

YOUTHS' PERCEPTION AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TOWARDS JUNGLE JUSTICE DURING ENDSARS PROTESTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Studies have investigated jungle justice, however, little is known about youths' perception and contributing factors toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Convergence Theory. A descriptive survey research design was used to conveniently select 291 youths' (mean age: 18.33, SD: 8.43) completing measures of self-designed questionnaire. Results showed that majority of the respondents' have positive perception toward jungle justice during EndSARS protest. Finally, the result also found that unemployment, youth frustration-aggression, poverty, corruption/ bad state of the country and lack of trust in the government are major contributing factors toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study recommended that behavioural scientists should organise programmes (seminars and workshops) for youths on the destructive tendency associated with jungle justice. In this way, they would have proper perspective for the rule of law and Fundamental human rights protection.

Key words: EndSARS, Nigeria, Jungle justice, youth perception

INTRODUCTION

The EndSARS protest publicly started on the 8th of October 2020 among youths across many states in Nigeria. The protest which was geared toward the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force against the brutalisation of innocent citizens, unlawful arrests of citizens, extortion of citizens and many other illicit allegations levelled against the dreaded squad over the years (Washington Post Oct, 4 2020). The protest was triggered by a trending video showing a SARS operative shooting a young Nigerian in front of a Hotel in Delta State and in the process took away the victim's car (Washington Post, 2020). Also, on Monday 5th October, 2020, another video surfaced on the social media of a SARS police officer who shot a 20-year-old upcoming musician named Daniel Chibuike without any identified crime (Washington Post, 2020). These two incidents brought about public outrage and anger which led many young Nigerians alongside activists and celebrities to mobilise themselves on social media to stage a nationwide protest to the Federal Government to disband the special anti-robbery squad (SARS) for their atrocities committed against innocent Nigerian citizens. cursory observation shows that the first one week of the protest was relatively peaceful and accepted by all citizens of the country as well as the political class in Nigeria. This made the Inspector General of Police after consultation from the president of the country to disband the special anti-robbery squad (SARS) and within some few days replaced the squad with Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT). This development did not go well with the protesters; hence new demands including ones bothering on end bad governance, end corruption, and end huge pay for legislators trended on social media and protest grounds across the country. The additional demands caused an unwelcome challenge for the federal government of Nigeria and governors in the states. However, the ugly incidents on the 20th of October 2020 where some innocent protesters were brutally killed by military personnel at the Lekki Toll gate in Lagos State (Washington Post 2020) caused new dynamics of agitations which subsequently resulted in the protest being hijacked by miscreants and thugs who then attack and engage in jungle justice especially to police officers across the states in Nigeria.

Sanni (2017) defined jungle justice as a method of punishment placed on a person who is believed to have committed a crime without some form of recourse to any legal authority. In this study, jungle justice simply means a situation where a group of lawless or non-law-abiding set of

persons give unto themselves, the power of being in charge of punishing individual either through ill-fated extra-judicial killings, horrendous beating or public humiliation and not taking into cognizance the rule of law and the fundamental rights of the alleged persons. Jungle justice is a well-known word in the Sub-Saharan African countries especially in Nigeria and Cameroon (Kpae & Adishi 2017) where there is total disregard for the rule of law in the treatment of a suspect or offenders. The situation is even worrisome in Nigeria because of the problem of mass illiteracy, unemployment, inequality, and high crime rates. These problems are further confronted by the issues of corruption, poor governance and the harsh economic environment that many people have to survive. This situation has increased the desperation and frustration in many people, which has made many people resort to mob justice as the only way they can express their displeasure and dissatisfaction. Even disturbing is the fact that these issues infringe on the basic rights of people and overpower the critical arm of the government that is supposed to be responsible for defending these human rights when they are violated. While a reasonable percentage of crime is good for every society, crime is an integral part of a safe society (Durkheim, 1951). However, as crimes become a threat to human life and social order, immediate measures must be taken to minimize their persistence and proliferation, or society will degenerate into what Thomas Hobbes described as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. The EndSARS protests witness various degree of jungle justice to police officers, government properties as well as private organisations when the protest was hijacked by thugs and miscreants. For instance, the inspector General of Police Mohammed Adamu revealed that 22 policemen were killed while 205 police stations were destroyed across the country with Lagos state badly hit among the states (Oyeleke, 2020). The Nigeria port authority was burned down in Marina, same as some transit buses of Lagos state government also burned down. The hoodlums also attacked and burned down private property linked to popular politicians in Lagos state such as Television Continental (TVC), the Nation Newspaper as well as looted shops of innocent citizens and carted away millions of goods all in the name of EndSARS protests (Folarin, 2020). The COVID-19 palliatives in various warehouses across many states were also looted and many prisoners set free in Edo and some states in Nigeria (Punch Newspaper, 2020). All these jungle justices melted out on government and private organisations during the protest becomes worrisome among behavioural scientists and concerned stakeholders. This is because these ugly developments have serious negative implications for Nigeria as a country to be in a state of anarchy, infrastructural defects, increase violation of fundamental human right and increase crime rate. Studies (Chalya et.al 2015; Kpae & Adishi 2017; Nwakpu, Ogbodo, Nwakpu & Oyeleke 2020; Ilori 2020) have investigated jungle justice from a theoretical and empirical angle. However, to the researcher knowledge's, no study has examined youth's perception and contributing factors of jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. Outcome of the study will help design mechanisms that would help manage and sustain a peaceful protest devoid of jungle justice in any futuristic protests in Nigeria and in the world. Therefore, this study hopes to investigate youths' perception and contributing factors towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The present study is guided by the following questions:

- What is the level of perception of jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria?
- What are the contributing factors towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria?

Concept of Jungle Justice

Different scholars have defined the concept of jungle justice in different forms. In the word of Salihu and Gholami (2018), jungle justice referred to as a 'mob justice', 'mob lynching', or 'mob action'. For Jacobs and Wright (2006), this definition may also be called 'street justice.' According to Kpae and Adishi (2017) jungle justice is an act of disregarding the rule of law and

taking matters into one's hands or a situation in which the masses take it upon themselves to give judgment on a matter without listening or without the right to a defence. In the words of Sanni (2017), jungle justice is a method of punishment placed on a person who is believed to have committed a crime without some form of recourse to any legal authority. For his part, Abati (2015) claimed that jungle justice is a situation in which a group of lawless or non-lawful individuals gives themselves the power to be in charge of punishing the alleged offenders and not considering the rule of law and the fundamental rights of the alleged offender. Chima (2016) noted that jungle justice is a complete breach of the basic human rights that are generally open to individuals regardless of the alleged crime, which criminalizes the actor by committing a series of wrongdoings stripping the accused naked, torturing the accused, setting the accused on fire or murdering the accused.

Onyebuchi (2014) simply put it as a type of extra-judicial killing where the victim is deprived of the rule of law and justice is done in a barbarous and appalling manner, typically by stoning or burning the person in the fullness of the public, rendering it synonymous with injustice. This Day News (2014: 16 May) submits that it is a condition in which an angry mob 'takes into their possession the right to inflict punishment on the suspected perpetrator of a heinous crime'. From all these conceptualisations, jungle justice as defined by this present study is a situation where some group of people put law in their own hands by beating, burning of human being as well as properties without taking into cognizance the rule of law and fundamental human right of such individuals.

Concept of EndSARS

The word EndSARS was first used in 2017 after a viral police murder of some innocent citizens of the country. SARS, an acronym of the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad is an integral arm of Nigerian Police created in 1992 to combat the menace of kidnapping, arm robbery and other social vices in the society. Since its creation and up till it was scrapped, it has the history of molesting, extorting and brutalising innocent citizens in an unprofessional manner. The EndSARS slogan resurfaced after a tweet by Chinyelugo (@AfricaOfficial2) went viral, sounding an alarm that "SARS just shot a young boy dead." Hours later, mobile phone recordings with the hashtag #EndSARS began trending, documenting the gruesome scene of the unidentified young man's lifeless body abandoned on the roadside and citizens pursuing the officers, who they witnessed steal the man's Lexus SUV. Also, a 20-year-old upcoming musician named Daniel Chibuike who was also killed by SAR was the incidents that triggered the EndSARS slogan. In less than a week the youths were able to mobilised themselves for a protest which was peaceful in different strategic places across Nigeria. Despite SAR being disbanded by the Inspector general of police, IGP Mohammed Adamu and replaced by Special Weapons and Tactics unit (SWAT). The EndSARS protests did not stop across the country rather more stringent demands were further requested by the protesters. This did not go well with the federal government and some states governor and this resulted in the popular Tuesday 20th October massacre of Innocent protesters who were killed by military personnel at the popular Lekki toll gate in Lagos state (Washington Post, 2020). The resultant effect of the barbaric act was the hijacked of thugs who killed police officers, destroyed government and private properties and also loot many innocent citizens shops and carted away millions of goods. Although, the tension of the EndSARS protest has gone down in the country, it remains to be seen if the protest would continue in no short time.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The study was anchored on the Convergence Theory. The theory is one of the mob psychology theory proposed by Freud in Group Psychology and Ego Analysis, which holds that crowd activity is not the result of the crowd itself, but is brought into the Crowd by individuals. Thus,

crowds amount to a convergence of like-minded individuals. An example of the convergence theory shows that there is no homogeneous behaviour within a repeated practice, often seen when an immigrant population is becoming prevalent in a historically homogeneous area, and members of the established community join together are intimidating others who are attempting to move into their communities. In such instances, the convergence theorists' claim, the crowd itself does not produce racial hostility or violence; rather the hostilities have been simmering among many locals for some time now. A crowd then emerges from the convergence of citizens who condemn the existence of these neighbours. Convergence theory maintains that crowd activity as such is not irrational; rather, people in crowds express established beliefs and values so that mob responses are the logical product of widespread common sentiment.

Relating this theory to this study, The EndSARS protest was seen by some people majorly hoodlums and thugs as an opportunity to vent their anger against the society through the use of jungle justice and other violent means. They perceive the protest as a means to form their own cliques and group all in the name of engaging in a peaceful protest. The inability of the peaceful protester not to take cognisance of some hoodlums who does not have the like-mind in the protesters could have contributed to the increased rate of jungle justice that marred the peaceful protest of the EndSARS.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This is because data were collected from a representative sample of the study population without any form of manipulating of the variables.

Setting and population

The study was conducted at the polytechnic Ibadan main campus in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria. The Polytechnic Ibadan which is a state-owned tertiary institution was founded in 1970 and currently has five faculties. The justification for the setting is that large number of individuals who could have participated in the EndSARS protest could be found in this setting. Furthermore, youths that are largely acclaimed leaders of tomorrow constituted the targeted population in the tertiary institution.

Measures

The study used a self-designed questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Section A of the questionnaire entails the socio demographic factors of the respondents which consist of age, gender, marital status, and religion affiliation. Section B of the instrument consists of 10 items perception of jungle justice while section C consists of 10 item contributing factors to jungle justice. The part B of the questionnaire was scored as 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree, 3 - Strongly disagree, 4 – Disagree. Low score on the scale means negative perception while high score on the scale means positive perception. Two experts from the social science domain did a face and content validity of the instrument. Furthermore, a pilot study was conducted using 15 youths that were not part of the main study. The study got a reliability coefficient of 0.69 for perception of jungle justice and 0.83 for items measuring contributing factors to jungle justice.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the polytechnic management through the Dean Student affair. Furthermore, the researcher explained the goals and purpose of the study to consented participants and also assures them of their confidentiality of their responses. The

respondents were also informed that they can withdraw from the study anytime they so wish to do so. In selecting the participants, purposive sampling technique was first used to select two faculties in the study. This is because these two faculties were the only one currently on academic section as of the time of the study. Thereafter the researcher conveniently selected 150 respondents from each faculty totalling about three hundred respondents. The participants completed the questionnaire during their lecture free time. Though there was no time limit, it took an average of 5 minutes for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. Out of the total number of 300 questionnaires that were distributed, 291 were retrieved out of which 9 were not returned. This yielded a response rate of 97.0% from the total distributed questionnaires.

Data analysis

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 24 version. Descriptive statistics were conducted to analyse demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as the research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (N=291)

Category	Level	N(%)
Age		Mean age (18.33) SD (8.43)
Gender	Male Female	106(36.4) 183(62.9)
Marital status	Single Married	284(97.6) 6(2.1)
Religion	Christian Islam Traditional Other	194(66.7) 92(31.6) 1(.3) 2(.7)
I joined the EndSAR protest?	Yes No	93(32.0) 191(65.6)

Fieldwork: 2020.

The table above illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study. Respondents' age ranges from 16-39year with a mean age (18.33years) and SD (8.43). On gender 106(36.4%) were males, 183(62.9%) were females while 2(.7%) did not indicate their gender. In term of marital status majority 284(97.6%) were single, 6(2.1%) were married while 1(.3%) did not indicate his or her marital status. In term of religion affiliation, majority 194(66.7%) practiced Christianity, 92(31.6%) practiced Islam, 1(.3%) practiced traditional, 2(.7%) practiced other religion while 2(.7%) failed to indicate their religion affiliation. Lastly, question on if respondents joined EndSARS protest revealed that 93(32.0%) said they join the EndSARS protest, majority 91(65.6%) did not join the EndSARS protest while 7(2.4%) did not disclose if they join EndSARS protest or not.

Research Question One

What is the level of perception of youths' toward jungle justice during the EndSAR protest in Nigeria?

The research question was analysed using mean, standard deviation and simple frequency counts. First, the mean and standard deviation of overall score on perception of jungle justice scale was calculated. These were found to be scores of 23.33 and 4.42, respectively. The statistics of one standard deviation above and below the mean ($\bar{X} \pm 1SD$) was then used to categorise the participants into low and high perception. The lower cut-off point was set at $23.33 - 4.42 = 18.91$ (approximated to a score of 19) and the lower cut-off point was set at $23.33 + 4.42 = 27.75$ (approximated to a score of 28). Going by this procedure, any respondent with score between 10-19 was categorised as having positive attitude scores while scores that ranges from 28-34 were regarded as negative attitude.

Table 2a: Mean score and standard deviation of level of perception of youths' toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception	291	10.00	34.00	23.33	4.42680
	291				

Table 2b: Level of perception of youths' toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest

Perception	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	10 – 19	240	82.5
Negative	28 – 34	51	17.5

Table 2b depicts the level of perception of youths toward jungle justice during the EndSARS. The table showed that 82.5% of youth had positive perception toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest and only 17.5% had negative attitude toward jungle justice. It therefore can be said that the level of perception of jungle justice during EndSARS protest among youths were positive.

Research Question Two

What are the contributing factors responsible for jungle justice during the EndSARS protests in Nigeria?

Table 3: Contributing factors towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protest

Factors	Frequency	Ranking
Youth Frustration-aggression	158(54.3)	2 nd
Unemployment	189(64.9)	1 st
Poverty	137(47.1%)	3 rd
Disregard for fundamental human rights	61(21.0%)	6 th
illiteracy	41(14.1%)	7 th
Lack of trust in the government	70(24.1%)	5 th
Lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies	39(13.4%)	8 th
Corruption/ bad state of the country	107(36.8%)	4 th
Lack of trust on the Nigeria judicial system	24(8.2%)	9 th
Cultural beliefs	2(.7%)	10 th

Table 3 shows that 158(54.3%) of the respondents assert that youth frustration-aggression was the cause of jungle justice during the EndSARS, majority 189(64.9%) of the respondents affirmed that unemployment is the factor responsible for jungle justice, 137(47.1%) asserted that poverty was the factor responsible for jungle justice, 61(21.0%) of the respondents submitted that disregard for fundamental human rights was the cause of jungle justice, 41(14.1%) affirmed that illiteracy was the factor responsible for jungle justice, 70(324.1%) affirmed that lack of trust in the government was the factor responsible for jungle justice, 39(36.8%) of the respondents revealed that lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies was factor responsible for jungle justice. Furthermore, 107(36.8%) of the respondents affirmed that Corruption/ bad state of the country was the factor responsible for jungle justice, 24(8.2%) of the respondents' revealed that Lack of trust on the Nigeria judicial system was the factor responsible for jungle justice while just 2(.7%) of the respondents affirmed that cultural belief was the factor responsible for jungle justice during the EndSARS protest. It can be concluded from this study that Unemployment, Youth Frustration-aggression, poverty, Corruption/ bad state of the country and Lack of trust in the government are major contributing factors that caused jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The study examined youths' perception and contributing factors toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study found that majority of the youths' have positive attitude toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest. The study was not in line with Nwakpu, Ogbodo, Nwakpu and Oyeleke (2020) where they found that respondents' always feel pity whenever they see an images and reaction of jungle justice which portray that they have negative attitude toward jungle justice. The findings did not corroborate Barron and Madden (2004) who found that majority of respondents' in their study holds negative attitude toward jungle justice. The justification why the findings were so is because many Nigeria youths perceive the government as not be fair by not providing the basic amenities necessary for their survival. Hence, they hold positive perception towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protest as a way of retaliation to the government who they perceive has failed them.

The study also found that unemployment, youth frustration-aggression, poverty, corruption/ bad state of the country and lack of trust in the government are major contributing factors towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study findings were in line with Ilori (2020) revealed that people out of anger, loss of lives and properties, frustration, lack of police trust, and persistent insecurity are factors responsible for jungle justice. The study was also in line with Alemika and Chukwuma (2000), Ubabukoh (2013) and Abati (2002) who found that Illiteracy, economic disparities and disenchantment and anger in the societal problems are factors responsible for jungle justice. The rationale why the findings was so is because over the years in Nigeria, the country has been battling with the problems of unemployment, corruption/ bad state of the country and poverty, which has contributed to youth frustration-aggression, and lack of trust in the government which in the long run has hinder development in Nigeria despite the country known as giant of Africa and blessed with enormous resources.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the study concluded that youths' have positive attitude toward jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study also concluded that unemployment, youth frustration-aggression, poverty, corruption/ bad state of the country and lack of trust in the government are the contributing factors that contributed to jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The implications of these findings will mean that jungle justice will continue to be accepted by youths in any futuristic protest especially if the menace of unemployment, youth

frustration-aggression, poverty, corruption/ bad state of the country and lack of trust in the government continue to exist in Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that behavioural scientists should organise programmes (seminars and workshops) for youths on the destructive tendency associated with jungle justice. In this way, they would have proper perspective for the rule of law and Fundamental human rights protection. It is also recommended that government and policy makers should create lucrative jobs for teeming youths in the country, prosecute and jail any person caught in any corruption-related activities. This measure will therefore increase citizen trust in the government and reduces youth frustration-aggression which invariably will promote peace and good governance in the society.

Limitation and suggestion for further studies

Despite the relevance of this study, it is still faced with some limitations. Firstly, the study surveyed only one state and considered a relatively small sample size. Hence generalisation of the study findings to other states in Nigeria might be challenging. Despite this reality, the study findings are still very relevant and will contribute to the body of existing literature on youth perception and contributing factors toward jungle justice during EndSARS in Nigeria and elsewhere. Secondly, little literature was found on this subject matter, hence this study stands as a wakeup call for more study on this subject matter. Thirdly, the method of data gathering might not be adequate to capture the true feelings of the respondents. It is therefore recommended that future-related studies should endeavour to increase the sample size and scope of the study as well as investigate more psychosocial related variables that could predict jungle justice or mob behaviour during EndSARS in Nigeria. Future studies should improve method of data collection by inculcating some form of qualitative data i.e interview, FGD that could increase the robust generalisation of the study findings to other youths' in Nigeria and the world at large.

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APPENDIX RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The study is aimed at investigating youth perception and contributing factors towards jungle justice during the EndSARS protests in Nigeria. The questionnaire would take less of your time to complete. I understand that this is a substantial investment of your time hence your valuable response will contribute immensely to the study. Please, respond honestly to the questionnaire as your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used only for research purposes. This is not a test, so there is no right or wrong answer.

Your maximum cooperation is hereby solicited.

Thanks.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Instruction: Kindly indicate your response by putting a tick (✓) appropriately and fill the gap where necessary.

1. **Age as at last birthday:**
2. **Gender:** Male () Female ()
3. **Marital status:** Single () Married () Cohabiting () Widow/widower () Separated/Divorced ()
4. **Religious Affiliation:** Christianity () Islam () Traditional () Other ()
5. **I joined the EndSAR protest:** Yes () No ()

SECTION B

Instruction: From the listed items, please tick in the column of your choice. 1- Strongly agree 2- Agree, 3 - Strongly disagree, 4 - Disagree

	ITEMS	1	2	3	4
6.	Jungle justice during EndSARS is unacceptable				
7.	Jungle justice in the EndSARS shows youths are angry with the government				
8.	Jungle justice during EndSARS will make the government realize their wrongdoings				
9.	Jungle justice is purely unacceptable and should not be encouraged during any protest				
10.	Killing the police is a way of stopping police brutality				
11.	Jungle justice melted out on the Police, government and private properties were justified in the EndSARS protest				
12.	Jungle justice melted out on the police is a criminal act				
13.	Jungle justice is justified during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria				
14.	I will always support jungle justice in any protest				
15.	Every person caught engaging in jungle justice during the EndSARS protest should be jailed				

SECTION C

Instruction: Tick below factors that you think could have caused jungle justice during the EndSARS protest in Nigeria (you can tick maximum of 3 options)

Perceived factor contributing to jungle justice during EndSARS protest in Nigeria	RESPONSE
Youth Frustration-aggression	
Unemployment	
Poverty	
Disregard for fundamental human rights	
illiteracy	
Lack of trust in the government	
Lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies	
Corruption/ bad state of the country	
Lack of trust on the Nigeria judicial system	
Cultural beliefs	