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Social and Economic Factors Influencing youth unemployment to Crime in the Wa Municipality, Ghana

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Abstract

The level of youth unemployment is highly dependent on the overall status of the nations' economy in the world. The recent economic recession of Ghana led to the unavailability of jobs influencing the unemployed youth to crime. The recent embargo by the IMF escalated the situation prodding the unemployed youth to channel their energies into fruitless ventures. This rendered the youth to be unemployed, making it difficult to afford a three square meal daily. In the Wa Municipality, the youth are always seen under trees charting and gambling at a broad day light. Poverty among the youth influenced majority (80%) to commit a crime in order to earn money for survival. The study sought to investigate the social and economic factors influencing the unemployed youth to crime. Convergent parallel mixed method design was used to solicit impregnable information from the respondents. Quantitative and Qualitative data were employed where questionnaires and interview guides were utilized. The study revealed among others that poor parental care, peer influence, elder siblings influence, parents' economic hardship, fear of poverty trait are the socioeconomic factors influencing the unemployed youth to crime. The study concluded that the horrendous socio-economic factors influencing the unemployed youth to crime are gradually turning the municipality into an aquarium of sharks where personal security is unguaranteed. The study recommends that confiscating IMF embargo on employment and educating guardians and parents on the need to provide for the unemployed youth till they are employed will eke out the basic needs of the youth.

Keywords: Unemployment, Youth, Poverty, Social, Economic, Crime

1. Introduction

The level of youth unemployment is highly dependent on the overall status of a nation's economy in the world. This happens when there is an economic recession in a country where myriad number of youth have completed education which is the surest way of securing them jobs are unable to access any job for decent living as opined by Ojo (2012). This has significantly affected the lives of many youth, especially their personal income, health cost and healthcare standard of living and impoverished them. According to Frey and Stutzer (2010), these have affected not just the individual's life, but the society or countries as well. This lured many youth to devise illegitimate ways for survival as surmised by Coontz (2016). To combat this, countries such as the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Denmark and others have implemented unemployment, social protection benefits policy to provide assistance to the unemployed for which the unemployed youth are not excluded (Howell & Azizoglu, 2011). Yet, an allusion by Pissarides (2013) indicates that these benefits to some extent are unable to provide the needs of the unemployed, particularly the youth which culminate in committing crime. The World Bank report estimates that globally, over 74.5 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 were unemployed in 2013 which accounts for 43.2% of all unemployed youth (Balan 2016). Approximately, youth unemployment has been increased by 700000 as compared with 2012 (Balan, 2016). International Labour Organization report (ILO, 2014) cited in Rao (2015) anticipated that youth unemployment would reach more than 215 million by 2018 if pragmatic measures are not taken.

Unfortunately, almost all African countries are underdeveloped which makes it very cumbersome to provide social assistance to the unemployed as practiced in some countries to relieve the unemployed, particularly the youth from social and economic stress. This has surged the number of unemployed youth in crime (Ajaegbu, 2012). According to Verick and Islam (2010), the global Great Recession of post-2008 era escalated the situation of youth unemployment especially in Africa. The authors continue that the economic austerity has had deleterious effects on worsening the economic hardship of the youth and impoverished even the working youth. They further reveal that the financial upheaval of 2007–2008 led not only to an economic and fiscal crisis in countries, especially in Africa, but to social crises as well. This crises illustrates that unemployment has dramatically dwindles the happiness and confidence level of the unemployed youth, which makes them unable to cope up with their day-to-day life which serve as a threat to society (Boyes, Mason, & Cluver, 2013). Although policies have been implemented by African governments to curtail the menace, a report by the African Center for Economic Transformation (2016) reveals that 50% of graduates who churned out of the universities in Africa are jobless. This coerces many unemployed youth to rebel against governments in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Cameroon, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen which vandalized state property and loss of life (Herrera & Mayo, 2012).

Ghana is blessed with able and potential youth, which could be used for nation building. Unfortunately, 48% of the youth are unemployed posing lots of threats to national development as asserted by (Sakyiamah-Boahene (2014)) and Adusei (2012). Successive governments have promised heaven and earth for providing jobs for the youth in order to curb their involvements in devising illegitimate ways of committing crime. These mouthwatering promises have proved futile to provide adequate jobs for the youth. Additionally, the government of Ghana has implemented policies such as National Youth Policy (NYP), Captains of Industry Programme (CIP), Youth Enterprise Agency (YEA), Students in Free Enterprise Programme (SIFEP) and other policies. According to Baah-Boateng (2013), education is the key to alleviating youth unemployment in the country, meanwhile the government has implemented free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), recently, Free Senior High School policy has been implemented to empower the youth through

education which would equip them with skills to help ameliorate the canker of youth unemployment in the country. However, numerous policies and programs implemented by the government and other philanthropists in order to empower the youth on entrepreneurship development are immaterialized. Unemployment has affected the youth to provide for their family and to afford their basic needs. Twumasi (2013) alludes that many of the unemployed youth who are unable to endure these socio-economic hardships indulged in social vices for a living.

Asafo (2015) accentuates that youth unemployment in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region, Ghana is on the increase with the percentage of 63 as against the national percentage of 48. Derbile, Dakyaga, Dakuu, and Jambadu (2016) assert that youth unemployment is in ascendency making it difficult for the youth to provide for themselves. The authors further allege that many of the unemployed youth who could not withstand these outrageous challenges have devised bizarre ways for survival. Nationwide policies such as Micro Finance and Small Scale Loans Center (MASLOC), National Youth Enterprise and Youth in Modern Agriculture (YMA) were also implemented in the Municipality. In addition, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) established youth empowerment programs to better the livelihood of the unemployed youth in order to minimize their involvements in illegitimate activities which hampers the development of the municipality. Boamah, Gyimah, and Nelson (2012) espouse that the hardship lives of the youth impelled them to indulge in delinquencies such as stealing of motorbikes which put residents in the municipality unrest. The writers continue that the youth engagement in such unacceptable activities helps them to escape unemployment frustration thereby providing for themselves and their family. A baseline data from the police reveals that 80% of the unemployed youth commit crime in order to satisfy their societal goals and to be recognized in the municipality. It is against this drawback that the study sought to examine the social and economic influence of youth unemployment to crime in the Wa Municipality-Ghana. The paper is subsumed into five sections. This incorporates the introduction, the theoretical underpinnings, the methodology, the findings and discussion and the conclusion and recommendations towards revamping the living conditions of the unemployed youth.

1.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

Frustration aggression and relative deprivation theories stanch the study. According to Ezeokana and Onyemaechi (2017), Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sears (1939) are the main proponents of the frustration aggression theory or frustration aggression hypothesis. According to the proponents, the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise. The writers maintain that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression which influence individual to commit crime for survival. They further continue that when individuals' specified goals are thwarted it culminates in frustration, which propels them to develop aggressive behavior, thereby coercing them to devise illegitimate ways for survival. Thus, where the legitimate opportunities of the individuals in achieving the societal goals are blocked. This was corroborated by Berkowitz (2012) that frustrations generate aggressive inclinations to the degree that affect individual negatively and this makes them to resort to crime to satisfy their goals. Skinner (2014) explicates that frustration theory is not only limited to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a reinforcer but also to the reaction to such blocking. This, in his view implies the access to reinforcers is being thwarted by another party. The reaction of preventing a person from achieving their goals provoke them to resort to violence to achieve their goals. According to Miller (1941), frustration produces instigation of a crime which comes in a form of aggression. A study conducted by Worchel (2017) affirms that preventing individuals' desires or ambitions ignite aggression. The author continues that the violation of persons' expectancy could lead to violence in the fulfillment of the target goals.

In 1970, Ted Gur propounded a theory dubbed “relative deprivation theory” which stressed that when individual expected goals are restricted they resort to violence crime as a way of achieving their societal goals (Ted Gurr, 2015). According to him, there are great discrepancies of what people think they are entitled to and the value of their capabilities. He further asserts that when the individual’s expectancy of achieving a specific goal fails, they become frustrated, which impels them to innovate unacceptable ways of achieving what they think they deserve and are being denied. In Gur’s book entitled “why men rebel”, he categorically stated that the collective disappointment of individual expectations emerged anger and conflict. This anger is as a result of the unfulfilled goals. This instigates them to vent their anger on either the individuals or the society. A study conducted by Ajaegbu (2012) corroborates that when the rise of expectations of individuals after long waiting on something fails, the person becomes frustrated and leads to anger which induce them to resort to violence crime as the only alternative means of achieving their goals.

Therefore, taking the aforementioned theories into cognizance, it is concluded that, in a situation whereby the youth in the Wa Municipality have completed education (formal and non-formal) and they are anxiously looking for jobs with the hope of getting a job in order to earn them money to satisfy their societal needs and their expectations are unmet, they become frustrated. This frustration leads them to aggression, which ignite their anger to commit crime for survival. The findings of Ezeokana (2017) clearly confirm that the major instigator of the youth involvement in the Boko Haram Terror in Nigeria is the mere fact that the unemployed youth are frustrated in searching for jobs for years without any success. To him, this compelled these youth to accept the dreadful offer by the terrorists to involve themselves in such unscrupulous activities to the detriment of the country. Therefore, it is not surprising that a baseline data from the police indicates that majority (80%) of the youth commit crime to satisfy their societal goals such as getting married and providing shelter and food for themselves and family. The youth involvement in crime is as a result of unemployment frustrations which lead to anger. This anger is finally vented on the municipality, whereby the unemployed youth are convinced to use dubious means for survival.

1.3 Methodology

The study was conducted in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana. Wa Municipality is one of the eleven District/Municipalities that make up the Upper West Region. It was upgraded from a district status to a Municipality in 2004. Legislative Instrument (LI) 1800 is in pursuance of the policy of decentralization which started in 1988 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). Under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 426), the Assembly exercises deliberative, legislative and executive functions in the Municipality. According to Salisu (2017), the Wa Municipality shares administrative boundaries with Nadawli District to the north, Wa East District to the east and to the west and the southern Wa- West District. He further explains that the municipality lies within latitudes 1°40’N to 2°45’N and longitudes 9°32’W to 10°20’W. A report by the Ghana Statistical Service (2013) discloses that about 54.8% of the population aged 15 years and older are economically active and 45.2% are economically inactive.

Mixed method design specifically convergent parallel was employed to solicit both qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. This allowed the study to analyze the data separately and then compare the results of the unemployed youth to the stakeholders such as the traditional leaders, opinion leaders, prison and police officers. In addition, comparing sentiments of these respondents helped ensure reliability and validity of the study as espoused by Creswell (2014). This allowed the use of instruments such as questionnaire (open-ended and closed ended) and interview guides as asserted by Edmonds and Kennedy (2017). This design helped to identify and investigate the socio-economic influence of youth unemployment to crime. This informs explanatory research enquiry since it asked questions about how socio-economic factors influenced the unemployed youth to resort to crime as surmised by Bailey (2008). The target population for this study encompasses, the traditional leaders, the youth groups in the selected communities and youth inmates, a psychiatric nurse, the assemblymen, the police and prison officers. A formula for determining sample size by Yamane 1970 cited in Arif and Farooqi (2014) was utilized for the quantitative data to avoid any bias. The formula is stated below

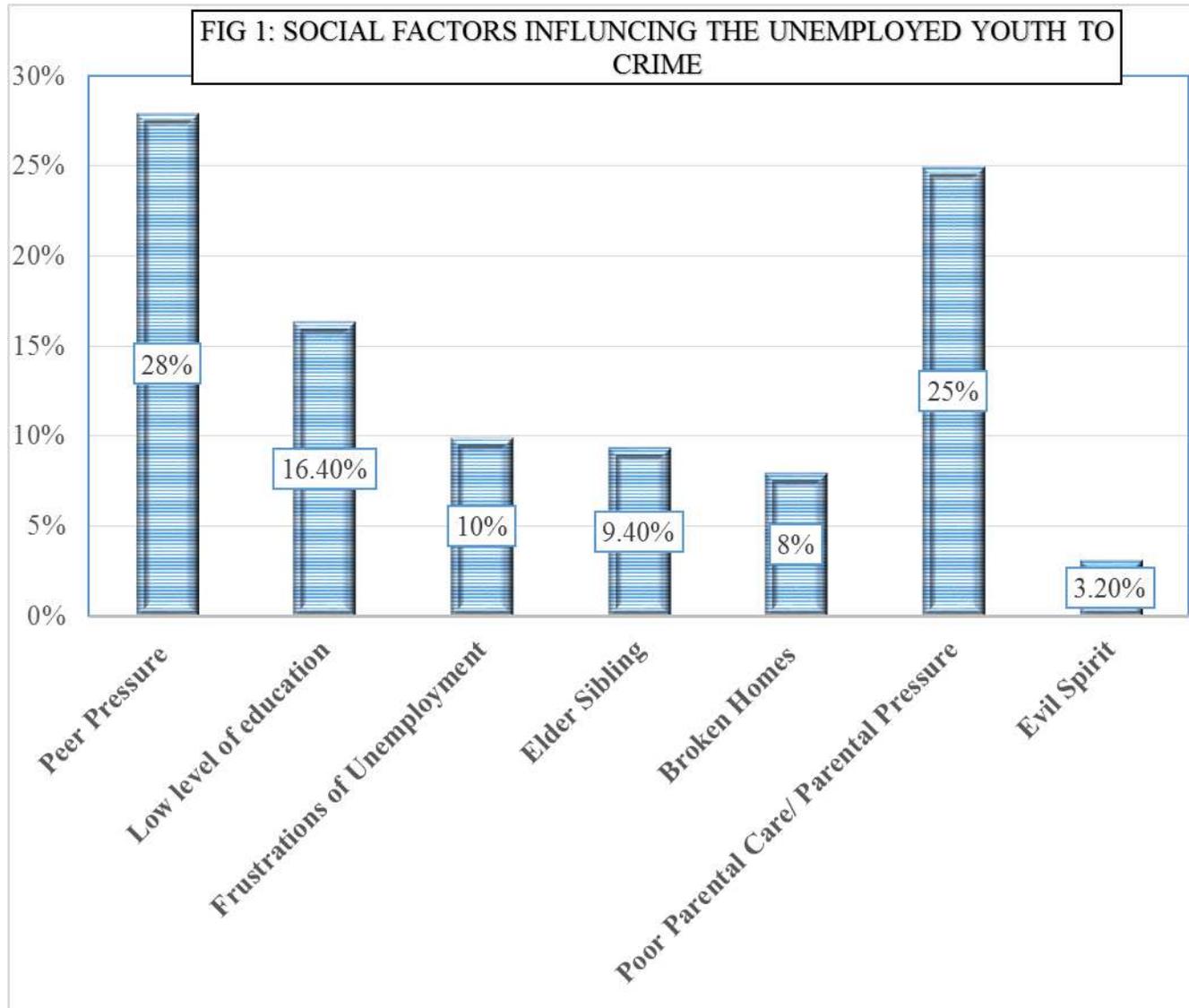
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$$

Where n = required sample size, 1= constant, N = Population, α = level of significance or margin of error. In order to have a fair representative sample size, the sample size is determined at a 90% confidence level (at a 0.1 significance level). The calculated formula helped to determine a sample size of 56 out 126 youth population for the study. A sampled of 22 was selected for the qualitative study. The researcher stops collecting data when fresh data no longer sparks new insights which reveals new properties. This affirms Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011) assertions that researchers stop collecting data when new incoming data sparks little or no change in the existing data. The sample size of both quantitative and qualitative were totaled to be 148 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select the key informants such as the assemblymen, traditional leaders, a psychiatric nurse, security officers like the police and the prison. Some eight selected unemployed youth inmates were also selected to elicit depth information from them. Purposive sampling was used because it allowed the researchers to collect impenetrable data from the respondents, especially those who have rich or requisite information about the study. Simple random sampling via excel was used to select the youth outside for the interview. This gives a fair representation of the respondents. This corroborates assumptions by Bird et al. (2009) that simple random sampling helps to include and exclude the populace for a fair and balanced representation. Semi-structured interview was used to collect impregnable information from the youth outside through the use of questionnaires. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from the key informants and the selected unemployed youth inmates, this was guided by in-depth interview guides. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparative analysis where ideas and views were categorized into like and unlike themes. The quantitative data were fed into a computer and entered into software known as Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) where the tables, percentages and bar charts were administered.

1.4 Findings and Discussions

The study investigated social and economic factors influencing the unemployed youth to commit crime. Although, there is a myriad of factors influencing the unemployed youth to commit crime, the researcher asked the respondents about the predominant factors that influenced them to commit crime. This was in the form of open and close ended questions. This allowed the respondents to give multiple responses and provided answers that were not found on the questionnaires. This helped the researcher to determine the topmost socio-economic factors influencing the youth to be perpetrators of crime. This study suggests ways and means through which such factors, could be circumvented to optimize the image of the Municipality. Figure 1 details the responses to questions on social factors influencing the youth.

1.5 Social Factors Influencing the Unemployed Youth to Crime



Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Figure 1 shows that 28% of the total respondents indicated that, peer pressure is the topmost reason that influenced their involvement in crime. The respondents were of the view that their friends lured them into committing crimes. This affirms an interview conducted with youth inmates that their friends asked them to help sell their motorbikes not knowing the said motorbikes have been stolen. The study further revealed that some are in the prison cells with these friends, which indicated that friends had bad influence on the youth

involvement in crime. An inmate expatiated that he was depending on his friends for all his needs and his friend initiated him into motor theft for the reason that he could earn a living through it. An interview with a Prison Officer supported that many of the youth, especially the unemployed were reported to have committed crimes due to friends' influence. The officer added that the unemployed youth who are lured into dubious activities in the municipality usually commits crime in gangs. A police officer attested to this fact that all the unemployed youth arrested were in groups believed to be friends. An assemblyman interviewed revealed that mostly the youth sit under trees and influence friends join them smoke marijuana and drinking alcoholic beverage which culminates their involvement in crime. This supported Sutherland (1939) cited in Clinard and Meier (2011) observations in his differential association theory that a person can become a criminal through his intimate groups and these groups in this study happen to be the friends the inmates associated themselves with which caused their involvement in crime.

Additionally, 25% of the total respondents indicated that poor parental care or parental pressure reported to be the second topmost social factor pushing the unemployed youth to crime. The respondents explained that when parental care becomes poor or weak, it influences them to commit crime. The respondents further disclosed that, sometimes when their parents failed to provide them with their basic needs they had no other option than to steal from them or other relatives. This supports the previous findings of this study that, respondents whose needs are not provided were likely to pick monies from their parents and other relatives. A SHS male inmate disclosed in an interview that, his parents were not paying his fees and he is always sacked from school and for this reason, sometimes considering the challenges he is passing through it coerced him to steal since his parents are unable to cater for him. The respondent stated further that, since his parents do not provide for him, they were always afraid to question him when he goes home with money or any other thing. This supported an assertion by a university graduate when he said that his parents neglected him at a very tender age and that made him to sleep with friends because his parents told him that they could not sleep with him in the same room. An interview conducted with a traditional elder indicated that parents who failed to provide for their children, particularly the unemployed youth, are unable to question their children when they are in possession of things that cannot be afforded by the unemployed youth and this is encouraging the unemployed youth's involvement in committing crime.

This is a confirmation of what an assemblyman explicated when he indicated that parents failed to train their children in consonance with the tradition and others wait for their children to become criminals before they start giving them a training which becomes useless. The assemblyman attributed the youth, particularly the unemployed, involvement in crime to not only laziness, but parental failure to question their children when they are seen riding motorbikes which even the parents who are working cannot afford. To him, some parents motivate their children to steal because they enjoy the stolen bike or livestock the youth take home. This meant that when parents fail to provide for the youth, especially the unemployed, they would definitely fall on their friends for survival and that becomes a sure recipe for their involvement in crime. This is the reason for which peer pressure was indicated as the topmost influence of crime since many of them depended on their friends for a living. The study further discovered that though basic education is free, parents have to pay for

certain things such as printing fees, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) dues, extra classes fees and buying books for their children. Ironically, parents think everything about basic school is free and so they fail to provide their children with these things. This meant that if the children find it difficult to pay, they devise unacceptable alternative ways of catering for themselves and this has increased their involvement in crime as reported by the Police report that 80% of the unemployed youth are crime perpetrators and these youth are mainly those who are in school. Therefore, parents should do well to provide for their wards when necessary. They should also question and rebuke them when they are in possession of things that do not belong to them. This could help to reduce their involvement in crime.

Again, figure 1 reveals that low level of education impelled the youth to commit crime with the percentage of 16.4. The respondents indicated that the main reason for which they were unemployed is as a result of low level of education. They explicated that some of the youth have little or no education and that predisposed them to engage in criminal activities for survival. The respondents further revealed that even though the graduate youth find it difficult in getting jobs; they might have more chances of getting jobs than those with low level of education. The study discovered that respondents with low level of education are paid a very low amount of money which cannot cater for their families and because of that, they sometimes feel cheated and decide to steal as indicated by the relative deprivation and frustration aggression theories that undergirded this study. This affirms an interview with a-29 year male inmate respondent who expressed the view that:

“I stopped schooling at class three when my father died and because of that I was finding it difficult to get a job in order to earn money to cater for myself and family. I wrote an application letter to Zoomlion Ghana Company Limited as a security officer, but I was told if I had at least Basic Education Certificate ” (interview, January 16th, 2017).

The statement meant that though he had some kind of basic education, he was unable to complete primary school, which led him to be unemployed and this was the reason for his act. The study further revealed that, majority (60%) of the respondents who had some kind of basic education stopped schooling at either class two or three. Therefore, this affirms Konietzka and Kreyenfeld (2010) claims that many of the youth have low level of education and that deprives them of jobs which instigates them to commit crime.

Additionally, 10% of the total respondents indicated that unemployment frustration, thus, long search for jobs without any success triggers their involvement into crime. To them, employment is the only sure way to be independent and be respected in the society. Therefore, searching for employment for weeks, months and years without any success instills in them frustrations for which society regards them as youth noted to be irresponsible and lazy. Hence, to the respondents, in order to avoid this stigma from the society they developed illegal ways of surviving in order to gain recognition. This agrees with an assertion by Durkheim (2014) that, the social structure exerts powerful pressure on the individual's life and thus coerces them to

commit crime. The study revealed that the unemployed youth become frustrated because they have nothing to supplement their livelihood since parents and guardians have neglected them for being what the youth called “a waste of resource”. According to the youth, this escalates their situation to enter into crime because even though they are not employed after school as indicated earlier, that does not make them irrelevant to the family and society at large.

In consequence, from figure 1, 9.4% of the respondents indicated that elder siblings of a particular family lured them into committing crime. An interview with an inmate disclosed that, his elder brother lured him into motorbike theft. The respondents expressed the view that the elder brother was providing his basic needs to complement his livelihood. The brother to some point stopped providing for him because the brother had said, he will not risk his life for him after convincing him into crime without any success. The brother’s decision for not providing for him caused him a lot, which even compelled his girlfriend to end up a relationship with him for being a liability instead of an asset. Considering the rigorous of life at that time, especially the brother’s action of evicting him from a rented room leased by the elder brother, he yielded for the unaccepted job in order to earn money for survival. The assumptions of the respondents meant that if elder siblings of a particular family are ill-mannered, the tendency of the younger siblings imitating their wrong behaviors is high. The resurgence of this lackadaisical behavior of the siblings is mostly to the detriment of not only the family members but also to the society as well. This agrees with Regoli et al, (2006) cited in Ojo (2012) allusion that the younger siblings often want to follow the path charted by older siblings and emulate their lifestyles.

The emulation of behavior becomes effective when the elder siblings are pursuing productive activities, but it fails when they are pursuing unproductive activities which entice the younger sibling into crime. It is therefore not surprising that an interview with a traditional elder revealed that some of the families in the municipality are branded as criminals noted for motorbike thefts. The traditional elder expressed the view that when a motorbike is stolen the families are able to locate it for the owner and then warn the victim not to tell anyone or loses the bike again. This assertion is in consonance with Lombroso (1939) allusion that criminal in societies are born but not made. He emphatically stated in his biological theory that crime is in the genes of an individual which passes on to generation. In addition, a question was asked to inquire whether money is paid to the perpetrators when the motorbike is released. In response, the elderly said it attracts a fee of GH¢300-1000 tantamount to US\$66.7-222.2 depending on how new the motorbike is. The study found that residents in the municipality are always afraid to report the case to the police because of the fear of losing their lives, others expressed the view that reporting the case to the police yield no results and that endanger their lives. However, the anticipated fear of the researcher is that if pragmatic measures are not put in place the attitudes of the siblings would gradually turn the communities within the municipality into an aquarium of sharks where residents security are not guaranteed.

Also, 8% of the respondents indicated that broken home influenced them to commit crime. The respondents explained that when parents are divorced their attention is shifted from them, especially when they marry again. This makes many parents irresponsible in providing the basic needs of the youth and this impels them to depend on their friends and other relatives which coerce them into crime. A male inmate explained that he stayed with his step-mother who maltreated him for which at times he has to steal from relatives before getting food to eat. Even though, the number is insignificant, it supports the differential oppression theory which suggest that when the individual is oppressed they resort to commit crime. In consequence, respondents who happened to be victims of this variable asserted that the treatment meted out to them by their step-parents are so harsh and it made them to be embittered. The bitterness derived from the unfriendly treatment of step-parents impel them to resort to crime in order to escape such eerie treatment.

Few (3.2%) of the respondents were of the view that evil spirits influence their action of engaging in crime. The respondents continued that a youngster will not intentionally commit crime for want of jobs, if not influence by an evil spirit. If the individuals commit crime, it is the influence of the evil spirit that instigate them to commit crime. This is in agreement with the findings of Olsen (2015) argument that the incident of theft and armed robbery in Ghana particularly in Accra and Kumasi are increasing everyday which is mostly perpetrated by the unemployed youth and perpetrators are influenced by evil spirit.

Aside the above mentioned social factors, the study further investigated other social factors such as the internet to ascertain whether it has an influence on the youth involvement in crime. This variable was very imperative to determine whether the use of Internet influence the youth's decision to commit crime as alleged by Warner (2011). This question was based on "yes" and "no" responses. In response, 44% of the total respondents divulged that they visit the Internet cafes while majority (56%) expressed that they were not using the Internet. In consequence, out of 44% of the total respondents using Internet, 22% indicated that, they were using the Internet in search of learning materials, 17% of the respondents expressed that they used it for chatting on WhatsApp, 4% used the Internet for Facebook while an insignificant number (1%) agreed that they used the internet to get gifts from friends. The explanations by the respondents indicated that their involvement in using the Internet has no influence on their involvement in crime. This refutes Warner (2011) allusion that cyber fraud cases in Ghana are mostly caused by the unemployed youth. This meant that the municipality is not urbanized enough for people to be using the internet to dupe others as compared to an urbanized town like Tema in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana where the author conducted his study.

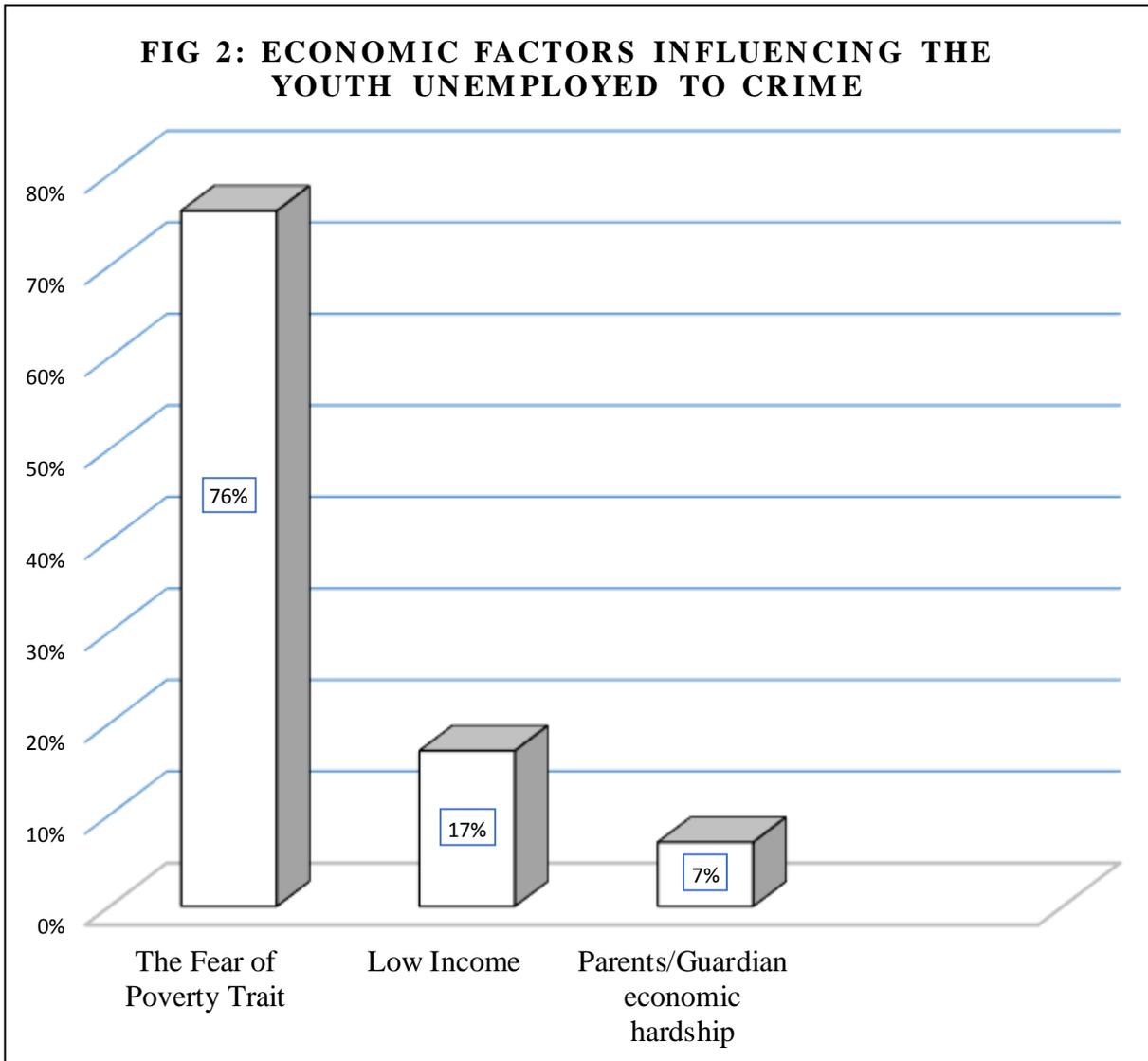
Consequently, the respondents were asked if they belonged to a group or not. This variable was very imperative to determine whether youth's group influences the unemployed youth into crime as asserted by Cohen (1955), in his theory on groups' subculture. And out of 126 respondents, 117 respondents representing 93% disclosed that they belonged to groups particularly youth groups. The remaining 9 respondents representing 7% did not answer the question which showed that they do not belong to any group. Laying

emphasis on respondents who answered the question, majority (61%) of the total respondents expressed that their involvement in groups' activities influenced them to commit crime while 39% of the total respondents indicated that belonging to the various groups could not influence them in crime. The responses indicated that the various groups the youth associated themselves with, have a great influence on their decision to commit crime. This supported the youth early allusion in this paper that peer pressure influenced them to commit crime. An interview with the traditional elder reviewed that these groups have their own policy in each of the communities in the municipality. The elder continued that some vagabond groups are noted to be motorbike snatchers in some parts of the municipality. The elder further expressed the view that a person is likely to get his or her stolen motorbike back if one knows one of these thieves' operational groups. According to him, each group has a specific area of operation and they have the power to manipulate the unemployed youth to spy new motorbikes in the community and give them feedbacks.

It is therefore not surprising that an interview with an assemblyman divulged that he bought a motorbike sometime ago and it was stolen in the next day from his house. A perpetrator of the motorbike at the prisons interviewed confirmed that among all the areas they operate they have friends workers (spy thieves) who give them information about a newly motorbike in a particular vicinity. This endangers residents' life, especially those who own a motorbike since one may not know when these groups will bounce on them to snatch the property from them. This is very disheartening since death casualty are being recorded in the process of snatching the motorbike from the owner. A youth inmate who happened to be a member of a vagabond group divulged that his group has a policy to butcher or kill any recalcitrant preyed who resists giving out the property. According to him, one is punished when fails to snatch a bike after struggling with the owner. This, to him, forced them to torture or kill the owner if resisted. This meant that the groups the youth join influence them to commit crime in order to get money for themselves and the group and satisfy the culture or policy as asserted by Cohen (1955) cited in Andrews and Bonta (2010)

1.6 Economic Factor of Youth Unemployment to Crime

The study investigated the economic factors coercing the unemployed youth into crime. This was open ended questionnaire which helped the respondents to answer what is being stipulated on the paper and add other factors that are not found on the questionnaires. Fig 2 indicates the economic factors influencing the youth to commit crime.



Source: Fieldwork, 2017

From figure 2, 76% of the total respondents agreed that the fear of poverty trait instigated them to commit crime. According to the respondents their parents were not rich and that resulted in their inability to get money and job for survival. This makes it difficult for them to access basic necessity, such as food, shelter and cloth making them to be poor. The fear of being poor and suffer the pain as their parents influence them to innovate illegitimate ways to satisfy their societal goals as surmised by the theory of anomie by Robert Merton (1958). The study found that even though the poverty benchmark for an individual in the country is a person whose daily income or expenditure is below US\$1.9 equivalent to GH¢ 8.5 as asserted by United

Nation Poverty Index (UNPI), the unemployed youth at times had no money at all to provide them with food and even clothing. This compelled them to totally depend on their friends and neighbors which coerced them into crime. The youth inability to provide for themselves the basic necessities affected their health as well. According to them, the government of Ghana has implemented a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to cater for the health of the people, beneficiaries have to pay some peanuts amount of money before enrolled. The study indicated that the youth are unable to pay for such money since they have no jobs to earn them money. Their parents have not prioritized their health condition since they are also struggling to pay for the health insurance. In lieu of this, the respondents were of the view that since they had no money to pay for the hospital bill when they are sick. They deemed it necessary to innovate illegal means to get money to be able to pay for the health insurance and drugs since the insurance fails to cover all drugs. An interview conducted with an inmate revealed that he contracted gonorrhoea, a sexually transmitted infection but nobody cared for him. The respondent continued that parents blamed him for being a cause for his predicament and this deteriorated his health condition. The respondent further explained that the consistent pains he endured forced him to invade into a neighbor's room and stole a flat screen television to sell. To him, this aided him some money to the hospital where he was cured. The inmate maintained that since he was not caught for the first time he considered it as a job and recruited unemployed area guys to join until they were arrested on a dark day. Respondents were asked whether they were influenced by taking drugs to energize them into crime.

One of the inmates expressed the view that:

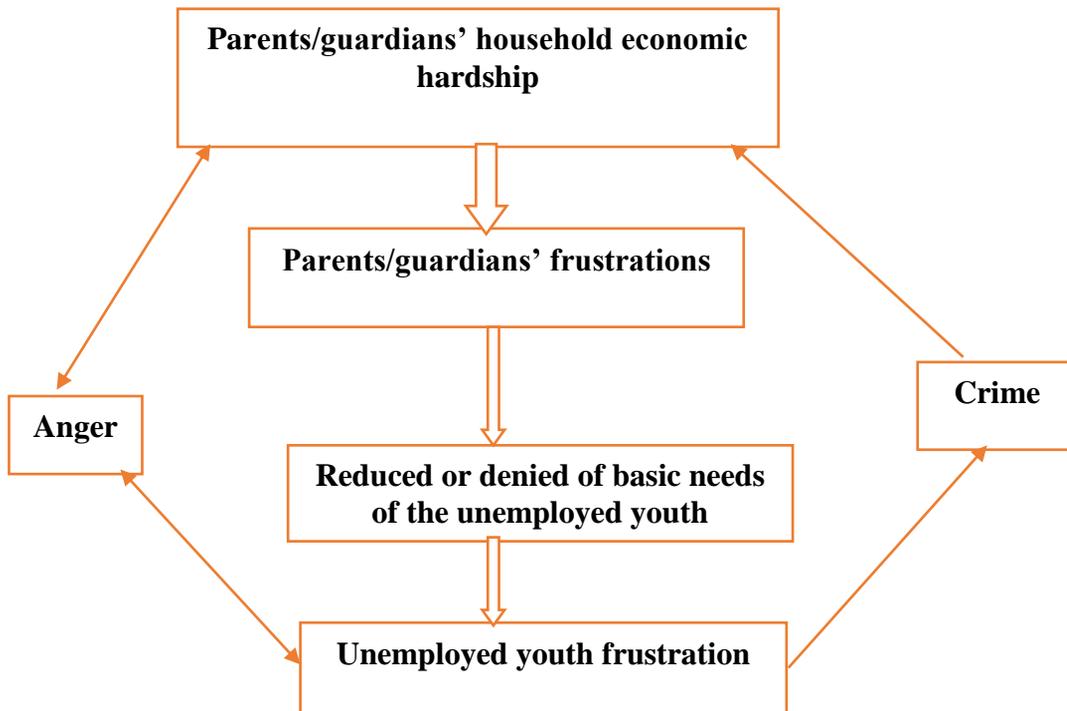
"Nobody in his right senses can do what I did without any influence of a chemical. Before any operation (stealing) my team and I sniff marijuana mixed with 'pito', a local alcoholic beverage. A side that we mixed 200milligram of tramol (tramadol) with 5 star drink beverage. This charge my body to be on high of anybody and see human beings like ants, which make it very easy for me to torture or kill property owners such as motorbike, laptops and flat screens who resist to give out the demanded property" (interview, July 19th, 2017).

The above statement indicated that the unemployed youth who are involved in crime were influenced by a mixture of chemical substances to propel him to inhumanly commit a crime without any fear or tremble. The anticipated fear of this paper is that this can dysfunction the brains of these future generation leaders, which would serve as a threat to the municipality. An interview with a psychiatric nurse in the municipality depicted that 8 out of 10 youth who reported to have suffered from mental disorder were drug abusers. The study revealed that the respondents have strategized all dubious means to escape poverty trait as indicated earlier. The unemployed youth, though not working, do not want to be tagged as poor and lazy youth who are born to inherit poverty from their parents. This, according to the respondents will be a genealogical cul-de-sac which needed to be thwarted by all means. Therefore, this is the rationale behind devising illegal ways to survive in the municipality. Impliedly, if this continues without any counter measure the security in the municipality will be in jeopardy, which would affect traders, businessmen and women and other workers as well.

Figure 2 reveals that 17% of the respondents were of the view that low income influenced them to commit crime. The respondents indicated that when they are offered jobs the remuneration is very little to cater for

themselves and their families. This sentiment was expressed, especially among those who have worked as mobile money dealers, selling motorbike spare parts, masons and television and decoder repairers. The respondents indicated that at times they are not able to make profit of GH¢2.00 daily which is less than US\$1.00 and this money is unable to buy them food for the day and their family. They continued that people with whom they work for especially at the shops pay them based on their sales and they end up not getting anything at all from the shop owners. The study revealed that the shop owners who at times paid the youth with little money which ranges from GH¢50.00-150.00. This money is not able to settle their utility bills and house rent. Some shop owners failed to pay them the money needed and tried to form allegations against them in order not pay them. Others also intentionally pay part of the money with the reason of not having enough money and promised to pay later, failed to honor their promises. These attitudes among the shop owners whom the youth work for frustrate the youth to commit crime to replace the money lost which culminate their imprisonment. An interview conducted with youth inmate disclosed that his boss denied him of his salary for three consecutive months and this annoyed him to steal some spare parts to sell to others in order to get money for survival since his landlord was on his nerve for his money at that time. This indicates that poor remuneration and the attitude of shop owners influenced the youth to commit crime for survival or cover the money they are being cheated for.

Finally, figure 2 indicates that 7% of the total respondents reported that economic hardship on parents thrust the youth into crime. According to the respondents the economic hardship confronting parents and other guardians makes it difficult for them to provide for them their basic needs. This could be the reason for which the youth complained that their parents have neglected them by failing to provide them their basic needs. An inmate who is a parent and a casual worker explained that, he was unable to provide for his family. As a result of his inability to battle with the economic hardship, he stole a goat in order to supplement his family needs. According to the respondents this is a serious canker that breeds crime, particularly among the unemployed youth. Parents whose income are unable to provide for the family taunted the youth by scolding them as lazy and useless to the family and society as a whole. Low income of parents lured the unemployed youth into crime since household expenditure are reduced or denied. Figure 3 below illustrates the income frustration reaction of parents or guardians of the unemployed youth, which resulted in crime, thereby affecting the society and escalating household income of the parents or guardians.

Figure 3: economic frustrations of parents of the unemployed youth to crime

Source: fieldwork, 2017

Figure 3 above indicated that when parents or guardians faced economic hardship at home, it affected the expenditure of the household. However, the persistence of this hardship inserts frustration among parents, which thrust them to reduce or denied the basic needs of the unemployed youth. The reduction or denial of the basic needs of the unemployed youth makes them to be angry with their parents, their parents in return become angry with them as well. This anger of parents leads to the dismissal of the unemployed youth from the house resulting in crime in the municipality. The crime committed by the unemployed youth affected the household income whereby the parents or guardians have to use the little money to bail the youth when arrested by the police or the community security team or pay for the item being stolen in the community to prevent the complainant from filling the case at court. This, according to the respondents has affected their families which have worsened household income. This supports frustration aggression and relative deprivation theories that anchor the study that if the individuals are unable to satisfy their societal goals as scheduled, they become frustrated. This frustration leads to anger and anger impels the individual to commit crime to the detriment of the family and the society as whole as depicted in figure 3.

1.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

Society has been structured in such a way that mankind must work before satisfying their societal goals. Unavailability of jobs for people, particularly the youth makes it difficult to make ends meet. This culminates

in poverty for which the aggressive individuals who cannot stand the quest of poverty resort to commit crime to earn money for living. Although, the government has implemented policies in alleviating the canker of unemployment among the youth, youth unemployment is still in ascendancy impelling the energetic youngsters to channel their energies into unproductive ventures. In the Wa Municipality, despicable influences like social and economic factors encompassing peer influence, poor parental care, low level of education, elder siblings, the fear of poverty trait, and parents/guardians economic hardship among others are the most cogent factors influencing the unemployed youth to crime. These have affected the municipality which is gradually turning it into an aquarium of sharks where security are not assured causing fear and panic among the inhabitants. Therefore the following suggestions are made to help ameliorate this horrendous canker in order to accrue trading and stimulate the interest of businessmen and women to contribute their quota to social and economic growth of the municipality. The following recommendations were made to ameliorate the canker;

- The government should expedite action on the implementation of the "one factory, one district" and "one dam, one village policy". This will create more job opportunities for the youth in order to speed up industrialization in the country. Again, this will eventually create employment opportunities, especially for the unemployed youth.
- The government of Ghana and International bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should endeavor to lift the ban on employment so as to open employment avenues to the youth in order to intensely reduce their involvement in crime since majority of the youth commit crime because they have no source of livelihood. This will help the youth to channel their energies into productive ventures which could drastically reduce their involvement in crime.
- The community security taskforce in collaboration with the Ghana Police Service should identify and arrest any threatening youth gathering in the municipality. This will serve as a deterrent to other unemployed youth to desist from horrendous groups devising awful strategies to commit crime.
- Parents should endeavor to provide for the unemployed youth and encourage them not to involve themselves in delinquency despite the difficulties. They should not mount pressure on them to provide for the younger siblings when they have no jobs to provide them money for such assistants. This will help the youth to feel at home, which will prevent them from committing crime for survival.
- The government of Ghana through the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations in tandem with Non-Governmental Organizations should channel enough resources into creating jobs for the youth as a chunk of youth complete tertiary education every year and yearning to be employed. Prioritization of job creation by these bodies will help to reduce crime, especially, among the unemployed youth in the municipality dramatically.

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