
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME RATE IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: The study looked at the effect of youth unemployment on the crime rate in Caracas, Venezuela

Research Methodology: The research was desktop research. Desktop research involves collecting data from existing resources to make conclusions. The study reviewed literature from various case studies and the findings from those studies were used to make conclusions regarding the current study. The review of scholarly articles and other sources relevant to study objectives were critically examined.

Findings: Based on the reviewed literature, it was established that youth unemployment has a positive effect on the crime rate in Caracas, Venezuela. Youths are attracted to criminal activities because of poverty.

Conclusion: The study concluded that youth unemployment impacted crime rates in Caracas, Venezuela. It has been established that high youth unemployment rates contribute to rising crime rates in Caracas. This is because youth unemployment encourages people to look for alternate

ways to make a living. The increase in the unemployment rate renders the youth with no options for making a living other than engaging in criminal activities.

Recommendations: The research recommends that suitable measures for youth empowerment be implemented to combat the problem of youth unemployment. The study suggests that entrepreneurship training and skills be made mandatory at all levels of the educational system. It is also recommended that vocational training centers be established in disadvantaged areas and slums to give graduates the necessary technical skills for the job market. The government and non-governmental organizations should develop policies to increase employment in the country.

Keywords: *Youth unemployment, crime rate, Caracas, Venezuela*

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is accompanied by expanding socioeconomic disparities, which are reported to be the driving force for youth involvement in illegal oil bunkering, kidnapping, and arms businesses (Mamun, Akter, Hossain, Faisal, Rahman, Arefin & Griffiths, 2020). A crime is an action against established laws that can result in an individual being punished by law (Elton, 2020). Crime exists in the majority of the world's societies. No country in the world does not keep track of criminal incidents. However, the cause and rate of prevalence differ. No, society does not have a criminal issue. When they cannot find legal gainful employment, unemployed youth frequently resort to illegal activities such as prostitution, violent robbery, and stealing to support their fundamental requirements. As a result, any interventions to address the problem of high crime rates among urban youths should include programs and activities to lower young unemployment rates.

Many emerging countries are primarily concerned with the issue of unemployment. Youth unemployment is significantly higher than in other demographic groups, particularly developing nations. Surprisingly, cities with high youth unemployment rates in many developing countries also have high rates of urban crime (Kassem, Ali & Audi, 2019). Unemployment causes many issues, including crime and violence, low self-esteem, and poverty. When unemployed people are in need and cannot help themselves or others, they resort to robbing and killing others to meet their needs and desires (Paul, 2022). Poverty attracts teenagers to criminal activities. The increase in the unemployment rate renders the youth with no options for making a living other than engaging in criminal activities.

Antillano, Arias, and Zubillaga (2020) reported that crime is pervasive in Venezuela, with serious crimes like murder and kidnapping rising. The United Nations blamed the crime on the country's terrible political and economic environment in 2015, when it had the world's second-highest murder rate. Caracas, Venezuela's capital city, ranked third in the most dangerous Venezuelan metropolises in 2020, with a murder rate of about 53 per 100,000 residents (García Pinzón & Mantilla, 2021). Cumaná topped the list, with a homicide rate of 62.42. As the long wait continues, some people resort to illegal activities such as housebreaking, larceny, mugging, stock theft, and commercial sex work to meet their basic requirements (Kruijt, 2020). Over the last 30 years, more than 80% of the world's cities have grown more unequally, even though the world has made tremendous progress in decreasing poverty since 2000, according to a report.

According to a survey, Venezuela is experiencing significantly worsening living conditions in slum regions, with nearly half of unemployed individuals in metropolitan areas resorting to crime (Shahid, 2019). According to UN-Habitat research, 48% of the country's 5.2 million unemployed are committing crimes to make ends meet in a tough economy. It has been highlighted that youth unemployment may impact crime rates in various parts of the world (Mycoo, 2020). These findings are based on the idea that youth unemployment pushes people to resort to illegal tactics to meet societal expectations.

The majority of Venezuelan cities are separated into affluent suburbs and impoverished informal settlements with inadequate housing and infrastructure (Falco, Zambrano-Verratti & Kleinhans, 2019). Youth migrate from rural areas in quest of jobs in urban areas, only to be faced with the reality shock of unemployment, therefore; taking years before they can land something constructive that will provide income. People learn to commit crimes from one another by modeling, mimicking, or observing their behavior (Bilal, Khan & Shah, 2020). They consider the incentives and punishments brought by crime and decide whether to accept and pursue crime for the rewards or to avoid the consequences. The study conducted a literature review to examine the effect of youth unemployment on the crime rate. The conclusions from the initial studies were used to make inferences and draw recommendations. Thus, the use of the literature to draw conclusions and recommendations for the current study was considered sufficient since numerous studies were critically assessed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morris-Francis (2020) conducted research to investigate the extent to which youth unemployment influences crime rates in Georgetown, Guyana, to determine the prevalence of youth unemployment, to investigate the factors that lead to youth unemployment, to examine the relationship between youth unemployment and high crime rates, and to identify the best method to reduce the high number of crime rates in Georgetown. A descriptive survey was administered to a sample of 250 urban youth (both male and female) aged 20 to 30 years. Data was gathered via self-administered questionnaires. The urban young (both male and female) residing in Georgetown between the ages of 20 and 30 were the study's target population. In the investigation, a non-probability design was applied with a purposive sampling strategy. In Georgetown, the sampling procedure was used to choose youths aged 20 to 30. The sample size for the research was 250 participants from Georgetown's urban youth. An interview guide and a questionnaire were both utilized to collect primary data. In data analysis, quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics like cross-tabulations, percentages, and frequencies, which were assisted by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data suggest that youth unemployment may impact crime rates in Georgetown. These conclusions are based on the idea that youth unemployment pushes people to resort to illegal tactics to meet societal expectations. The research concluded that poverty is highly likely to attract teenagers to criminal activities. The presence of job opportunities can thus aid in reducing criminal activities among young people. Education is one of the measures that can assist in diverting young people from criminal activities into productive employment. The research also suggests that the government should construct an integrated information system that collects bio-data on every unemployed youth in Guyana and make concerted efforts to help them find a job.

Imran, Hosen and Chowdhury (2018) conducted research to examine the relationship between unemployment and crime. Utilizing state-level data from the United States, the research assessed the impact of unemployment on the rates of eight felony offenses. It accounted for a wide range of state-level demographic and economic characteristics, and estimate specifications was performed that took into account state-specific time trends, state impacts, and year impacts. Moreover, as tools for unemployment rates, prime defense contracts and a state-specific measure of exposure to oil shocks were utilized. It was found that unemployment has a significant beneficial impact on

property crime rates which is consistent across model specifications. According to the estimations, a significant percentage of the reduction in property crime rates throughout the 1980s can be attributed to the reduction in the unemployment rate. The proof for violent crime is relatively weaker. A detailed examination of the violent crime of rape, on the other hand, indicates some evidence that male employment prospects are only weakly related to state rape rates.

Chainey and Muggah (2022) performed research to look at the association between youth unemployment and crime rate utilizing data from certain South American nations from 2012 to 2019; they included Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Aruba. The Panel Corrected Standard Error Approach is used to analyze the data. According to the study, youth unemployment and population growth lead to high crime rates. However, income per capita and agricultural employment minimize crime rates. The findings show that policymakers should invest in agriculture since it has the potential to provide income employment to a significant number of young people. This acts as a deterrent to engaging in crime, reducing the region's crime rate. When they cannot find legal gainful employment, unemployed youth frequently resort to illegal activities such as prostitution, violent robbery, and stealing to support their fundamental requirements. As a result, any interventions to address the problem of high crime rates among urban youths should include programs and activities to lower young unemployment rates. The study also concludes that poverty attracts teenagers to criminal activities. The increase in the unemployment rate renders the youth with no options for making a living other than engaging in criminal activities.

Jawadi, Mallick, Cheffou and Augustine (2021) reported that the huge variance in unemployment in Sweden between 2010 and 2018 is examined to analyze the association between unemployment and crime. In the research, the panel data set was employed with 1500 observations spread over 150 municipalities. Unemployment fluctuation serves as a proxy for macroeconomic events. The findings point to a weak effect of unemployment on violent crime and no influence on property crime, which contradicts traditional crime theory. It is also recommended that vocational training centers be established in disadvantaged areas and slums to give graduates the necessary technical skills for the job market. Youths can also be engaged in direct employment for casual labor in public projects to lower their high unemployment and gain valuable work experience. The government and non-governmental organizations should develop policies to increase employment in the country.

Golob (2022) noted that youth unemployment is one of the main issues plaguing the world today. Every continent faces youth unemployment issues, but the situation is worse in developing countries, including El Salvador. This miserable condition is devastating and harmful to youth and society in the present and future. This is due to its proclivity to induce deviant and criminal behavior. The research is concerned with determining the relationship between teenage unemployment and crime in San Salvador State. The research used a survey design and collected data using both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (Key Informant Information) methods. The filled questionnaires were analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain a frequency and percentage table. The data gathered and analyzed were interpreted about youth unemployment and crime in San Salvador State: fixing the hinges. The research discovered a link between teenage unemployment and criminality. It was established that unemployment could potentially drive idle and jobless teenagers to deviant and criminal behavior. The research recommends an all-hands-on-deck approach to dealing with El Salvador's hydra-headed challenges of young unemployment and crime.

Williams and Castellanos (2020) conducted research to determine the association between youth unemployment and crime frequency in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The research looked at the forms of criminal behaviors that young people in Tegucigalpa engage in. It investigated the origins of these illegal activities. The mixed research approach was utilized in the study, which combined descriptive survey and correlational research methodologies. The police, the city administrative officials, Tegucigalpa residents, and Ministry of youth personnel and Tegucigalpa were the study's target audience. Simple random and selective sampling approaches were used to pick respondents. There were 235 respondents in the sample. Questionnaires, an interview schedule, and documentary analysis were used in gathering data. While quantitative data was evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics, numerous correlations were utilized. The research's findings were presented in charts, frequency tables, and graphs. The study's conclusions are essential for police officers and other security personnel throughout the country. According to the study, there is a link between the crime prevalent in Tegucigalpa and unemployed youths. The report also suggests that government efforts to tackle unemployment among the youth have made a substantial contribution to addressing youth-related criminal activity in the country. The research suggests that the government identifies the types of youth-related offenses prevalent among Tegucigalpa's

youths. According to the report, economic empowerment projects should be better organized, with young people first obtaining training in money management and business skills before being handed loans. The report also recommends that the Honduran government develop appropriate measures to eliminate youth unemployment by increasing access to initiatives such as youth funding and a 30% preference for public procurement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was desktop research. Desktop research involves collecting data from existing resources to make conclusions. The study reviewed literature from various case studies and the findings from those studies were used to make conclusions regarding the current study. The review of scholarly articles and other sources relevant to study objectives were critically examined. The benefit of a literature-based study is that it is less costly. A researcher does not have to go to the field to collect the data for analysis. In addition, such kind of studies saves time since a researcher does not have to move from one place to another to collect the data. The conclusions from the preceding studies can be used to make inferences and draw recommendations if the findings are adequate. Moreover, the literature-based study can allow comparing results from various researchers before concluding. Thus, the use of the literature to draw conclusions and recommendations for the current study was considered sufficient since numerous studies were critically assessed.

FINDINGS

Based on the reviewed literature, it was established that youth unemployment has a positive effect on the crime rate in Caracas, Venezuela. Youths are attracted to criminal activities because of poverty. The study concluded that youth unemployment impacted crime rates in Caracas, Venezuela. It has been established that high youth unemployment rates contribute to rising crime rates in Caracas. This is because youth unemployment encourages people to look for alternate ways to make a living. When they cannot find legal gainful employment, unemployed youth frequently resort to illegal activities such as prostitution, violent robbery, and stealing to support their fundamental requirements. As a result, any interventions to address the problem of high crime rates among urban youths should include programs and activities to lower young unemployment rates. The study also concludes that poverty attracts teenagers to criminal activities. The increase

in the unemployment rate renders the youth with no options for making a living other than engaging in criminal activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommends that suitable measures for youth empowerment be implemented to combat the problem of youth unemployment by increasing access to initiatives like youth funding and giving youth preference in public procurement. There is also a need to expand youth access to information on low-cost funding alternatives, such as the youth fund. The study also suggests that entrepreneurship training and skills be made mandatory at all levels of the educational system. It is also recommended that vocational training centers be established in disadvantaged areas and slums to give graduates the necessary technical skills for the job market. Youths can also be engaged in direct employment for casual labor in public projects to lower their high unemployment and gain valuable work experience. The government and non-governmental organizations should develop policies to increase employment in the country.

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