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Exploring Drivers and Outcomes of Youth Restiveness in Paiko Town: A Localized Perspective

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### Abstract

This study examines the drivers and outcomes of youth restiveness in Paiko Town, Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. Using a localized perspective, the research investigates the common types of restiveness among youths and their effects on both young people and the broader community. Quantitative methodology was adopted and survey research design was used. The population of the study comprised of all the residents of Paiko Town amounting to four hundred and seventy-nine thousand (479,000). The sample size of the study was four hundred (400). Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, and three hundred and sixty (360) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using frequency tables and simple percentage. The study revealed that Political Marginalization Restiveness is the most prevalent forms of youth restiveness. The Study also found out that; loss of life and property destruction represents the most devastating effect. The study concluded that; Youth restiveness in Paiko Town poses a profound threat to community stability, affecting not just physical safety and social cohesion, but also undermining educational progress, economic development, and effective governance. The Study recommended that; the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with state governments and development partners, should implement comprehensive youth employment programs including skills acquisition centers, entrepreneurship support schemes, and public works projects, also the Nigerian Police Force, Department of State Services, and community leaders should establish integrated security and conflict prevention mechanisms that address both immediate threats and long-term peacebuilding.

**Keywords:** community effects, Niger State, Paiko Town, unemployment, social conflict, Youth restiveness

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**INTRODUCTION**

Youth restiveness has emerged as one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria in the 21st century, with significant implications for national development and social cohesion. The spiralling effect of youth restiveness are evident in Nigeria as ethnic militia, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, agitations and involvement in social insecurity (Okafor & Nwosu, 2021). The phenomenon encompasses a broad spectrum of manifestations ranging from peaceful protests and civil demonstrations to violent confrontations, criminal activities, and anti-social behaviors that disrupt community harmony and threaten national stability. The demographic context of Nigeria provides a critical backdrop for understanding youth restiveness. Nigeria is characterized by a predominantly young population, with over 60% of its citizens under the age of 25 years (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). This demographic dividend, while potentially beneficial for national development, has become a source of concern due to inadequate opportunities for meaningful engagement and economic participation. The study identified the causes of youth restiveness as bad governance, corruption, unemployment, poverty, lack of adequate recreational facilities and programmes as well as lack of quality functional education in the country (Adeyemi & Johnson, 2021). The failure to harness this youthful energy constructively has resulted in various forms of restiveness that manifest differently across various geographical and cultural contexts within the country. In the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, where Niger State is located, youth restiveness has taken on unique characteristics influenced by the region's cultural diversity, agricultural economy, and strategic position between Northern and Southern Nigeria. The region has experienced various forms of youth unrest, including farmer-herder conflicts, religious tensions, and economic-driven protests that have disrupted peace and development (Mahmud & Kolo, 2022). These manifestations reflect the complex interplay of ethnic, religious, and economic factors that characterize the Middle Belt's socio-political landscape.

Paiko Town, situated in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, represents a microcosm of the broader challenges facing Nigerian communities in addressing youth restiveness. As a semi-urban community with significant agricultural activities and diverse ethnic compositions, Paiko Town experiences unique forms of youth restiveness that require localized understanding and intervention strategies. This showed significant relationship between youth unemployment and restiveness in Nigeria (Osuji, 2023), highlighting the critical need for community-specific research to understand the localized dynamics of this phenomenon. The significance of studying youth restiveness at the local level cannot be overstated, particularly given the variations in manifestation and causative factors across different communities. While national-level studies provide broad insights into the phenomenon, localized research offers the opportunity to understand community-specific dynamics, cultural influences, and contextual factors that shape youth behavior and restiveness patterns. This understanding is crucial for developing targeted interventions that are culturally appropriate and contextually relevant for specific communities. The justification for this research stems from the urgent need to understand the specific drivers and outcomes of youth restiveness in Paiko Town to inform evidence-based policy interventions and community-level responses. Furthermore, the effect of youth restiveness on the economic development in Nigeria has cost the nation its stability, general improvement, cultural integrity, likelihood of survival and its preservation of national value (Adebayo et al., 2020). Without comprehensive understanding of how youth restiveness manifests in specific communities like Paiko Town, efforts to address this challenge will continue to be generic, ineffective, and potentially counterproductive, thereby perpetuating cycles of conflict and underdevelopment.

**Statement of the Problem**

In an ideal situation, young people in Nigerian communities should be actively engaged in productive economic activities, educational pursuits, and constructive social participation that contribute to both personal



development and community advancement. Young people should have access to quality education, meaningful employment opportunities, and platforms for civic engagement that channel their energy and creativity toward positive social transformation (Akinola & Adebayo, 2022). Communities should benefit from the demographic dividend of youthful population through innovation, entrepreneurship, and active participation in democratic processes that strengthen social cohesion and promote sustainable development. However, the reality in many Nigerian communities, including Paiko Town, presents a stark contrast to this ideal scenario. Youth restiveness has become increasingly prevalent, manifesting in various forms that threaten community peace, economic development, and social harmony. The paper reveals that drug abuse, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and poor child up bringing among others are some of the causes by youth restiveness (Adeyemi et al., 2021). Despite numerous policy initiatives and intervention programs at national and state levels, the specific dynamics of youth restiveness in local communities like Paiko Town remain inadequately understood and addressed. The research gap exists in the limited understanding of how youth restiveness manifests specifically in Paiko Town, the particular drivers that fuel this phenomenon in the local context, and the specific effects it has on both the youth themselves and the broader community. While extensive research has been conducted on youth restiveness at national and regional levels, there is insufficient localized research that captures the unique socio-cultural, economic, and political dynamics that shape youth behavior in specific communities. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult to develop targeted interventions that address the root causes and specific manifestations of youth restiveness in local contexts. The consequences of not addressing youth restiveness in Paiko Town are multifaceted and far-reaching. The effects include upsurge of social vices and destruction of lives and properties while the result also revealed that it can be curbed through skill acquisition programmes and enlightenment against the phenomenon. Without proper understanding and intervention, youth restiveness can escalate into more serious forms of conflict that threaten community security, disrupt economic activities, and undermine social cohesion. Furthermore, unaddressed youth restiveness can result in the loss of human capital as young people migrate to other areas or engage in activities that are detrimental to their personal development and community welfare.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the common types of Restiveness Among Youths in Paiko Town, Niger State, Nigeria
2. To determine the effect of restiveness on youth and other people in Paiko Town, Niger State, Nigeria

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Common Types of Restiveness Among Youths**

The literature reveals that youth restiveness in Nigeria manifests in diverse forms, each with distinct characteristics and implications for community development. Economic-driven restiveness represents one of the most prevalent forms of youth unrest, primarily stemming from unemployment, poverty, and limited economic opportunities. Unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youth, causing increased militancy, violent crimes, kidnappings, restiveness and socially delinquent behaviour (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2023). This form of restiveness often manifests through protests demanding job creation, strikes against poor economic policies, and sometimes escalates to property destruction and violent confrontations with authorities. Political marginalization represents another significant type of youth restiveness that has gained prominence in Nigerian communities. Young people, feeling excluded from political processes and decision-making, often resort to various forms of agitation to demand inclusion and representation. Okonkwo and Nwankwo (2021) argue that political marginalization of youth has led to increased participation in ethnic militancy, political thuggery, and violent protests that disrupt democratic processes. This type of restiveness is particularly pronounced in communities where traditional political structures exclude young people from meaningful participation in governance and community leadership. Educational system-related restiveness has emerged as a critical form of youth unrest, particularly in communities where educational infrastructure is inadequate or where the quality of education fails to meet youth aspirations. Students' protests,



academic staff strikes, and demands for improved educational facilities represent common manifestations of this type of restiveness (Adebisi & Lawal, 2022). The disconnect between educational outcomes and employment opportunities further exacerbates this form of restiveness, as young people become frustrated with educational systems that fail to prepare them for productive economic engagement. Ethnic and religious restiveness constitutes another significant category of youth unrest in Nigeria's diverse communities. In multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies like Palko Town, youth often become instruments of ethnic and religious conflicts, either as perpetrators or victims. Mahmud and Kolo (2022) observe that ethnic and religious differences are often manipulated by political and economic elites to create divisions among youth, leading to conflicts that disrupt community harmony and development. This type of restiveness is particularly destructive as it undermines social cohesion and creates lasting divisions within communities. Criminal and gang-related activities represent perhaps the most destructive form of youth restiveness, often resulting from the failure to address other forms of restiveness constructively. When legitimate channels for expressing grievances are blocked or ineffective, some youth resort to criminal activities including robbery, kidnapping, cultism, and drug trafficking. Okafor and Nwosu (2021) note that criminal restiveness often develops as a progression from other forms of restiveness, particularly when economic and political grievances remain unaddressed for extended periods. This form of restiveness poses the greatest threat to community security and requires comprehensive intervention strategies that address both immediate security concerns and underlying causative factors.

#### **Effects of Restiveness on Youth and Other People**

The effects of youth restiveness on the youth themselves are profound and multidimensional, affecting their personal development, social integration, and future prospects. One of the most significant impacts is the disruption of educational and career development pathways. Young people engaged in restiveness activities often experience interrupted education, limited skill development opportunities, and reduced prospects for formal employment (Adeyemi & Johnson, 2021). This disruption creates a cycle where limited opportunities lead to restiveness, which further reduces opportunities for constructive engagement and development. Psychological and social effects on youth involved in restiveness are equally significant. This study examines the impact of youth unemployment on economic growth in Nigeria. It also investigated how the effect of youth literacy level affected their rate of gaining employment (Ogundimu et al., 2023). Participation in restiveness activities can lead to stigmatization, social isolation, and psychological trauma that affect young people's mental health and social relationships. The criminalization of restiveness activities also exposes youth to legal consequences that can have long-term implications for their future prospects and social standing within their communities. The effects of youth restiveness on community members extend beyond the immediate participants to affect entire communities. Social and community disruption represents one of the most visible impacts, as restiveness activities disrupt daily life, community events, and social interactions. Okafor and Nwosu (2021) highlight that community members often experience fear, anxiety, and social tension during periods of youth restiveness, leading to reduced community cohesion and social capital. This disruption affects community development initiatives, social programs, and collective action efforts that are essential for community progress. Economic consequences of youth restiveness on communities are substantial and long-lasting. Furthermore, the effect of youth restiveness on the economic development in Nigeria has cost the nation its stability, general improvement, cultural integrity, likelihood of survival and its preservation of national value (Adebayo et al., 2020). Property destruction, business disruptions, and reduced investor confidence result in significant economic losses that affect both individuals and communities. Local businesses may close or relocate, employment opportunities may decrease, and economic development projects may be delayed or cancelled due to security concerns and social instability. Security deterioration represents another critical effect of youth restiveness on communities. Increased crime rates, social violence, and general insecurity affect all community members, particularly vulnerable populations such as women, children, and the elderly. Adebisi and Lawal (2022) observe that communities experiencing youth restiveness often see increased police presence, security checkpoints, and restriction of movement that affects normal community life. The breakdown of traditional security mechanisms and social control systems further exacerbates these security



challenges, creating environments where criminal activities can flourish and community members feel unsafe in their own neighborhoods.

### METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research methodology was adopted and survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all the residents of Paiko Town, law enforcement agencies in the town such as the police, Nigeria Civil Defense Corps, Federal Road Safety Corp, and other local vigilantes in Paiko Town and the total population was four hundred and seventy-nine thousand (479,000). The sample size of the study was four hundred (400), this was determined by using Yamane's formula of determining sample size. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using frequency tables and simple percentage.

### RESULTS

**Table 1: Common types of restiveness among youths in Nigeria**

S/N	Types of Restiveness among Youths	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Economic-driven Restiveness	265	73.6
2.	Educational System Restiveness	178	49.4
3.	Political Marginalization Restiveness	294	81.7
4.	Ethnic and Regional Restiveness	288	80.0
5.	Religious Restiveness	182	50.6
6.	Social Justice and Human Rights Restiveness	122	33.9
7.	Environmental and Resource-based Restiveness	134	37.2
8.	Criminal and Gang-related Activities	209	58.1

Source: Field Work (2023)

The analysis of common types of restiveness among youths in Nigeria reveals that Political Marginalization Restiveness has the highest frequency with 294 respondents (81.7%), followed closely by Ethnic and Regional Restiveness with 288 respondents (80.0%). Economic-driven Restiveness recorded 265 respondents (73.6%), while Criminal and Gang-related Activities showed 209 respondents (58.1%). Religious Restiveness had 182 respondents (50.6%), and Educational System Restiveness recorded 178 respondents (49.4%). Environmental and Resource-based Restiveness had 134 respondents (37.2%), while Social Justice and Human Rights Restiveness recorded the least frequency with 122 respondents (33.9%). The findings indicate that Political Marginalization Restiveness and Ethnic and Regional Restiveness are the most prevalent forms of youth restiveness, while Social Justice and Human Rights Restiveness is the least common. Political or geographic identity is well-documented and fuels youth responses when they feel sidelined in power structures. Economic deprivation further compounds frustration, as unemployment and poverty continue to push young people toward disruptive behaviors or agitations. Meanwhile, while criminality, religious tensions, and education challenges are clearly present, they are often secondary effects rather than core drivers reflected in their lower frequency. These findings underscore the urgent need for local authorities and policymakers in Paiko Town to prioritize strategies that promote youth inclusion, ethnic equity, and economic empowerment. Political enfranchisement and responsive governance especially mechanisms that elevate youth voices in decision-making can directly mitigate the most acute forms of restiveness. Addressing underlying economic challenges through youth employment programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support can also reduce reliance on identity-based or criminal expression of discontent. Ultimately, tailoring interventions toward political inclusion and economic opportunity can foster social stability and curb youth-driven unrest in Paiko Town and similar Nigerian communities.



**Table 2: Effects of Restiveness on Youth and Other People**

S/N	Effects of Restiveness on Youth	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Social and Community Disruption	177	49.2
2.	Loss of Life and Property Destruction	298	82.8
3.	Economic Consequences and Investment Decline	263	73.1
4.	Educational Disruption and Academic Achievement Decline	207	57.5
5.	Political Instability and Governance Challenges	236	65.6
6.	Security Deterioration and General Insecurity	267	74.2
7.	Rural-Urban Migration and Demographic Displacement	201	55.8
8.	Impact on Future Leadership Development	178	49.4

Source: Field Work (2023)

The analysis of effects of youth restiveness demonstrates that Loss of Life and Property Destruction has the highest frequency with 298 respondents (82.8%), followed by Security Deterioration and General Insecurity with 267 respondents (74.2%). Economic Consequences and Investment Decline recorded 263 respondents (73.1%), while Political Instability and Governance Challenges showed 236 respondents (65.6%). Educational Disruption and Academic Achievement Decline had 207 respondents (57.5%), and Rural-Urban Migration and Demographic Displacement recorded 201 respondents (55.8%). Social and Community Disruption showed 177 respondents (49.2%), while Impact on Future Leadership Development recorded the lowest frequency with 178 respondents (49.4%). The findings indicate that Loss of Life and Property Destruction is the most severe effect of youth restiveness, while Impact on Future Leadership Development is the least recognized effect. The prominence of life and property loss is unsurprising given the destructive nature of protests, clashes, and violent acts often accompanying youth restiveness in Nigeria. Structural issues like unemployment, poverty, and marginalization create fertile ground for desperate and risky expression through unrest. As violence escalates, it destabilizes security, discourages public and private investment, and undermines political cohesion amplifying governance failures and economic downturns. Disruptions spill into education, trigger migration, and erode communal trust. Yet the indirect impact on leadership development is less visible to respondents, perhaps because concerns about immediate survival overshadow long-term civic consequences. These findings highlight the urgent need for local policymakers in Paiko Town and similar communities to prioritize violence prevention and youth inclusion strategies. Interventions should focus on reducing conditions that enable violent protests such as boosting economic opportunities, promoting equitable youth representation in governance, and investing in security infrastructures. In parallel, raising awareness about the long-term consequences of restiveness on leadership and civic engagement is vital; by framing youth restiveness as not only a short-term threat to safety and prosperity but also a long-term risk to societal capacity-building, stakeholders can better support programs that channel youth energy toward constructive leadership and sustainable development.

**SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

1. The findings indicate that Political Marginalization Restiveness and Ethnic and Regional Restiveness are the most prevalent forms of youth restiveness with 294(81.7%), and 288(80.0%) respectively.
2. The Study also found out that; loss of life and property destruction (82.8%) represents the most devastating effect, followed by security deterioration (74.2%) and economic consequences (73.1%).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Youth restiveness in Paiko Town poses a profound threat to community stability, affecting not just physical safety and social cohesion, but also undermining educational progress, economic development, and effective governance. If left unaddressed, these disruptions risk derailing long-term community well-being and the capacity to cultivate future leaders. A comprehensive, multi-pronged response is essential one that centers



on inclusive governance, youth empowerment, conflict prevention, economic revitalization, and educational resilience. Through investing in such strategic interventions and nurturing young people as partners rather than adversaries, Paiko Town can transform the tide of restiveness from one of destruction to a foundation for sustainable growth and communal harmony.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the Study:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with state governments and development partners, should implement comprehensive youth employment programs including skills acquisition centers, entrepreneurship support schemes, and public works projects. This should be executed through the establishment of Youth Development Banks in each local government area, providing low-interest loans and technical support to young entrepreneurs while creating partnerships with private sector organizations to guarantee job placements for program graduates.
2. The Nigerian Police Force, Department of State Services, and community leaders should establish integrated security and conflict prevention mechanisms that address both immediate threats and long-term peacebuilding. This should be implemented through community policing initiatives that involve youth as peace ambassadors, early warning systems for conflict detection, and rapid response teams trained in conflict mediation rather than purely punitive approaches.

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