

Human Capital Development And Youth Restiveness In Niger Delta, Nigeria

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Abstract: Youth restlessness has been a long-time feature of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that has taken the form of violence, militancy, unemployment and social disorganisation. The region is still suffering from an instability and underdevelopment despite its high natural resources and enormous dejections of the state on intervention programmes. Thus, the paper under analysis examined the correlation between development of human capital and restlessness among youth in Niger Delta area of Nigeria. In particular, the research aimed at establishing the effect of training and development, skills and competency development, career development and promotion on the youth restlessness - poverty and economic deprivation. Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) and the Frustration-Aggression Theory (Dollard et al, 1939) were used as the foundation for the research. According to Human capital theory, education and skill investment increases productivity and socio-economic results and on the other hand, aggression and disruptive tendencies is as a result of unmet socio-economic needs and this is evident in the case of the restive youth in the region. A quantitative research design was adopted; it was based on cross-sectional survey. The positivist research philosophy was followed in the study and this presupposes that the social reality can be objectively measured by means of empirical observation and statistical analysis. The sample consisted of the employees of the selected agencies dealing with the youth development and community leaders and youths in three states in Niger Delta. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted in order to take a sample size of 400 respondents to give the sufficient representation. A structured questionnaire was created as a primary data collection method; however, this was tried out and confirmed by a test using an expert and a pilot test. The reliability measure of Cronbach alpha coefficients of all the constructs was found to be greater than 0.70 to determine the reliability of the instrument. Analysis of data was done using frequencies and spearman rank correlation coefficient with 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that there is a negative significant correlation between all the measures of human capital development and youth restiveness in Niger Delta. The research concluded that human capital investments bring about less frustration and guarantee socio-economic stability. The research recommended that governments and players in the private sector should improve vocational training, entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition centres to be able to provide employability and economic inclusion. The research input were the combination of Human Capital and Frustration-Aggression theories as used to explain the socio-economic nature of restlessness, empirically proved that development of human capital is a strategic instrument of conflict reduction and sustainable peace in resource endowed yet restless states, such as the Niger Delta.

Keywords: Development, Restiveness, Niger Delta, Education, Peacebuilding

I. Introduction

Niger Delta region in Nigeria is the oil rich country of Nigeria yet its major source of poverty, underdevelopment and social economic turmoil has been a puzzle to the country. Youth restlessness has become one of most enduring problems in the region over the years that also comes in different forms including militancy, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping and violent demonstrations (Ibaba & Ikelegbe, 2020). To a considerable extent, it is due to poverty, unemployment and lack of economic needs which have been caused over decades through neglect, inexperienced governance and the absence of any investments in developing human capital (Eregha & Irughe, 2021). In turn, the development of human capitals, including training and development, acquisition of

skills and competencies, and career development and promotion have been suggested as an important way to reduce the restlessness of the youth and achieve a sustainable peace and economic integration in the Niger Delta (Amadi & Abdullah, 2019; Sunday et al., 2019).

The development of human capital is a strategic process which enhances productive potential and economic worth of people by way of education, training and acquisition of relevant skills and competences (Becker, 1993). In the Niger delta, lack of proper educational and vocational opportunities have hampered the economic empowerment of the youths making them easy to be exploited by the political elite and militant factions (Okoli & Orinya, 2019). Training and development programmes are thus critical in empowering the youths with skills that are marketable and entrepreneurial with competency acquisition enhancing their flexibility to the requirements of the contemporary industries (Aigbokhan, Imahe, and Ailemen, 2007). On the same note, the presence of career development and promotion will help to keep the process motivated, reduce job dissatisfaction, and help ensure stability and productivity for a long period of time (Odu & Okoh, 2022).

The twin crimes of poverty and economic deprivation can explain the restlessness of youth in Niger Delta when they are unable to access the basic and other sources of legitimate incomes (Azaiki and Ogbuigwe, 2020). The failure of human capital investment has made the problem of unemployment, inequality and frustration more evident among the segment of the youth population, which leads to aggression towards the state and multinational oil corporations (Etemike, 2021). The frustration-aggression theory is of the opinion that a frustration that arises from economic and social expectations not being met especially among the marginalised groups is usually expressed through violence (Dollard et al, 1939). Therefore, to solve the issue of youth restlessness, it is necessary to have a combination of creating economic opportunities and a calculated investment in human capital development that will enable youths to have meaningful roles in the local economy.

Besides, community leadership support is a major moderating factor between the human capital development and the restiveness of the youth. Powerful and open community leadership may be an interim between the development agencies and government programmes and the local youths, to ensure the empowerment efforts reach the target beneficiaries (Obi & Okechukwu, 2020). When the community leaders are engaged in support the training, the skill acquisition, and the employment programmes the result is the development of trust, motivation to participate in various programmes and as a result, the propensity to violence and social instability among the youth is reduced (Etekpe, 2018). On the other hand, the leadership structures can be weak or corrupt and hence making the human capital initiatives less successful in solving grievances.

Available literature shows that there are significant gaps in the knowledge about how the human capital is formed, youth restlessness and community leadership support are related to each other. Although many studies have been conducted on each variable separately (Adebayo and Okafor, 2019; Eze and Nwankwo, 2021) and few of which have implied how they interact themselves to bring about the stability and development of the communities, more in particular in the Nigerian context. The majority of the previous studies were conducted on the economic or educational dimension of human capital development, but the socio-political consequences of the human capital development on young's behavioural and restlessness were not taken into thought (Ogunyemi, 2020; Udu & Ezeani, 2018). In the same manner, the existing literature on youth restlessness did not pay much attention to how community leadership mediates the establishment of peace, inclusion and empowerment (Ikechukwu and Chukwu, 2020). Moreover, the studies in this field have taken the cross-sectional format largely which hasn't provided the longitudinal evidence that might help in capturing the changing trends with the time (Afolabi and Umeh, 2022). A significant portion of the studies also adopted qualitative information and did not incorporate the quantitative analysis like the Spearman rank correlation to determine the intensity of the relation between these variables (Nwosu, 2021). Also, fewer research work is available that focuses on the local community background i.e. the Niger Delta region where restiveness has been ongoing in spite of several developmental interventions (Okon & Effiong, 2023; Ezeani, 2022). The research, thus, aims at addressing these gaps through a comprehensive and data-driven discussion on the role of development of human capital and community-based leadership in alleviating restlessness in the youth and achieving sustainable peace and development in Nigeria. In this way, it is widening the current literature, using multi-dimensional approach of relating leadership effectiveness, youth empowerment and socio-economic stability of local communities (Adebayo and Okafor, 2019; Eze and Nwankwo, 2021).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the face of the huge oil wealth and natural resources in the Niger Delta, the area remains one of the socio-economically deprived by far of the rest of Nigeria. The unemployment rates, poverty and social exclusion rates among the youth are high hence giving itself in cycles of restlessness, which manifests itself in militancy vandalism as well as violent demonstrations (Ibaba and Ikelegbe, 2020). What is paradoxical about this is the area with rich resources has not been developed and many of young people are frustrated because of lack of developmental changes. The numerous government intervention and corporate social responsibility based initiatives that have been put in place over the years to limit such problems have not had much impact owing to poor implementation, unsustainability, and a minimum emphasis on the development of human capital (Eregba & Irughe, 2021).

The issue of human capital development is still one of the most important factors of socio-economic change, but in the case of the Niger Delta, the possibilities of training, skill development and career advancement quite inadequate. A number of youths in the area do not have required education, technical capabilities, and job marketable skills to compete in modern dynamic labour market (Amadi and Abdullah, 2019). Consequently, many of them sink in the poverty and economic deprivation loops and become the agents of restlessness and anti-social conduct (Okoli & Orinya, 2019). Not only has the lack of properly organised capacity building plans and career development contributed to stalling the empowerment of the youth, but it has also been a setback in the process of the establishment of sustainable peace and regional development.

Further, the role of community leadership in mediating between the human capital development and the youth restiveness has not been sufficiently explored and utilised. The leadership systems in most communities are either weak, politicised and lack transparency thus making it difficult when it comes to mobilising the youths to participate constructively or to allow equitable access to developmental opportunities (Obi & Okechukwu, 2020). Even well-intended empowerment programmes are likely to fall apart or create dissatisfaction where the support of leadership is weak or lost. Thus, the aim of this research is to examine the link between human capital building and restiveness of youth in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to;

- i. investigate the relationship between training and development and poverty and economic deprivation;
- ii. examine how skills and competency development relates with poverty and economic deprivation;
- iii. evaluate the nature of the relationship between career development and promotion opportunities and poverty and economic deprivation; and
- iv. examine the moderating effect of community leadership support on the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness.

1.3 Hypotheses

To guide the analysis, the following hypotheses will be tested:

HO₁: Training and development have no significant relationship with poverty and economic deprivation in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between skills and competency development and poverty and economic deprivation in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

HO₃: Career development and promotion opportunities have no significant relationship with poverty and economic deprivation in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

HO₄: Firm size does not significantly moderate the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory was developed by Theodore Schultz (1961) and developed by Gary Becker (1993) and is based on the premise that human investments in human capital in terms of education, training, health, and acquiring skills increase their productive potential and leads to the development of individuals and also society. The theory views human beings as an asset whose value can be improved through strategic and sustainable human learning and human capacity-building process. In the view of this perspective, people acquire their knowledge, skills and experiences that make them more productive, creative and valuable employees to the employer and economy (Becker, 1993). Within the framework of the current study, the development of human capital, through training and development, acquisition of skills and competencies, and career development and advancement are a vital approach towards the solution of the youth restlessness in the Niger Delta. The young people in the region usually have no employable skills, entrepreneurial abilities and means to access career growth and this leads to mass unemployment and economic frustrations (Amadi & Abdullah, 2019). According to the Human Capital Theory, providing these youths with relevant and applicable technical and vocational skills will further increase their employability rate, their level of income and prevent them against some anti-social and restive tendencies.

2.1.2 Frustration-Aggression Theory

The second theory that has been applied to anchor the study is Frustration-Aggression Theory which was originally postulated by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939). This theory states that frustration caused by the frustration of goals, the frustration of expectations or deprivation is usually the cause of aggression. People or groups of people may express their discontent through the aggressive or violent actions in those situations when they believe that they are deprived of justifiable opportunities to grow or even develop (Berkowitz, 1989). The condition of the youth restlessness that is still prevalent in Niger Delta can be explained in the light of the Frustration-Aggression Theory. Although the oil exploration has made the region to have higher unemployment rates, infrastructural inefficiencies, and environmental destruction, the youth in the region remain unemployed, poor infrastructural and oil exploration has adversely affected the environment of the area (Ibaba and Ikelegbe, 2020). Economic deprivation is leading to frustration of youth who have been feeling left out among the fruits of the resources in their region. This kind of frustration is often connected with militancy, vandalism, kidnapping, and other types of violence as the means of resistance to the state and the multinational oil companies (Etemike, 2021). The theory is a psychological and socio-economic explanation for the link between poverty, economic deprivation and restlessness among the youth. Legitimate channels to attain economic and social objectives would be closed and the youths are able to adopt illegitimate methods to emphasise their grievances and to ensure that they are recognised. Lack of proper human capital development programmes, therefore, leads to increased frustration because it does not offer the opportunity to develop and improve oneself and to have a meaningful work. Skills acquisition and training programmes can thus be used for two purposes, relieve frustration by providing alternative routes to success and relieve aggression by providing inclusion and empowerment (Azaiki and Ogbuigwe, 2020).

2.1.3 Social Support Theory

The third theory that the present study will be based on is the Social Support Theory that focuses of social relationships and networks and their impact on the behaviour of both individuals and groups. The theory which is based on the work of Cobb (1976) to be developed by House (1981) hypothesises emotional, informational and instrumental support by important persons (family, peers, organisations or community leaders) can support people in the context against stress, well-being and positive social behaviour. In the research under consideration, the Social Support Theory will constitute the foundation of the explanations of the moderating role of the support of community leadership between human capital and restlessness among youth. The Niger Delta is characterised by community leaders, the traditional rulers, youth coordinators, religious figures and opinion leaders which serve as the linkage between the outside development actors (including the government and oil companies) and the local people. The success either or failure of the developmental interventions is dependent on the support or opposition they bring. By promoting and supporting

training, skills development and career growth programmes, the community leaders will be able to build on an enabling environment through which youth can get involved and become empowered (Obi & Okechukwu, 2020). According to the Social Support Theory, leadership support provides psychological reinforcement that suppresses youths for positive participation in constructive behaviour. It builds the trust, promotes communication and reduces a sense of alienation and neglect which tends to make people restless. On the other hand, in the case of the weak, politicised or corrupt leadership structure in the communities, they are prone to break the trust in the developmental programmes and lead to opposition and revival of dissatisfaction amongst the youths (Etekepe, 2018). Under these circumstances lack of plausible leadership input undermines the connexion between the human capital endeavours and the targeted social outcomes.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Human Capital Development

The development of human capital is a strategic process by which productive capacities, skills, knowledge and competencies are improved on the individuals in order to help them make a contribution towards economic growth and development of societies. It is an inseparable part of the field of development economics and organisational development that focuses on people as a resource that is valuable, but not labour input. Human capital development as described by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1993) entail the investment in education, training and health that enhance the productivity and efficiency of the individuals. The growth is translated into increase in income, innovation and economic sustainability. In this study, human capital development is grounded on three key dimensions viz; training and development, skills and competency acquisition and career promotion and development. Training and development is planned activities of any organisations or government that are aimed on enhancing the knowledge, behaviour and skills of the employees in carrying out their duties efficiently. It makes sure that the people are abreast with the technological, economic and social developments in their surroundings. According to Noe (2020), training gives them the knowledge pertaining to occupation while development makes them work in the future and have more responsibilities. With reference to the case of the Niger delta, consistent training and professional improvement would also facilitate the likelihood of the youths being more employable, entrepreneurial and productive, thus diminishing the appeal towards violence or anti-social conduct.

2.2.2 Youth Restlessness

The youth restlessness is a socio-economic and political phenomenon, which has many manifestations in terms of violent or disruptive acts, which are carried out by the youth as a result of the perceived injustices, lack of employment, deprivation or marginalisation. Ibaba and Ikelegbe (2020) defines youth restiveness as a condition where young people get agitated and resort to exhibiting the condition of civil chaos; as reaction of political marginalisation, poverty or poor leadership. It is a reflection not only of a manifestation of structural inequality but also of a manifestation of general frustration of the displaced groups. Youth restlessness has taken over as a characteristic of socio-political environment in the Niger Delta. The region is the economic powerhouse of the oil riches in Nigeria, which is affected by endemic poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation (Eregba and Irughe, 2021). Such realities have led to the feeling of alienation between the youths that feel they have been deprived of enjoying the fruits of their natural resources. As a result, militancy, vandalism of oil pipes, kidnapping and destruction of oil infrastructure have become a new form of protest and resistance (Etemike, 2021). In this research, two important dimensions have been identified to be the cause of restlessness to youth and this is poverty and economic deprivation. Poverty is a condition in which one is not able to afford simple human amenities such as food, shelter, education and health services. Sen (1999) states that poverty is denying individuals the capabilities and opportunities rather than income. Poverty is not only linked directly to bad governance but also to corruption and low investment in human development as is common in the Niger Delta. Uneducated and unemployed youths are left finding other ways of survival which are not legitimate leading to insecurity and the instability of the society (Okoli & Orinya, 2019).

2.2.3 Support to Community Leadership

Community leadership support can be defined as active participation of the local leaders and they guide and approve developmental activities and social stability in the community. Northouse (2021) says that leadership is a process that helps people to influence

groups in order to achieve a common goal. Leaders in the context of community development are important in mobilisation of resources, and conflict mediation as well as promoting cooperation among stakeholders. They have the capability to make human capital development programmes successful or fail in case of their support, particularly in culturally cohesive areas such as the Niger Delta.

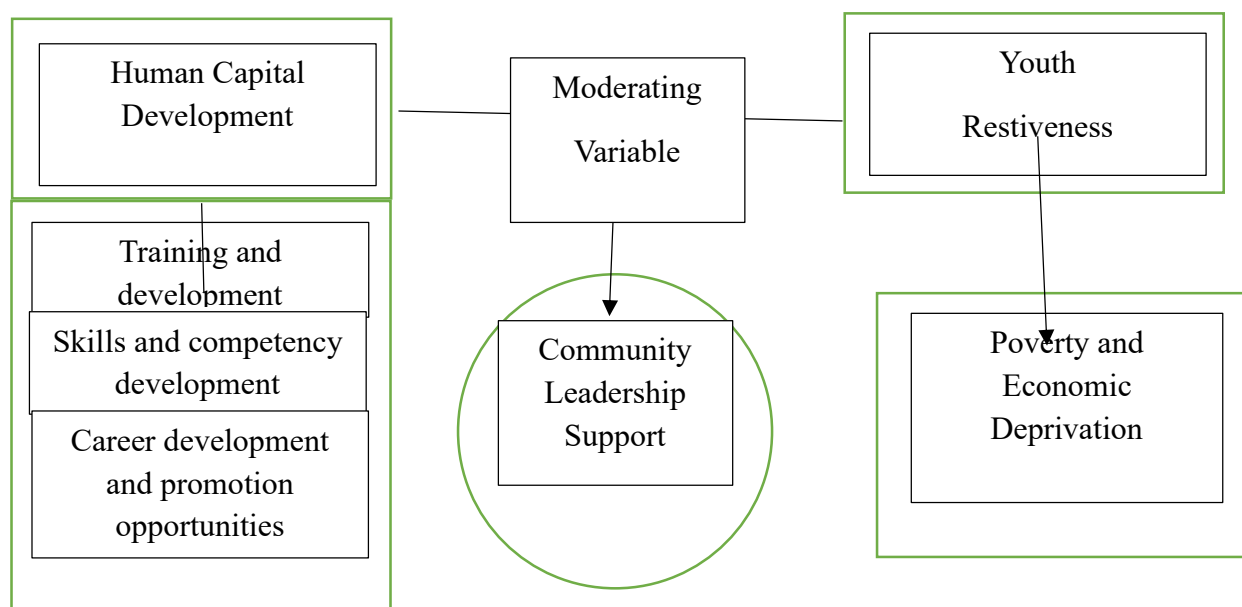


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework on the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Source: Human Capital Development: Training and development, skills and competency development, and career development and promotion opportunities (Noe, 2017; Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012; Becker, 1964; McGuigan, 2018; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Dessler, 2020; Werner & DeSimone, 2012). Youth Restiveness: Poverty and Economic Deprivation (Nwosu & Onyekpe, 2020; Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012; World Bank, 2020). Community Leadership Support (Chukwuemeka & Agbarevo, 2018; Ebegbulem, 2012; Okoh, 2017).

2.3 Empirical Review

As proved by empirical research, the creation of human capital is an important factor in deciding the behaviour, productivity and stability of a community, among the youth. Okon and Bassey (2021) examined the link between human capital formation and youth restiveness in Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. They did this by adopting a survey design and carrying out a regression analysis that found that skills acquisition programmes and vocational training had a tremendous effect on reducing the incidences of violence in protesters and criminal acts among the unemployed youths. They assumed that in such cases organised training programmes enable the youth to have workable skills which reduce frustration and violence incidence caused by unemployment. On the same note, Akor and Oguiche (2020) looked into the effects of training and development programmes on youth restlessness in Nigeria-Delta area. Based on the findings of analysing the data collected of 400 youths in three oil producing states, the study established that the government sponsored training schemes under the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) helped to reduce militancy and pipeline vandalism. Nevertheless, they took note that corruption, ineffectual monitoring and political interference were the disadvantages of such programmes and establishment of a consistent transparent implementation of the programme is the key to permanent peace.

Eze and Aniebo (2019) focused their attention on the contribution of the skills and competency acquisition to economic independence of the youths in Niger delta. They found that the level of skill acquisition as well as the rate at which involvement in violent activities occurred had a strong negative relationship. The researchers came up with the conclusion that, with appropriate competencies in the trades like welding, agriculture and ICT, the youths would finally venture more in constructive activities as opposed to violent demonstrations to control resources. As Umar and Ibrahim (2022) in examining the impact of career development and promotion prospects to ascertain the role of youth restlessness in the north of Nigeria saw the comparison to the case in Niger Delta. Their cross-section research showed that lack of upward career mobility and lack of effective recognition on skillful youths aggravates the sense of marginalisation which leads to social unrest. Their suggestions were to make career counselling and mentor programmes institutional to provide the youth with marked developmental paths and future hopes.

Ikechukwu and Worlu (2021) empirically tested the level of human capital investment in poverty reduction in Niger Delta. They used the information of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and interviews organised to find that the oil companies that fund training and capacity building projects were able to significantly reduce the economic deprivation in the community that had a strong corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework. The paper highlighted the fact that poverty and restlessness are interlinked and the problem can be solved through the intervention of sustainable human capital. According to another study carried out by Nwachukwu and Akpan (2020), the authors assessed the community leadership support to moderate the link between human capital initiatives and youth restiveness. Their results showed that communities that had proactive and transparent leadership had better results under youth development programmes. They found that programme leaders who advocated for training initiatives, participant selection in a fair manner and local supervision were contributing to the success of the programme and reducing the disillusionment of the youth.

In addition, Ojo and Adewale (2022), conducted a longitudinal study of the efficacy of human capital development measures of prevention of youth restlessness of the oil-producing states. They analysed the results and found that meaningful changes in the youth employment and crime decreases were observed after long term participation in skill development and entrepreneurship programmes. They also found that continuity of such interventions was not aided by political instability and ineffective leadership and the moderating role of the community leadership. Benson and Ekong (2021) empirically examined the nexus between poverty and economic deprivation and the youth restiveness in the Niger Delta. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used in the study to analyse the relationships of variables and the findings determined that the most positive role played by economic deprivation on restlessness of the youth was determined. This relationship was however strongly diluted by the addition of human capital development programmes as a mediating factor which highlighted the transformative nature of education and training in conflict prone regions.

Okafor and Chukwu (2020), tested the effect of community leadership on the moderating of government empowerment schemes on youth in Bayelsa State. Through focus group discussions and survey information, they found that the leaders of the community that worked with government agencies strengthened trust, accountability, and programme participation. The research opined that leadership support is a mechanism of social capital as it built other on the legitimacy and effectiveness of the human capital policies in mitigating restlessness. Lastly, Ebiye and George (2023) presented an in-depth study of how the growth of Human capital and the stability social interacted in the Niger Delta. They used both quantitative and qualitative data in their study to evaluate the results of NDDC, Amnesty Programme initiatives. The findings showed that the communities with more access to educational and vocational opportunities did show few cases of violent conflicts and youth unemployment. Noteworthy, community leaders who were committed were more effective in improving the delivery of the programmes, decrease corruption, and give a sense of ownership to the beneficiaries.

III. Methodology

The research design embraced in the current study is quantitative research design that has a foundation on descriptive and correlational survey research design. The selection of quantity design is obtained on the purpose of study's to empirically determine the relationship between the human capital development and the youth restiveness and the moderating effect of community leadership support in the Niger delta region. The descriptive aspect can facilitate with proper description relating to the features and

impressions of the population being studied while the correlational aspect can be used to statistically analyse the connexion between the variables such as training and development, skills and competency acquisition, career development and promotion, poverty and economic deprivation. The positivist research philosophy used in guiding the research assumes the fact that the social phenomena may possibly be measured, quantified, and analysed via empirical data objectively. Positivism emphasises on objectivity, impartiality, and the use of scientific techniques to test hypotheses and prove the relationships of the theories (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019; Olulu-Briggs & Sunday, 2021; Olulu-Briggs & Sunday, 2023; Sunday & Wobo, 2023). This philosophy is appropriate since it supports the purpose of the study to develop causal inferences among the constructs and to quantify the impact of human capital development on the restlessness of the youths.

The young population which is the target in this research consists of youngsters living in the selected communities within the Niger delta region in Nigeria including Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states. Niger Delta has drawn attention due to the huge number of youths, socio-economic agitation and exposure of Niger delta to human capital development issues both by the government and the non-governmental organisations. The target group comprises of both men and women aged 18 and 40 who participated or could participate in youth empowerment, training or acquisition of skills programmes launched by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), oil companies and non-government organisations. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) indicates that such number of young people in these states are more than 5 million. Since it was impractical to study the whole population, a representative sample is selected so that the results can be applied in the whole population which will be statistically valid.

The study, also got the sample size of approximately 400 people based on a formula of finite population that was developed by the author of Taro Yamane (1967) and is said to be statistically sufficient to measure correlation and inferential analysis. Multistage sampling method was adopted in the study. Purposive selection of three states (Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta) were carried out in the first stage as these states are the most dominant regarding the restlessness of the youth and states where developmental programmes were concentrated. At the second stage two local government areas (LGAs) were randomly selected in each state. The third stage was the identification of communities where the youth engagement programmes were active or those with experience in government sponsored training programmes with the use of purposive sampling. Lastly, the sampling method used was simple random sampling that was used to pick the youth respondents in each community to eliminate any form of bias and in order to have inclusiveness.

The research was based on primary data which was supplemented by secondary sources. The primary data were collected in the field using the structured questionnaires used on the selected respondents. This ensured first hand data on the perceptions of the respondents towards human capital development programmes, its influence on skills and employment, its experiences of poverty and economic deprivation.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire which was to be prepared following the concept framework on which the study was going to follow. The questionnaire was divided into five parts, which included Section A that was designed to get demographic information (age, gender, education, and occupation); Section B that was aimed at the measurement of human capital development based on training and development, skills and competency acquisition, and career development and promotion; Section C that assessed youth restiveness in terms of poverty and economic deprivation, and Section D that determined community leadership support as a moderating variable. The scale used was a five point Likert which was based on 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The items of the questionnaire were based on the validated ones in previous research (e.g., Becker, 1993; Eze and Aniebo, 2019; Nwachukwu and Akpan, 2020), which were consistent and compared. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents personally using trained research assistants that were familiar with the local background and languages to make them clear and get the right answer.

Validity and reliability tests were done in an attempt to ensure that the questionnaire was capable of measuring the constructs being studied. A strategy was used to ascertain the content validity, in which three scholars, finance, management, and social sciences professionals were used to go through the questionnaire items by offering an evaluation of relevance, legibility of the items, and coverage of the study variables (Sunday & Etugbo, 2023; Olulu-Briggs, 2023; Olulu-Briggs, 2021). They included their recommendations in the last administration. Factor analysis was also used to prove construct validity where items loaded on their respective components (human capital development, youth restiveness and community leadership support) in the right way. In order

to figure out the reliability, the Cronbachs Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency. A pilot test was done on 30 respondents not within the main study area and the reliability coefficients of all constructs were higher than the 0.70 mark which is the recommended by Nunnally (1978). To be more exact, the alpha of training and development, acquisition of skills and competences, career development, youth restiveness and community leadership support were 0.82, 0.85, 0.80, 0.83 and 0.79 respectively. Such findings prove the reliability of the instrument and the appropriateness to be used in the field.

The responses received, via the questionnaires that had been filled were then coded and analysed using the Statistical Package of social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The analysis was done in two phases, the descriptive and inferential one. The frequency distributions, percent and mean scores were used for the descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics and response to each variable. This gave a clear picture on the nature of the data patterns and general perceptions of the respondents. To check the hypotheses for determining the strength and direction of relations between independent variables and the dependent variable, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (r) was used in the inferential analysis in order to test the hypotheses. The correct type of correlation used was the rank correlation used as the data obtained were ordinal in nature, which were obtained using Likert scale and the data were not expected to have normal distribution. The null hypotheses were tested at 5 per cent level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, partial correlation test was deployed to prove the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness to establish the impact of leadership involvement in improving human capital development due to the moderation effect of leadership support by the community. The results of the analysis were summarised in the form of tables and explained in accordance to purpose of researching and theoretical framework.

IV. Analysis and Results

4.1 Results

Table 4.1: Demographic Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	150	39.7	39.7	39.7
	Male	228	60.3	60.3	100.0
	Total	378	100.0	100.0	
Age	18-27	186	49.2	49.2	49.2
	28-35	109	28.8	28.8	78.0
	36 and above	83	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	378	100.0	100.0	
Marital Status	Single	216	57.1	57.1	57.1
	Married	127	33.6	33.6	90.7
	Separated	35	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	378	100.0	100.0	
Educational Attainment	WAEC/OND	157	41.5	41.5	41.5
	HND/Bachelor	186	49.2	49.2	90.7
	Master and above	35	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	378	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS 28.0 Output

The demographic findings found in table 4.1 provide a clue on the nature of the respondents that would be used in the research study on human capital development and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The gender ratio shows that the male is the highest number of the respondents and it is 60.3% (228 respondents) while the females are 39.7% (150 respondents). This could imply that the study area have more of males and this may be because of their economic and social activities in the Niger Delta. The gender balance also presupposes that both male and female views were represented sufficiently, which made it possible to include the findings of the balance concerning the questions of human capital growth and restlessness of youth. On the age distribution, the information shows the highest number of respondents (49.2) were in the age group of 18-27 years with 28.8 years with the age of 22.0 years and above. This means that the majority of the participants are young adults, a category of population

that are usually in the centre of the developmental and restlessness issues in the region. The large proportion of the youth make the research more determined in explaining the factors leading to the youth restlessness and their active participation in the productive activities of human capital.

On marital status, 57.1% of the respondents are single, 33.6% are married with 9.3% being separated. The preponderance of the single respondents might indicate that a good number of the sample is at that age where financial uncertainty and joblessness might have added to the annoyance and agitation. According to education, 49.2% of the respondents have had HND/Bachelors degrees, 41.5% have degree (WAEC/OND), and only 9.3% have Master's degree and transcripts. This distribution has the implication that while a good number of the respondents have had a tertiary education, a significant number still have the basic or intermediate education. The learning profile is similar to the realities with regard to the need to improve the capacities to acquire skills, train and upgrade careers in order to curb the restlessness of youth and in the process facilitating sustainable livelihoods in the area.

4.1.2 Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate analysis is done with the aid of the Spearman Rank correlation coefficient at the 5% significance level.

Table 4.2: Human capital development and Poverty and economic deprivation

			Correlations			
			Poverty and economic deprivation	Training and development	Skills and competency acquisition	Career development and promotion
Spearman's rho	Poverty and economic deprivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.821**	-.477**	-.603**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	378	378	378	378
	Training and development	Correlation Coefficient	-.821**	1.000	-.138	.155
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.378	.322
		N	378	378	378	378
	Skills and competency acquisition	Correlation Coefficient	-.77**	.138	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.378	.	.000
		N	378	378	378	378
	Career development and promotion	Correlation Coefficient	-.603**	.155	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-.782	.000	.
		N	378	378	378	378

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 28.0 Output

According to Table 4.2, training and development and poverty and economic deprivation is significant (since $0.000 < 0.05$) and negative ($\rho = -0.821$). This finding has indicated a strong negative and significant relationship between training and development and poverty and economic deprivation. Null hypothesis is rejected and the study shows that there was a significant relationship between training and development and poverty and economic deprivation. Skills and competency acquisition and poverty and economic deprivation is significant (since $0.000 < 0.05$) and with a negative ($\rho = -0.477$). This finding suggests a moderate negative and significant relationship that exists between skills and competency acquisition and poverty and economic deprivation. The null hypothesis is rejected and the study reveals that there is a significant relation between skills and competency acquisition and poverty and economic deprivation. Career development and promotion and poverty and economic deprivation Is significant (since $0.000 < 0.05$) and negative ($\rho = -0.603$). This finding indicates a strong negative and significant relationship of the variables career development and promotion with poverty and economic deprivation. The null hypothesis is rejected and the study confirms

that there is significant relationship between career development and promotion and poverty and economic deprivation.

Table 4.3: Moderating Effect of Technology Innovation

Correlations

Control Variables			Human capital development	Youth restiveness	Technology Innovation
-none ^a	Human capital development	Correlation	1.000	-.893	-.672
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		df	0	376	376
	Youth restiveness	Correlation	-.893	1.000	-.498
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		df	376	0	41
	Community Leadership Support	Correlation	-.652	-.498	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		df	41	41	0
Community Leadership Support	Human capital development	Correlation	1.000	.514	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		df	0	375	
	Youth restiveness	Correlation	-.722	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		df	375	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS 28.0 Output

Table four showed the negative ($Rho = -0.722$) and significant (since $0.000 < 0.05$) moderating effect of leadership support in the community on the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness of oil and gas firms. Thus, we accept the alternative hypothesis that leadership support in the community moderates the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness in Niger Delta, Nigeria

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The research result revealed the fact that there is a negative and significant correlation between the aspect of human capital development training and development, skills and competency, career development and promotion, and youth restfulness in the Niger Delta. This is a trend that implies an existence of positive changes in the targeted human capital investments and a converse change in the restive behaviours of youth. In particular, the negative correlation between training and development and the restlessness of the youth signifies that organised training programmes equip the youth with employable and entrepreneurial skills, which makes them less susceptible to idleness and possible desirability of the violent or disruptive behaviours (Adebayo and Okafor, 2019). Empirical results also show that skills-based training reduces the psychological frustration associated with joblessness, and subsequently stops the tendency towards unrest (Eze and Nwankwo, 2021).

The correlation between the negativity and significance of skills and competency acquisition and youth restlessness is consistent with the Human Capital Theory: the investment in skills augments the productivity of an individual and his or her worth to the economy (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1961). By getting the right technical and vocational skills, the youths would be on a great footing to gain sustainable livelihoods and have less opportunities of becoming part of militancy or criminal networks (Ogunyemi, 2020). According to contextual evidence in the oil producing communities, when lack of proper skill programmes in the past has led to frustration of youth in such communities, and consequent restlessness (Okon & Effiong, 2023).

Similarly, the perceived youth restlessness is also found to be negatively and significantly related to career development and promotion. Good promotion systems, clear promotion pathways and mentorships promotes a feeling of hope and a social inclusion

thus minimising the stimulus to disruptive behaviour (Afolabi and Umeh, 2022). In the case of the career ladder being obscure or skewed youth experience more disenchantment and get into social disorder more (Udu & Ezeani, 2018).

Notably, the research has also discovered that the community leadership support also has a negative and significant moderating effect: the presence of supportive, transparent, and participatory local leadership reinforces the negative correlation between human capital development and youth restlessness. This make community leaders that enable access to programmes, provide equitable selection of beneficiaries and promote accountability to improve the success of training and career programmes, therefore, reducing the chances of youth agitation (Ikechukwu & Chukwu, 2020; Ezeani, 2022). Weak or partisan leadership, on the other hand, leads to the destruction of credibility of the programme, and may encourage the difference in perceptions of exclusion, which cancels out possible returns to human capital investments (Okon & Effiong, 2023). All in all, the findings show that human capital interventions is the most effective in curbing the youth restlessness if it is implemented together with active and responsible leadership among the community.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This paper investigated the relationship between human capital development and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta, Nigeria using the moderating influences of community leadership support. The analysis showed that the human capital development that is captured in terms of training and development, acquisition of skills and competencies and career development and promotion has negative and significant relationship with youth restiveness that was represented by poverty and economic deprivation. The result of this report emphasised that by bringing the human capital to an increased point using systematic and nonexclusive programmes, the level of restlessness among the youth can be significantly decreased as the people are provided with employable skills, economic empowerment and chances of upgrading their positions.

Theoretically, this research supports the premise behind the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1961) which proclaims investment into in education, training and skills development leads to an increase in productivity and other socio-economic aspects related to individuals. The findings confirm that providing the youth access to education, skills and career development assures that they will be less susceptible to restive or violent behaviour as their opportunity cost of rebellion is increased as the level of employability is increased. Moreover, the results are consistent with the theories of Social Exchange (Blau, 1964) which take into consideration that the results of a positive investment made by society on the individual, i.e. training and empowerment are reciprocated by constructive behaviours and stability of a community. The moderating framework symbolises in the form of Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978) connotes the critical role of community leaders in the aspect of the inspiration and mobilisation of the youths as well as guiding them to peace and positive involvement. This study adds to the current theoretical knowledge by exposing the amplification of the impact of human capital develop through the leadership support thus the combination human capital, leadership and social stability in the topic of developing countries.

Managerially, the study has great implications on the policy makers, corporate organisations as well as the community development practitioners. These results indicate that the Niger Delta will not have a sustainable peace without security interventions or short-term empowerment programmes. Instead, it requires a long-term plan which is predicated on the creation of human capital. The management of the public and private institutions, especially in the oil and gas industry, should design and implement training programmes that would relate to the peculiarities of the youths in their host societies. Such programmes need to focus on technical, entrepreneurial, and even vocational skills that are directly applied into the workplace and into independent living. The government agencies and development partners should also liaise to institutionalise transparent and merit based career development systems in which the youths are rewarded on hard work and innovation. In addition, the paper has also focused on the importance of traditional and community leaders as strategic partners of development planning. The credibility of youth development programmes, acceptance, and sustainability are dependent on support from them. Community leadership will help to overcome lack of trust between the state, business, and the communities and achieve social unity and deter the anti-social tendencies. Therefore, the managers and policymakers needs to invest in both physical infrastructure and institutional leadership capacity building since the

community leadership plays a significant moderating role in holding the relationship between the human capital development and restiveness.

5.2 Recommendations

Federal, state and local government need to put more emphasis on the youth-based and centred programmes that acquire skills with the emphasis on employability and entrepreneurship. Adaptation of these programmes to the local economies like agriculture, renewable energy and ICT is needed. There is need to institutionalise the career development systems in the public and private bodies that has a presence in the Niger delta. Promotion, mentorship and professional recognition should also be given to the youths; this would reduce the frustration of the youths, and enhance loyalty and productivity. Community leaders are supposed to be taught modern leadership and conflict resolving methodologies so that they are able to cope with the demands of the youth. They should be acknowledged to be forced into the policy making process and implementation of the programmes, to ensure it is inclusive and transparent.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the study has made great contribution, it has its limitations. To begin with the research was only geographically limited to the Niger Delta region and this has the potential of limiting the research's extrapolation to the rest of Nigeria or Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted in the study which takes data at a particular time. This research design does not allow the formation of causal relationships between variables especially the long-term consequences of human capital investment on the restlessness of the youth. Thirdly, using self-reported data also has the possibility of introducing bias such as social desirability and recall error which may affect the accuracy of the response. Moreover, although the study employed the Spearman Rank Correlation approach in the procedure, future studies can employ more complex statistical approaches such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) which can assist the researcher in studying intricate interrelationship among variables.

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