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Amnesty Programme and Rehabilitation of Youths in Rivers State, Nigeria: Establishing The Socio-Economic Nexus

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Abstract: This study examined the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. Data for the study were generated through a 41-item structured questionnaire administered to 384 respondents from Port Harcourt, Obio-Akpor, Asari-Toru, Ahoada West, Gokana and Eleme local government areas in Rivers State. The sample size for the study was drawn using the Taro Yamane's formula, while the random and purposive sampling techniques were used to administer the questionnaire to the respondents. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study in line with the objectives of the study. First, the study found a significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. Second, it also found a significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria. As a result, the study concluded that more concerted efforts should be geared towards giving the amnesty programme all it needs for effective rehabilitation of the youths. Finally, the study recommended that the programme be given strong legal backing to ensure its sustenance, be opened for private-public partnership for its reinforcement and sustenance, be complemented by other innovative measures such as wide consultation with various stakeholders and inclusion of all Niger Delta youths, and be adequately funded and well organized, among other things.

Keywords: amnesty, militancy, Niger Delta, programme, rehabilitation

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1. Introduction

The Niger Delta region in Nigeria is a unique region because of its rich and abundant deposit of crude oil. However, the region has outstanding issues of conflicts, violence or insurgencies and abysmally poor human and infrastructural development in the midst of its rich deposits of oil and gas, flora and fauna [1]; [2]; [3]; [4], [5]. As noted by Oloya & Ugbeyavwighren, Nigeria's infrastructural crisis does not seemingly respect natural resources endowment. In spite of this, some scholars think that the Niger Delta case is the result of oppressive, exploitative and discriminative policies of the federal government aimed at marginalizing and rendering the people of Niger Delta irrelevant. This is to the extent that the Niger Delta is considered the proverbial goose that lays the golden egg. However, the anger of the people seems to be that the goose is treated with disdain and may even be faced with the risk of death.

Although the bulk of crude oil, Nigeria's main source of revenue, is derived from the Niger Delta, the region belongs to the ranks of the most backward and politically marginalized groups in the country [1]. The picture of infrastructural neglect painted above is made worse by the menace of environmental degradation. This largely unintended consequence of oil exploration activities is a threat to the livelihood of

majority of the inhabitants of the region. The devastation caused by oil spillage and gas flaring has made it virtually impossible for the people to eke out a living [5]. Ajaero averred that exploration activities have led in some cases to the systematic debasement and assault on the oil communities, leading to the collapse of the ecosystem in some areas, and to negative impact in terms of livelihood of the people and the survival strategies they have designed for generations [6].

A disconnection between the economic advantage of the Niger Delta and the quantum of resources disbursed for the development of the region has given rise to structural imbalances in Nigeria. Consequently, the region is increasingly famous due to massive oil deposits and constant violence in the region. Estimates show that the Nigerian government generate over 90% of its revenue from the region, which is characterized by crisis of underdevelopment [3]. The region remains underdeveloped despite the huge revenue it generates for the privileged social class including the public figures, public servants and beneficiaries from multinational oil corporations. The Nigerian government and oil multinational corporations (OMNCs) are principal beneficiaries of the massive oil deposits in the region, while the majority of the people in the region battle against squalor occasioned by exploitive oil exploration, environmental degradation, climate change, inadequate infrastructure, unemployment and poverty [7].

Several reactions have been put up by the people of Niger Delta to their peculiar problems of neglect, marginalization, environmental degradation, poverty and unemployment; some reactions predate Nigeria's independence. According to Oloya & Ugbeyavwighren, the struggle for resource control in the Niger Delta dates back to the pre-colonial era when the Royal Niger Company (RNC) tried to deprive the people of their legitimate trade and industry [7]. In attempts to challenge and resist the British merchants, some indigenous kings were deposed and exiled. For example, King William DappaPepple of Bonny was deposed and exiled to Fernando Po in 1854; King Jaja of Opobo to the West Idies in 1887; Prince Nana of Itsekiri to Accra in 1894; and Oba of Benin to Calabar in 1897 (he later died in Calabar in 1913).

Rehabilitation means using rehabilitative measures rather than punishment to address criminals in the prison system. Rehabilitation criminal justice focuses on helping the offender understand their wrongs and prepares them to re-enter society as a reformed person. To do this, rehabilitative programmes must target the problems that caused the offenders to turn to crime in the first place. The factors that can affect crime rates are referred to as environmental influences, such as alcohol and drug use, poverty, and lack of education, and they can both predict and give insight into the crime issues in a community, showing the areas where rehabilitative programmes need to help the prisoners of those communities the most. This usually requires the use of different types of training and treatments to help the offender become ready to be a part of their community. The goal of rehabilitation is to reduce recidivism, or the action or tendency of an offender to commit a crime again upon release.

The amnesty programme was initiated in 2009 by the President Musa YarAdua-led federal government as a wise attempt to address the root causes of militancy (and the Niger Delta crisis) and ensure sustainable human development in the region. The rehabilitation of ex-militant, as the core of the programme, has been on since 2009. What readily comes to mind is "to what extent has the youths of the Niger Delta region have been rehabilitated and empowered through the amnesty programme"? Thus, this study is an attempt to examine the relationship that exists between the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. As a result, the researchers seek to answer the following questions: (a) has the amnesty programme helped in rehabilitating militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria? and (b) has amnesty programme helped in training youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. In line with the research questions, the main objective of the study would be achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the relationship between the amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The study assumes that:

1. There is no relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. There is no relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Amnesty, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th edition), refers to an official statement that allows people who have been put in prison for crimes against the state to go free. The conception of amnesty is in line with the Nigerian constitution, whose section 175 stipulates that the President can grant pardon to any person concerned or convicted of any offence. Amnesty is an indication of criminality with a pardon for specific purposes depending on the situation in question [7].

On June 25, 2009, President Umar Musa Yar'Adua granted amnesty to all persons who have been directly or indirectly involved in militant activities in the Niger Delta. From the date of this amnesty, militants had a 60-day period to lay down their arms. The amnesty offer was President Yar'Adua's last ditch solution to the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta region. The crisis of the region had grown to the point of embarrassment for the entire country. In the period before the amnesty, militant activities covered a whole grant of activities ranging from kidnapping of expatriates (and even Nigerian) workers in the oil sector, blowing up of flow stations and sundry activities which sometimes bordered on criminality [5]. Amnesty was a political solution to a problem which seemed to have defied other solutions. It is on record that before the granting of amnesty, President Yar'Adua had tried other solutions such as drawing up the Niger Delta Master Plan and establishment of Niger Delta Ministry [8], [9]. Indeed, the failure of all other efforts of successive governments necessitated the adoption of amnesty by President Yar'Adua as the last option to end the lingering Niger Delta Crisis.

The Niger Delta crisis has elicited lots of scholarly reactions ([9]; [10]; [11]; [12]; [5]). This is as a result of the strategic nature of the region for Nigeria. First, the region occupies a large portion of Nigeria's coastline; it is a major gateway to the country. Secondly and more importantly, it is Nigeria's treasure base because the bulk of the country's oil resources are located in the region. Thus, the effort to maintain peace and stability in the region has been a major concern for successive governments in the country. Over the years, the crisis in the Niger Delta has been a critical component of the Nigerian crisis or what Omotola calls the "national question" [9].

Ojajorotu has identified seven causes of conflicts or crisis the Niger Delta to include the structure of the Nigerian federation, perceived/real marginalization of the Niger Delta region, activities of oil and gas companies, ethnic identities/nationalism, retention of obnoxious legislations, role of government, and militarization/proliferation of arms. These reasons are, in the opinion of Ojajorotu, responsible for the emergence of social movement in the region [13]. Many of these movements have proliferated in the region and some have assumed a militant tone, thereby compounding the crisis in the region [5]. At the time President Yar'Adua came into office on 29 May, 2007, the Niger Delta crisis

was at its zenith. Resentment in the region had been festering for so long that the crisis in the region had become an albatross to the Nigerian project.

The amnesty programme has elicited different reactions. Some see it as a successful project ([14]; [15], [16], [6]). Ajaero's view capture that of those in the "success" camp thus: "For those who actually know the cost of violence and the quantity of arms and ammunition in the region, the decision of the repentant militants to embrace peace is one of the best things that have happened to the country in 2009. A state of war has been averted by their decision to lay down arms. This is a great act of patriotism" [6]. On the other hand, some scholars see the amnesty programme as a "failure" [17]. Some have moderate views on the programme. While some thinks it lacks transparency [18], others see the preparation for amnesty as inadequate [19], and some think that amnesty alone cannot resolve the Niger Delta question [20]; [21].

Whatever reactions elicited by the amnesty programme, two things are clear. First, it is an unprecedented action in the history of political engineering in Nigeria. The amnesty offer was a masterstroke in terms of giving Niger Delta a sense of belonging in the Nigerian project. As a corollary, amnesty has helped to advance the course of national integration and the forging of unity in the country. Secondly and as fallout of the first, there has been a high level of peace and stability in the Niger Delta region in particular and Nigeria in general. The peace and stability in the area have in turn given more profitable oil exploration activities in the area, and this has impacted positively on Nigeria's revenue profile and as well has enhanced development efforts in the region [5].

The amnesty programme commenced on June 25, 2009 ended on October 4, 2009. A new phase in the programmes was immediately commenced namely, making the deal reached with the militants and indeed the entire region work in the post amnesty period [5]. The first step in this period (for the militants) involved a rehabilitation process that will ultimately lead to their full rehabilitation and integration back into peaceful life ADDIN ZOTERO_ITEM CSL_CITATION [2]. This is what has come to be known as the post-amnesty programme, though a part of the amnesty deal. Indeed, the amnesty programme has been widely applauded because of its ability to usher in peace and development in the country. However, it has some challenges or shortcomings. The amnesty has been faulted due to its poor implementation. Some dissidents argue that the time slated for amnesty is inadequate to allow for meaningful development. Requests made for the extension of the amnesty was not approved and it is claimed that the programme was rushed to prevent possible disruption of the Under-17 World Cup tournament, which was played in Nigeria.

Anecdotal evidence shows that many ex-militants have become restive due to delay in payments of their entitlements and poor implementation of the amnesty agenda. The provision of amnesty negates the fundamental reason for the growth of militancy, as militants largely declared at the early stage of their struggle. The Federal Government of Nigeria has not increased the percentage of resources allocation (13%) to the Niger Delta, despite several agitations in that regard. More fundamentally, it appears that the Nigerian government does not recognize skills possessed by ex-militants. The federal government has been warned against poor funding of the post-amnesty programme for the Niger Delta ex-militants (Azeez, 2009).

Akinwale (2010:206) argues that beyond agitation for resources control, militants became criminal entrepreneurs deriving huge rewards from violence in various ways including bunkering and hostage taking. Therefore, the paltry financial rewards granted to militants during amnesty are incomparable with huge amnesty of money that accrues to them during illegal oil bunkering, hostage taking and other violent activities. The monthly stipend of ₦20,000.00 (\$132.45) and ₦1,500.00 (\$9.43) daily feeding allowance per person as well as the promise of vocational training in the ongoing rehabilitation of militants appear to negate the already established militants' identities and alternative routes to upward social mobility in the Nigerian society. In the light of the above,

Akinwale predicated that a resurgence of violence is likely to occur in the Niger Delta after the amnesty except the undesirable socio-economic situations that fuelled militancy are fully addressed.

A major blow on the post-amnesty period was the literal disappearance of President Yar'Adua from the country. On November 23, 2009, the President left the country on what should ordinarily have been a medical vacation. Unfortunately, the President and his men did not handle the issue properly in terms of the constitutional requirements as stipulated in Section 145 of the 1999 Constitution. This was to herald the beginning of a major constitutional crisis, which only ended after the National Assembly declared Vice President Goodluck as Acting President on February 9, 2010.

Jonathan's ascension to the presidency, as controversial as it was, ended 78 days of power vacuum occasioned by President Yar'Adua's failure to properly hand over power to his Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan, as stipulated in Section 145 of the Constitution. Because of this political "brouhaha", a lot of burning national issues did not get the required attention. One of such issues was the post-amnesty programme. However, upon assumption of power as the Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan declared that the federal government will take every step necessary to consolidate the gains of amnesty and successfully execute the post-amnesty programme. He also appealed to all actors to exercise patience and embrace total peace [6]. In the presence of reduced oil-related violence in the Niger Delta region and federal government's commitment in the post-amnesty course, several ex-militants have been sponsored to acquire certain employable skills and are paid about ₦65,000 monthly. This shows a huge prospect for human capital development in the region.

Theoretical Framework

The human capital theory (HCT) has been adopted as the theoretical framework for this work. Based upon the work of Schultz, Sakamota and Powers, and Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, the human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education or training is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. In fact, the human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population [22], [23], [24].

Human capital theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings. The provision of formal education is seen as a productive investment in human capital, which the proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more equally worthwhile than that of physical capital [25].

According to Babalola, the rationality behind investment in human capital is based on three arguments that: the new generation must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations; new generation should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes and production methods and social services; and people must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches [25].

Fagerlind & Saha noted that human capital theory provides a basic justification for large public expenditure on education both in developing and developed nations. The theory was consistent with the ideologies of democracy and liberal progression found in most Western societies. Its appeal was based upon the presumed economic return of investment in education both at the macro and micro levels. Efforts to promote investment in human capital were seen to result in rapid economic growth for society. For individuals, such investment was seen to provide returns in the form of individual economic success and achievement [26].

Most scholars agree that it is human resources of nation, not its capital nor its material resources that ultimately determine the character and peace of its economic and social

development. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall assert that “human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development.

The importance of training or education and human capital has been brought out in many studies of economic growth and development. Robert developed a human capital model which shows that education and that creation of human capital was responsible for both the differences in labour productively and the differences in overall levels of technology that we observe in the world. More than anything else, it has been the spectacular growth in East Asia that has given education and human capital their current popularity in the field of economic growth and development [27]. Countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan have achieved unprecedented rates of economic growth while making large investments in education. In the statistical analysis that accompanied his study, the World Bank found that improvement in education in a very significant explanatory variable for East Asian economic growth.

Drawing from the human capital theory, it is argued in this work that since the amnesty programme has been able to pull the Niger Delta militants out of the creeks and sent them on specific trainings or skills acquisition (education) of their choices, there is hope of effective rehabilitation and human capital development of the ex-militants in the Niger Delta region. In short, amnesty has opened the gateway for education and empowerment of the ex-militants in the region, and by the time they are fully integrated into the labour market, they will contribute to the economic productively and growth of the region. As affirmed by Odekunle, investment in human capital (such as has been done to the ex-militants) has positive effects on the supply of entrepreneurial activity and technological innovation. Ayeni asserts that education as an investment has future benefits of creation of status, job security and other benefits in cash and in kind [28].

2. Materials and Methods

Three hundred and eighty-four (384) youths participated in the study. 64.3% of the respondents were males whereas 35.7% were females; 60.4% were aged 36-54 years, 27.6% were aged 18-35 years and 12.0% were aged 55 years and above; 28.1% of the total respondents were from Port Harcourt LGA, 27.3% of the participants resided in Obio/Akpor LGA, 13.3% resided in Ahoada West LGA 12.2% resided in Gokana LGA, 11.5% resided in Asari-Toru LGA, and 7.6% resided in Eleme LGA; 73.2% were married; and only 2.9% were divorced (not complete); 57.0% attended primary school and only 4.4% did not have formal education (not complete); 84.4% were Christians, 7.3% were Traditional Worshippers; 4.9% were members of other religions, and only 3.4% were Muslims; 50.5% were civil/public servants, 16.7% were traders/artisans, 14.6% were oil company workers, 12.8% were fishermen/farmers, and only 5.5% were ex-militants; 75.8% earned between 50,000-99,000 naira, 20.8% earned between 100,000-149,000 naira, and only 3.4% earned less than 50,000 naira (see Table 1 below).

The descriptive survey design is adopted for this study. Its overriding concern is to examine the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was drawn using the Taro Yamani's formula, which is represented thus: $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$; where n = sample size sought, N = population size, and e = level of significance (Chukwuemeka and Chukwuemeka, 2012). Below is a composition of the sample size:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 1,893,934 / 1 + 1,893,934 (0.05)^2 \\ &= 1,893,934 / 1 + 1,893,934 (0.0025) \\ &= 1,893,934 / 1 + 4,734.835 \\ &= 1,893,934 / 4,735.84 \\ &= 399.92 \\ &= 400 \text{ (approximated)} \end{aligned}$$

Based on the sample size of 400, the sample size of each of the States of the Niger Delta region is further determined thus:

Port Harcourt LGA's sample size: $538,558 \times 400/1,893,934 = 113.73 = 114$

Obio/Akpor LGA's sample size: $462,350 \times 400/1,893,934 = 97.65 = 98$

Asari-Toru LGA's sample size: $219,787 \times 400/1,893,934 = 46.42 = 46$

Ahoada West LGA's sample size: $249,232 \times 400/1,893,934 = 52.64 = 53$

Gokana LGA's sample size: $233,813 \times 400/1,893,934 = 49.38 = 49$

Eleme LGA's sample size: $190,194 \times 400/1,893,934 = 40.17 = 40$

The random and purposively sampling techniques will be adopted in collecting data for the study. This is to enhance precision and thoroughness in the complex distribution of the population of people of Rivers State, Nigeria. In all, four hundred (400) respondents will be randomly and purposively selected for the study. Those who were purposively selected were ex-militants. Data for the study were obtained through the questionnaire. This allowed for similar structured questions to be asked or administered to the 400 respondents selected for the study. Though the questionnaire is a structured response model with fixed-alternative format of dichotomous and multi-choice options, it allowed for easy collection of data from the respondents.

The simple percentages and chi-square test tool was adopted as analytical instruments in the study. The simple percentages incorporate tools of simple descriptive statistics such as tables, frequency, and percentages to present and analyze data that will be obtained from the respondents. Then, the chi-square test tool will be used in testing the hypotheses and drawing inferences.

Table 1. Respondents' Socio-economic Characteristics

Socio-demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	247	64.3
	Male	137	35.7
	Total	384	100.0
Age	18-35 years	106	27.6
	36-54 years	232	60.4
	55 and above years	46	12.0
	Total	384	100.0
Local Government of Residence	Port Harcourt LGA	108	28.1
	Obio/Akpor LGA	105	27.3
	Asari-Toru LGA	44	11.5
	Ahoada West LGA	51	13.3
	Gokana LGA	47	12.2
	Eleme LGA	29	7.6
	Total	384	100.0
Marital Status	Single	64	16.7
	Married	281	73.2
	Divorced	11	2.9
	Separated	13	3.4
	Widowed	15	3.9
	Total	384	100.0
Education	No formal education	17	4.4
	Primary	219	57.0
	Secondary	116	30.2
	Tertiary	32	8.3

	Total	384	100.0
Religion	Christianity	324	84.4
	Islam	13	3.4
	Traditional Religion	28	7.3
	Others	19	4.9
	Total	384	100.0
Occupation	Civil/public servant	194	50.5
	Fisherman/Farmer	49	12.8
	Ex-militant	21	5.5
	Trader/Artisan	64	16.7
	Oil company worker	56	14.6
	Total	384	100.0
Monthly Income	Less than N50,000	13	3.4
	N50,000-N99,000	291	75.8
	N100,000 – N149,000	80	20.8
	Total	384	100.0

3. Results

The relationship between the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria, is presented in Table 2. It shows that 53.7% of the respondents disagreed that the amnesty program is an avenue for rehabilitating militant youths in Niger Delta region of Nigeria, whereas 46.3% of the respondents agreed that the amnesty program is an avenue for rehabilitating militant youths in Niger Delta region of Nigeria; 53.7% of the respondents disagreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in information and computer technology (ICT) in Rivers State, Nigeria, whereas 46.3% agreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in information and computer technology (ICT) in Rivers State of Nigeria; 93.7% of the total respondents disagreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in Rivers State in oil and gas businesses and 6.3% of the total respondents agreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in Rivers State in oil and gas business; 89.3% of the total respondents disagreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in Rivers State in the management of the Niger Delta environment, whereas 10.7% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the amnesty program has helped in training of youths in Rivers State in the management of the Niger Delta environment.

Furthermore, 78.9% % of the total respondents disagreed that the amnesty program has helped in counseling ex-militant youths in Rivers State to shun violence and 21.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the amnesty program has helped in counseling ex-militant youths in Rivers State to shun violence; 61.4% of the total respondents disagreed that Youths who participated in the amnesty program are very careful about life and love peace now, whereas 38.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed that Youths who participated in the amnesty program are very careful about life and love peace now; 64.9% of the total respondents disagreed that youths rehabilitated through the amnesty program are likely not to reoffend or commit crime again, whereas 35.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that youths rehabilitated through the amnesty program are likely not to reoffend or commit crime again; and 85.9% of the total respondents disagreed that the lives of youths who participated in the amnesty programme have changed for good, whereas 14.1% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the lives of youths who participated in the amnesty programme have changed for good (see Table 2).

Table 2. Relationship between the amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria (n = 384)

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The amnesty programme is an avenue for rehabilitating militant youths in Niger Delta region of Nigeria	33 (8.6%)	173 (45.1%)	153 (39.8%)	25 (6.5%)
Training of youths in information and computer technology (ICT)	33 (8.6)	173 (45.1)	153 (39.8)	25 (6.5)
Training of youths in Rivers State in oil and gas business	45 (11.7)	315 (82.0)	13 (3.4)	11 (2.9)
Training of youths in the management of the Niger Delta environment	30 (7.8)	313 (81.5)	19 (4.9)	22 (5.7)
Counseling ex-militant youths in Rivers State to shun violence	27 (7.0)	276 (71.9)	58 (15.1)	23 (6.0)
Participants are very careful about life and love peace now	22 (5.7)	214 (55.7)	129 (33.6)	19 (4.9)
Youths rehabilitated are likely not to reoffend or commit crime again	120 (31.3)	129 (33.6)	131 (34.1)	4 (1.0)
Youths who participated in the programme have changed for good	63 (16.4)	267 (69.5)	37 (9.6)	17 (4.4)

The relationship between the amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria, is presented in Table 3. It shows that 80.1% of the total respondents disagreed that youths who participated in the amnesty program have acquired adequate vocational training and skills for their survival in the society whereas 19.9% of the total respondents agreed that youths who participated in the amnesty program have acquired adequate vocational training and skills for their survival in the society; 68.7% of the total respondents disagreed that the training or skills acquired by ex-militants during the amnesty program made them employable, whereas 31.3% of the total respondents agreed that the training or skills acquired by ex-militants during the amnesty program made them employable; 85.4.0% of the total respondents disagreed that Ex-militants were effectively trained during the amnesty program to acquire employable skills whereas 14.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed that Ex-militants were effectively trained during the amnesty program to acquire employable skills; and 93.5% of the total respondents agreed that ex-militants have acquired some skills and training needed for their economic empowerment through the amnesty program and only 6.5% of the total respondents strongly disagreed that Ex-militants has acquired some skills and training needed for their economic empowerment through the amnesty programme.

Table 3. Amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria (n = 384)

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Participants have acquired adequate vocational training and skills	120 (31.1)	188 (49.0)	58 (15.1)	18 (4.7)
The training and skills acquired by ex-militants made them employable	50 (13.0)	214 (55.7)	110 (28.6)	10 (2.6)
Trained ex-militants acquired employable skills	36 (9.4)	292 (76.0)	34 (8.9)	22 (5.7)
Trained ex-militants acquired some skills which empowered economically	9 (2.3)	16 (4.2)	317 (82.6)	42 (10.9)

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4. Chi-square analysis of the relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	411.112 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	251.786	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	104.342	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	384		

a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .72.

Table 4 above shows the Pearson Chi-Square analysis of the relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. From the result obtained, $X^2=411.112$, $df=9$ and p -value (0.000). Since the Pearson Chi-Square p -value (0.000) is found to be less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5. Chi-square analysis of the relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.437 ^a	9	.030
Likelihood Ratio	18.180	9	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.326	1	.250
N of Valid Cases	384		

a. 5 cells (31.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .71.

Table 5 above shows the Pearson Chi-Square analysis of the relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria. From the result obtained, $X^2=18.437$, $df=9$ and p -value (0.030). Since the Pearson Chi-Square p -value (0.030) is found to be less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria.

4. Discussion

This study examined amnesty programme and rehabilitation of youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were tested in the study. The first hypothesis which held that there is no significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria was rejected. The study rather found that there is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. Given that rehabilitation of militant youths is accommodated in the human capital development component of the amnesty

programme, this finding corroborates the findings of the human capital theorists, such as Schultz, Sakamota and Powers, and Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, who held that formal education or training is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population [22], [24]. The provision of formal education and skills acquisition through the rehabilitation agenda is seen as a productive investment in human capital. For Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations.

Similarly, the second hypothesis which held that there is no significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria was rejected. The study rather found that there is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with that of Akinwale that the amnesty is followed by human capital development agenda with state interest in vocational training and employment generation. In this study, a majority of the respondents has agreed that the ex-militants will acquire skills and training needed for their economic empowerment.

Findings indicate that psychopathic prisoners have 2.5 times higher probability of being released from jail than undiagnosed ones, even though they are more likely to recidivate. It has been shown that punishment and behavior modification techniques do not improve the behavior of a psychopath. Psychopathic individuals have been regularly observed to become more cunning and better able to hide their behaviour. It has been suggested that traditional therapeutic approaches actually make psychopaths if not worse, then far more adept at manipulating others and concealing their behavior. They are generally considered to be not only incurable but also untreatable [29]. Psychopaths also have a markedly distorted sense of the potential consequences of their actions, not only for others, but also for themselves. They do not, for example, deeply recognize the risk of being caught, disbelieved or injured as a result of their behavior [30].

From a radical point of view, rehabilitation is seen as an attempt by those in power to impose a repressive system of social control over vulnerable individuals. Such a critical perspective rejects the positivistic view of crime that focuses on individuals while ignoring greater social conditions of disadvantage. What is challenged is the notion that the offending behavior stems from a defect in the personality of the prisoner, who is considered amenable to change or rehabilitation within the prison environment. Correctional institutions strip inmates of all of their familiar social and cultural supports around which their personal identity had previously been centered. Any program of rehabilitation within prison must first overcome these devastating processes. Some, like David Rothman, reject the possibility of rehabilitation outright, due in part to the relative powerlessness of the prisoner to give or withhold consent to such efforts and because of the incongruous nature of the environment within which it is offered.

In general, rehabilitation means using rehabilitative measures rather than punishment to address criminals in the prison system. Rehabilitation criminal justice focuses on helping the offender understand their wrongs and prepares them to re-enter society as a reformed person. To do this, rehabilitative programs must target the problems that caused the offenders to turn to crime in the first place. The factors that can affect crime rates are referred to as environmental influences. Environmental influences such as alcohol and drug use, poverty, and lack of education can both predict and give insight into the crime issues in a community, showing the areas where rehabilitative programs need to help the prisoners of those communities the most. This usually requires the use of different types of training and treatments to help the offender become ready to be a part of their community. The goal of rehabilitation is to reduce recidivism, or the action or tendency of an offender to commit a crime again upon release. Rehabilitation programmes in the Niger Delta region by way of the Amnesty Programme does not in any way target or address the problems that led to youth militancy in the region. These problems include oil violence and its concomitant issues.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. It has been demonstrated in this work that there is a significant relationship between amnesty

programme and rehabilitation of militant youths in Rivers State, Nigeria. Based on this finding, more concerted efforts should be geared or directed at giving the amnesty programme all it needs for functional operation. Put differently, rehabilitation of militant youths in the Niger Delta region through the amnesty programme should be taken seriously by the government and other stakeholders in the region and the entire country.

Also, the study has demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between amnesty programme and training of militant youths for self-economic empowerment in Rivers State, Nigeria. Considering the amount of money sunk into the amnesty programme, the government and all other stakeholders should place premium on the programme and utilize it as a springboard for economic empowerment of the youths of the Niger Delta region. It is obvious that if the youths of the region are gainfully empowered and employed, the tendency for criminal and violent activities will reduce to the barest minimum. Therefore, the government should see the amnesty programme as a way of rehabilitating the militant youths toward economic sufficiency and not just a ploy to pull them out of the creeks.

The study found that there is no significant relationship between amnesty programme and reoffending or increased criminal attitude among militant youths who participated in the programme in Rivers State, Nigeria. This apparently suggest that the rehabilitation package of the amnesty programme is lacking essential ingredients or components of fully integrating the ex-militants into the society and ensuring that their violent or criminal inclinations and attitudes are drastically reduced. The programme should be repackaged to ensure that the participants are efficiently trained to shun further violence or criminal activities in the society, thereby ensuring sustenance of peace.

Peace building is a sure springboard for societal progress and development. The militants' acceptance and endorsement of the amnesty programme should be highly appreciated and encouraged. In fact, that is the highest price the militants have paid for the peace and progress of the region. Therefore, the government should make sure that the post-amnesty programme is dutifully pursued and executed for this peace to be sustained. The Niger Delta region will thrive in peaceful atmosphere and not crises.

5. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the amnesty programme has not effectively ensured rehabilitation of youths in the state. Of significant importance, the rehabilitation agenda of the amnesty programme should be significantly enhanced or improved to efficiently train the youths in skills acquisition for self-economic empowerment. What is required for this sustenance is the necessary political will on the part of the federal government of Nigeria. One important way of demonstrating this political will is for the amnesty programme to be backed by enabling law so as to continue the Yar'Adua/Jonathan's administrative policies that enabled the programme. As it is the culture of Nigeria to abandon laudable projects that do not favour the political class, the current administration is contemplating abandoning the amnesty programme on the flimsy argument that it is costly to maintain, even when the needed funds are not made available for the programme. This inappropriate abandonment can be stopped by giving the programme a strong legal backing.

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