness. This corroborates the position of Olawale and Ogungbamila (2017), who argue that weak governance structures, corruption, and lack of accountability can lead to disillusionment among youths and erode their trust in political institutions. Such conditions create an enabling environment for unrest and instability.

In terms of manifestations, the study confirms that youth restiveness often results in criminal and violent behaviours such as vandalism, theft, and social unrest. These findings are consistent with Aluede et al. (2020), who noted that restive youths often resort to deviant behaviours as a response to socio-economic pressures. The relatively close mean values between male and female respondents suggest that both groups share similar perceptions regarding the causes and expressions of youth restiveness. The findings on the impacts of youth restiveness on community development further highlight its negative consequences. Respondents agreed that youth restiveness leads to the distortion of economic activities, abandonment of community projects, increased rural–urban migration, insecurity, poverty, and discouragement of investors. These results are in line with earlier studies which emphasize that social unrest disrupts economic stability and weakens development efforts (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2024). The high mean scores for poverty and economic disruption indicate that youth restiveness not only affects individuals but also undermines the overall economic structure of the community.

Additionally, the study found that youth restiveness negatively affects the provision of social services and infrastructure development. The destruction or abandonment of community projects limits access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and transportation, thereby hindering human development. This supports the argument by Olawale and Ogungbamila (2017) that youth unrest can significantly slow down progress toward sustainable development by damaging critical infrastructure and reducing social cohesion.

The assessment of community development progress over the past three to five years reveals that respondents generally perceive a decline in development, largely attributed to youth restiveness. Although some respondents indicated moderate progress, the overall results suggest that restiveness has had a more negative than positive impact on development in the area. This finding underscores the argument that persistent unrest can stall development initiatives and discourage both public and private investment.

Conclusion

This study examined youth restiveness and its implications for sustainable community development in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that youth restiveness in the area is largely driven by socio-economic and

institutional challenges, particularly poverty, unemployment, limited access to education and skills acquisition, inadequate infrastructure, and weak government investment.

The study also established that youth restiveness manifests through antisocial behaviours such as vandalism and crime, which further hinder community development. These conditions reflect structural deficiencies that limit youth empowerment and participation in development processes.

Therefore, youth restiveness in Ikom LGA both contributes to and results from underdevelopment. Therefore, addressing the challenge requires coordinated efforts focused on youth empowerment, improved access to education and vocational training, infrastructure development, and inclusive governance that actively engages young people in community development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The **Federal and State Governments, in collaboration with relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Youth Development and educational institutions**, should implement comprehensive programmes aimed at addressing the root causes of youth restiveness. These should include job creation initiatives, poverty alleviation schemes, and improved access to quality education and vocational training.
2. The **Ikom Local Government Council, development agencies, and community-based organisations** should prioritise community development initiatives that mitigate the effects of youth restiveness. This should include investment in basic infrastructure, promotion of small-scale enterprises, and rehabilitation of abandoned or stalled community projects to enhance economic activities.
3. The **government at all levels, traditional institutions, and civil society organisations** should promote good governance, transparency, and accountability. In addition, youths should be actively involved in decision-making processes through structured participation in community development committees to foster inclusion, ownership, and empowerment.
4. Fostering partnerships between government, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities is crucial for implementing and sustaining these recommendations. Collaborative efforts can leverage resources, expertise, and diverse perspectives to drive

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