Examining the Influence of Economic Dynamics on Juvenile Criminality in Nakuru Sub-County, Kenya

Justus O. Kiche,

odongojustus25@gmail.com

Institute of Security Studies, Mount Kenya University

P.O. BOX 342-01000, Thika.

Type of the Paper: Research Paper.
Type of Review: Peer Reviewed.
Indexed in: worldwide web.
Google Scholar Citation: IJRESS

How to Cite this Paper:


International Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences (IJRESS)
A Refereed International Journal of OIRC JOURNALS.
© Oirc Journals.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License subject to proper citation to the publication source of the work.

Disclaimer: The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by the OIRC JOURNALS, are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of the OIRC JOURNALS. The OIRC JOURNALS disclaims of any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.
Examining the Influence of Economic Dynamics on Juvenile Criminality in Nakuru Sub-County, Kenya

Justus O. Kiche,
Institute of Security Studies, Mount Kenya University
P.O.BOX 342-01000, Thika.

Abstract

The present study was prompted by the observation that there was very high prevalence of juvenile criminality in Kenya. This study focused on examining the influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya. The target population for the study was 144 that included 73 police officers from Bondeni police station, 35 juveniles drawn from children remand home, 35 parents/guardians of the said juveniles, and 1 chief from Bondeni location. The researcher selected a sample size of 102 respondents composed of 62 police officers, 32 juveniles, 7 parents/guardians, and 1 chief. The researcher used a questionnaire and an interview schedule to collect views. The validity of this study was achieved through a thorough consultation with the supervisors and other specialist. Reliability was used to focus on the degree to which empirical indicators are stable and consistent. A Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to measure the reliability of the research instruments. An alpha coefficient value of 0.6 suggested the instrument is reliable. The study adopted the mixed research methodology and the concurrent triangulation design. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study found out that there was an important positive association between all the measures of economic dynamics and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county. The study concluded that there was an influence of economic dynamics and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya. The study recommends that the County government should take steps to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in order to reduce juvenile criminality. There is therefore need for juvenile department to improve on their policies and expected performance in regard to juvenile criminality.

1.1 Background to the Study

Juvenile criminality involves participating in a criminal behavior by a juvenile (Siegel and Welsh, 2011). Juvenile criminality is determined by multiple economic dynamics which are typically interrelated in complex ways (Lipsey & Derzon, 1999; Loeber & Farrington, 1998). Globally, children aged 10-14 years were incapable of having knowledge of committing crime in any court hearing (to be doliincapax) - unable to commit crime (Elizabeth & Laurence, 2008). For instance, in England, it was the prosecution to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a juvenile had committed an offence (Newburn, 2002). In our country Kenya, the study that was done in Kamiti Youth Corrective Training Centre (KYTC) showed that the poverty, income disparity, unemployment, underemployment, lack of training, lack of jobs, have been some of the reasons why juvenile criminality is rampant. (Omboto, 2013). In Kenya, there are eleven Juvenile Remand Homes, all of them under the Department of Children’s Services. Nakuru County is one of the counties in Kenya that is exposed to the pressures of crime. Several clashes in the county led by the juveniles indicate how they involve themselves into criminal activities (Falcetto, 2012). According to regional crime trend analysis in the police annual
crime report (2014), the regions which recorded increases in crime were Nyanza 22%, North Eastern 18%, Central 9% and Rift Valley 3%. According to Omboto (2013) the minors are not able to distinguish which factors will perpetuate their indulgence into criminal activities. They therefore get involved in criminal activities without their knowledge. According to Mooney and Young (2006), studies need to be carried out to identify the context and specific factors that promote juvenile involvement in crime. The parents shift their blame to the juveniles while the juveniles shift their blame to the errant government policies. In effort to correct the existing void, the study therefore sought to examine the influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
The issue of juveniles engaging in criminality is a global agenda. Juvenile criminality is considered as one of the problems and concerns of different countries. This phenomenon has a growing trend in our country as one of the youngest countries in the world. The various Crime prevention programmes have no enough resources to deal with such a scourge. Juvenile criminality has been proved by previous records showing those who are killed or those caught committing acts like mugging and murder including records of crime during 2007/2008 general election. In Kenya there had been high rate of juveniles engaged in criminality indicated by the high number of them arrested or sentenced due to criminal acts. The tough laws have failed to reduce crime effectively. There was no much that had been written down on economic dynamics that cause juvenile criminality. Due to that, it had made it hard for police officers and other stakeholders that deal with juvenile criminality in coming up with appropriate strategies on dealing with such cases of criminality among the juveniles, hence, the need for this study. Therefore, the study was important as it examined the influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya for the purpose of recommending appropriate actions to address the situation. Nakuru County is one of the urban areas in Kenya which was highly populated and was a metropolitan area with mixed ethnic backgrounds. Economic dynamics included costs such as wages, interest rates, governmental activity, laws, policies, tax rates, unemployment level, poverty, inflation rate, labor costs. The study therefore aimed to fill the identified gaps by examining if there was an influence of economic dynamics and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study
The study aimed at examining the influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-County, Kenya.

1.4 Objective of the Study
To examine the influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-County, Kenya.

1.5 Research Question
How do economic dynamics influence juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya?

1.6 Justification of the Study
It was expected that the findings of this study would add knowledge and literature provided for by other authors and academicians. The study findings would also benefit the stakeholders in the field of education, especially in policy and leadership in Nakuru sub-county. Secondly, the study examined whether economic dynamics have influence on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county.

1.7 Significance of the Study
First, the research may have helped approve a plan to train parents and teachers on how to detect juvenile criminality. This prevented maladaptive behavior and activities that led them to being criminals. Research may have been useful to the security firms in understanding the nature of crimes committed by juveniles. Information from the study may have helped the government in developing more effective strategies in dealing with criminal activities among the juveniles. The study may have helped the general public in understanding the increase in rate of criminal activities by the juveniles.

2.0 Literature Review
2.1 Economic Dynamics
Thefts of all kinds result from the primal urge for food, clothing, and shelter, and from the jealous desire for some of life’s luxuries. Unemployment causes a similar condition of affairs. Statistics in the large cities show that during severe winters and depressions in
2.2 Influence of Economic Dynamics on Juvenile Criminality

Families’ economic status is determined by income, livelihood, and education levels, the number of children in a family and tangible assets available home (Githua, 2002). Amato and Keith (1991) and Apel and Kaukinen (2008) found that parental economic hardship contributes to economic pressure which in turn predicted parental irritability and emotional distress. Lundaman, (2001) noted that deteriorated poverty ridden areas of cities tend to produce social disorganization which in turn leads to criminality. Prior and Paris (2005) indicated that most of the juveniles are involved in criminality due to poverty. This is also echoed by Shaw and McKay (1969) in their volume Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas where they stated that juvenile criminality areas are highly correlated with poverty and low incomes. Criminal behavior and crime is often associated with poor economic standards (Lotz, Poole & Regoli, 1985). More than 60% percent of Kenyans live below poverty lines, earning less a dollar per day (the Kenya Children’s Parliament, 2004). This form of poverty exposes young children in these families to operate in conditions that will encourage the juvenile behavior. Small families have the capacity to effectively take charge of their affairs and effectively provide for children’s basic needs. Crime is likely to take place in large family units because most of them are found in the lower social economic strata (Thornton & Voigt, 1992). Study findings shows that kids from big families are the most affected by delinquent acts as compared to kids from small families (Wasserman & Seracini, 2001; West & Farrington, 1973). Bandura & Walters (1959) assert that in the approach to the problem of criminal behaviour, sociologists have focused more on the significance of social environment as the contributing factor. The authors hypothesize that the high delinquency areas are characterized by a state of social disorganization, poverty, economic reliance and the missing reliable locality values of behaviour. Poverty and poor living conditions led to frustration and discontent, which fosters a hostile attitude to society. These conditions led to the formation of gangs, here the members’ behaviour and values run contrary to those of the larger community.

According to Shaw (1966) the delinquents come from families which are usually poverty stricken and which have only one parent. When there are no effective deterring morals in a family or a community, the growth of and development of juveniles and their peers outside homes are unguided. Several parents searching for limited or no jobs in urban set up’s become poor, with their kids fate ending up residing in over-populated un planned settlements commonly referred to as slums such as Bondeni in Nakuru sub-county. In search of a better environment, children from the slums loiter into the city centre where they can easily drift into delinquency. (Wambayi, 1984). Most juvenile delinquents come from very poor single parents, usually female. Most of their parents are unemployed or engage in unstable, unreliable and illegal income earning activities, like prostitution, unlicensed hawking, or brewing and selling chan’gaa. Because these activities are illegal, mothers are constantly harassed by the authorities, and end up frequently losing their wares and earnings. Occasionally they end up in prison, thereby leaving their children to fend for themselves (GOK/UNICEF, 1992).

Poverty levels soars the world day after day bringing different problems in societies one of them being high number of homeless children in developing countries (UN-Habitat, 2004). Moreover, poverty being an economic problem parents are unable to meet family needs such as education, healthy and food. Failure to reach children’s material needs, children engage in all sorts of activities most of which are illegal (Bosiakoh and Andoh, 2010). Poverty brings about vulnerability which means defenselessness, insecurity and exposure to many risks, shock and stress. It is worth noting that, analysis on social ecology of poverty and unemployment are very important in understanding the precise nature and extent of juvenile offending in any locale (Weijters, 2008). In addition, poor people always live in areas with low quality social services like poor houses, poor education facilities resulting into poor education, and they experience declining quality in their healthy and social welfare at large. In such vulnerable lifestyle, unemployment is inevitable to youth leading to a problem cycle. The situation is so frustrating hence many young people substitute in criminal activities to achieve their goals to live a better life. However, low income has not been the only cause to juvenile crimes since high income also contributes in
pushing up the crime rate in different communities. Types of crimes such as violent crimes, crimes done under the influence of substance use and crimes of using illegal drugs such as marijuana are also committed by juvenile from higher income families. Enough income to their pockets, freedom on how to spend the money has provided a loop holes to juvenile purchasing alcohol and drugs. In addition, juvenile from such class are able to purchase tools like guns enabling them to commit other offences (Anderson and Hughes, 2009).

3.0 Research Methodology and Design

In achieving the objective of the study, the researcher adopted the mixed approach of research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Mixed method approach is an aspect of both quantitative and qualitative procedures (Creswell, 2003). This method emanates from the conviction that neither quantitative nor qualitative approach is self-sufficient. Concurrent-triangulation design was applied, it is a mixed method strategy whereby the researcher converged qualitative and quantitative quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2003). The design explored in-depth and holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in data collection by use of questionnaires, and interview schedule. The two approaches were used so that the overall strength of the study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research as stated by Creswell & Clark (2007). Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive statistics was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and reports presented using tables. Inferential statistics was analyzed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and presented in tables. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form and quotations.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Data Analysis

Table 1: Extent to which economic dynamics have influenced juvenile criminality (Police officers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty necessitates juveniles to criminality.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income inequality and distribution to children can make them commit crime.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment by parents is a major factor of juveniles to engage in crime.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labor can make a juvenile do criminal act</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles receive enough training, vocational skills and counseling for positive behavior change</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Mean score</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means: 0 – 1.5 = SD, 1.6 – 3.1 = D, 3.2 – 4.7 = A, Above 4.7 = SA

Key: SD =Strongly Disagree, D =Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA =Strongly Agree

Source: Field Data, (2019)

The study results showed that the overall mean score of influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county was 3.36. On how poverty necessitated juveniles to criminality, it was supported by a mean of 2.56 with a SD of 0.575. In regard to income inequality and its distribution to children, a mean of 2.10 and a SD of 0.631 were obtained. Based on the argument of why unemployment is a major dynamic of juveniles to engage in crime, a mean of 2.16 and a SD of 0.628 were obtained. On the issue of child labor and how it can make a juvenile commit crime, a mean of 2.11 and a SD of 0.784 were obtained. To a greater extent, juveniles receive enough training, vocational skills and counseling for positive behavior change. This was indicated by a mean of 2.36 and a SD of 0.680. These findings also concur with those of Amato and Keith (1991) and Apel and Kaukinen (2008) who found that parental economic hardship contribute to economic pressure. According to Kamuzora and Mkanta (2000), big family size does not mean poverty. It is the real picture of patriarchal power relationship within families where juveniles provide labor (Kamuzora and Mkanta, 2000).
4.2 Analysis of inferential statistics

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Economic Dynamics and Juvenile Criminality (Police officers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Juvenile Criminality</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Income Inequality</th>
<th>Child labor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Criminality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>.552*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>.522*</td>
<td>.862**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>.461**</td>
<td>.762**</td>
<td>.652**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.448**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income inequality</td>
<td>.698*</td>
<td>.642*</td>
<td>.432*</td>
<td>.482*</td>
<td>.561*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labor</td>
<td>.368*</td>
<td>.638**</td>
<td>.439*</td>
<td>.482*</td>
<td>.561*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, (2019)

As exposed in the table above, there was an important positive association between all the measures of economic dynamics and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county. Income inequality and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county had the highest correlation which was also positive (r = .698, p < .05). This means that juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county is mainly as a result of income inequality. The research findings agree with Lundaman, (2001) noted that deteriorated poverty ridden areas of cities tend to produce social disorganization which in turn leads to criminality. Prior and Paris (2005) indicated that most of the juveniles are involved in criminality due to poverty. This is also echoed by Shaw and McKay (1969) in their volume juvenile delinquency and urban Areas where they stated that juvenile criminality areas are highly correlated with poverty and low incomes. Poverty and unemployment all had positive correlation with juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county (r = .552, p < .05) and (r = .522, p < .05) respectively. Training and child labor all had positive and statistically significant with juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county (r = .461, p < .01) and (r = .368, p < .05) respectively. The study results agree with those of Prior and Paris (2005) indicated that most of the juveniles are involved in criminality due to poverty. This is also echoed by Shaw and McKay (1969) in their volume juvenile delinquency and urban Areas where they stated that juvenile criminality areas are highly correlated with poverty and low incomes. Criminal behavior and crime is often associated with poor economic standards (Lotz, Poole & Regoli, 1985).

More than 60% percent of Kenyans live below poverty lines, earning less a dollar per day (the Kenya Children’s Parliament, 2004). This form of poverty exposes young children in these families to operate in conditions that will encourage the juvenile behavior. Small families have the capacity to effectively take charge of their affairs and effectively provide for children’s basic needs. Crime is likely to take place in large family units because most of them are found in the lower social economic strata (Thornton & Voigt, 1992). Study findings shows that kids from big families are the most affected by delinquent acts as compared to kids from small families.

4.3 Thematic analysis of Qualitative Data

The guardians disagreed that juvenile comply with regulatory requirements. Guardian 1 said that:

“Some children lack social bond with the parents they therefore develop some characters end up being worse” (A female guardian). This had an implication that when children lack that closeness with their children, they come to have some suspicious characters meaning they won’t have to provide them with necessities hence enhancing criminality.

Therefore, juvenile in Kenya do not necessarily comply with requirements during materials economic dynamics.
Parent 6 said, “parents/guardians fail to meet and provide basic needs for their juveniles hence catapult them to look on their own hence committing crimes in the process.” This means that when parents don’t give their children food, shelter and clothing then they do commit crime in order to get them.

However, guardians revealed that juvenile officers in remand homes improved efficiency and effectiveness in services and a majority (80%) of them supported this view. Guardian 4 stated, “Juvenile officers are actively involved in molding our children.” (A male guardian). This implies that officers at juvenile remand homes have the capability of rectifying juvenile characters.

Thus, most juvenile remand homes set out rules to help engage with the juveniles.

Parent 4 stated that, “Due to high levels of poverty some of the juveniles engage themselves in crime so that they can have money to sustain them.”

Chief A said that, “When there is poverty in the family juveniles lack food and money and then do crime like joining militia groups like Alsha-baab.” This implies that when juveniles don’t get food to sustain them, their last resort is just criminality to make both ends meet.

Guardian 7 said that, “when there is high poverty level especially in slums and other places there is poor development and there is likelihood of juveniles engaging in criminal activities such as stealing to gain some money for their own use.” This means that poverty necessitates juveniles to commit crime.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study findings showed that there was an important positive association between all the measures of economic dynamics and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county. Income inequality and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county had the highest correlation which was also positive. Guardians disagreed that economic dynamics enabled employees learn new approaches to juvenile remand home management. The study established performance evaluation was performed and that the academic provider’s commitment to organization development was of a moderate level. Police stated that outsourced police officers only performed satisfactorily. The study concluded that there was an influence of economic dynamics on juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county, Kenya.

5.1 Recommendations for Practice

- The study found out that income inequality and juvenile criminality in Nakuru sub-county had the highest correlation which was also positive. The study recommends that the County government should take steps to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

The study recommended that the following further areas of study be undertaken:

- The study concentrated on Nakuru sub-county therefore, the generalization of results to other counties needs to be done with caution. The study recommends a similar study to be done in other Counties.

- This study did suggest that further studies can be done on the same sub-County but introducing the elements of moderating variables.

References


