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Relevance of Islamic Tenets in Combating Gangsterism Among Youths in Lagos State: #EndSARS# in Focus

Jamiu Adelaja Oseni
Department of Religions and Peace Studies, College of Humanities, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria

Olanrewaju Shuarau Hashim
Department of Religions and Peace Studies, College of Humanities, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria

Adeola Lateef Rauf
Department of Religions and Peace Studies, College of Humanities, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Youth occupy a central position in societal development and are widely regarded as future leaders and agents of positive change. However, this perception has increasingly been challenged by the growing involvement of youths in violent criminal activities such as gangsterism, cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and banditry. In Lagos State, these challenges became evident particularly during and after the 2020 #EndSARS protests, which exposed deeper issues of youth marginalisation, social discontent, and organised youth violence within urban spaces. Against this background, this study investigates the factors driving youth gangster formation in Lagos State and examines the relevance of Islamic ethical teachings as moral and social framework for addressing the phenomenon. The study discusses key concepts such as the worldview on gangsterism, Islamic perspective on youth, implications of gang formation, and factors responsible for youth involvement in gangster activities. It further analyses the socio-cultural, psychological, technological, and environmental factors, including poverty, peer influence, weak moral orientation, and the misuse of digital and social media that predispose youths to gangsterism as well as the consequences of such activities for victims and society at large. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach; consist of primary and secondary data through questionnaires, and direct observation. Data were collected from youths across the five indigenous divisions (IBILE) of the State. Findings reveal that socio-economic deprivation, moral disorientation, peer pressure, and unregulated exposure to digital platforms significantly contribute to youth involvement in gangsterism. The study argues that Islamic tenets, which emphasises moral discipline, justice, peaceful coexistence, community responsibility, and non-violence, offer viable pathways for youth reorientation and crime prevention. Thus, the paper enlightens youths on the risks associated with gang involvement while highlighting constructive, non-violent means, rooted in Islamic principles, through which they can pursue their aspirations and maximise their potential as responsible members of society.

KEYWORDS: Relevance, Islamic Tenet, Gangsterism, Youth-Gang, Combat, End-Sars

INTRODUCTION

Youth have traditionally been regarded not only as the future leaders but also as the drivers of national development worldwide. This perception is rooted in the popular belief that young people possess the energy, creativity, and resilience required to sustain a nation's social, political, and economic progress. In Lagos State, Nigeria's commercial and cultural hub, youths have historically played pivotal roles in shaping civic engagement, public discourse, and societal change.

However, this idealised image has increasingly been challenged by their involvement in serial degrees of violence and criminal activities, including gangsterism, cultism, and other forms of organised crimes. Such developments undermine social cohesion and threaten the moral, economic, and political foundations of communities. The paradox of youth as both agents of change and participants in violence has raised concerns among scholars, policymakers, and the general public, questioning their capacity to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Thus, the circumstances surrounding the 2020 #EndSARS pandemonium and protests further intensified this debate, arising from widespread frustration over systemic injustice, police brutality, and socio-economic marginalization (Olaseni and Oladele, 2023). In Lagos State, youth participation in these protests demonstrated both heightened civic consciousness and episodes of violence that necessitate critical reflection. Events such as the tragic Lekki Toll Gate incident exemplified the complex interplay between legitimate civic activism and emerging forms of youth criminality, highlighting broader socio-political challenges confronting Nigerian society.

The proliferation of gangsterism among youths in Lagos is also influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including socio-economic deprivation, peer pressure, weak moral orientation, social exclusion, and unregulated use of digital and social media platforms. These conditions create

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environments in which vulnerable youths may turn to criminal networks for survival, identity formation, or social recognition. Consequently, there is a pressing need to reorient and positively rebrand youth, equipping them with constructive, non-violent strategies for pursuing legitimate demands without necessarily resorting to violence. This necessity is underpinned by the vital and esteemed position of youth in society (Noibi & Oseni, 2018). While youths are widely regarded as agents of change, this role has been distorted in recent times due to rapid societal transformations, particularly technological innovations such as social media, which have reshaped patterns of communication, mobilization, and behavior negatively.

The #EndSARS movement, which culminated in nationwide protests in October 2020, emerged in response to longstanding allegations of human rights violations perpetrated by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian Police Force, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Although SARS as results of these allegations was formally disbanded, but concerns regarding accountability, institutional reform, and broader structural deficiencies within Nigeria's policing and security architecture persist. As the epicenter of the protests and the site of reported use of lethal force against demonstrators, most notably at the Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos State remains a critical reference point in discussions of contemporary civil–state relations and youth activism.

Beyond civic protest, 21st-century societal transformations, particularly technological advancement and the proliferation of social media, have reshaped patterns of youth interaction and mobilization. While these developments have facilitated borderless communication and global connectivity, they have also inadvertently contributed to the formation and expansion of youth gang networks. In Nigeria, such groups manifest in various forms, including cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, and other organised criminal activities. Consequently, youth gangs have attracted sustained scholarly and policy attention due to their disproportionate involvement in violence and social disorder. Although many gang-affiliated youths engage in routine activities similar to those of their non-gang peers, a significant number participate in violent and criminal behaviors that undermine social stability (Patton et al., 2013).

However, between the mid-20th and early 21st centuries, youth gang violence in Nigeria has evolved into a widespread phenomenon cutting across gender, ethnicity, and geographical entity. Lagos State in particular, has experienced persistent incidents of gang-related violence, exemplified by the tragic events of October 20, 2020, at the Lekki–Epe Toll Gate, which symbolized the vulnerability of youth within a volatile socio-political environment. Despite numerous policy interventions and security measures by successive administrations, the proliferation of youth gangs and escalation of violent crime continue unabated (Aluko, 2014). Hence, gangsterism has emerged as a major threat to community safety, social cohesion, and sustainable development in Lagos State, necessitating urgent and sustained intervention.

Addressing this menace requires a comprehensive understanding of the social, environmental, and psychological factors that predispose youths to gang involvement. These factors often emanate from immediate social environments, as well as youths' desire for identity, recognition, protection, and peer acceptance, including socio-economic deprivation, peer influence, social exclusion, and weak moral orientation (The Police Act, 2020, European Union, 2023, Lagos State Government, 2022). In light of this, the present study examines the underlying causes of the increasing prevalence of youth gang formation in Lagos State, assesses its effects on victims and society, and explores the potential of Islamic ethical teachings and moral values as a remedial framework for curbing the recurring incidence of gang violence within the metropolitan areas of the state, particularly in the post-#EndSARS socio-political context.

Gang and Gangsterism: A Conceptual Overview

The rate of gangs' formation among the Nigerian youths generally and Lagos State called for worrisome among different stakeholders, as different gang groups adopt different communicative modes and practices for their operation which usually differ from location to location. Such media includes social media grouping such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter (now X) etc. Yet, due to the multifaceted nature of gang activities and the diversity of methodologies employed such as extortion of money from their victims, receive payment for threatening others or beat someone up to be part of the organized crime, forceful enrolment of membership to join a gang and its illegal activities, attend a gang's swearing-in ceremony and engage in table-talk or a fight with other gang members to mention a few, the group had become a threat to the society. These various groups, according to Kinnes (2000), sometimes carry out their criminal activities on the streets, highways, or get sponsorship through an organized body (such as politicians etc.) or sophisticated syndicate bosses.

However, the concept of gangsterism has been viewed from different perspectives among scholars. Although there is no gainsaying that the term 'gangsterism' is considered as national phenomenon across the geopolitical entity called Nigeria, as there is no free zone in the federation, including Lagos State so set free from the flame of it negative effect and proceeds. Hence, one of the most pressing issues in the urban centers of the Lagos state is the rapid formation of youth-gang groups of different kinds. Thus, the power wielded by these young promising individual gang members often cripples the peace of many communities in the city areas called Lagos state.

Furthermore, the term gangsterism is described according to lexicon definition as the culture belonging to an organized gangs of criminals, usually involving violence. Therefore, a gang, according to Thrashers (1927) cited in the work of Ariadna, et-al (2021) considered it as 'an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. This definition according to these scholars indicates that gangs, is a form of sociability, characterized by a behavior guided by face-to-face encounters, fighting, urban spatial movement as a unit, conflicts with other agents and the planning of gang actions.

To Standing (2005), cited in the work of Karen (2007) gangsterism is postulated as anti-social way of life that pitches loyalty to the gang against loyalty to institutions of civilized society, such as the school, the family, the religious institutions and the justice system. He further notes that the gang culture is regarded as being selfish in nature, as members used to dispossess the rightful owners of their belongings without thought of well-being and unhealthy regard for a would-be victim. Shockingly in this context, gang-groups used killer weapons such as guns, knife, machetes etc. to either instill fear, inflict life-long injury on their victims or killed in some cases where resistance is received.

Therefore, from the various views aforesaid, the concept of gangsterism is observed to be a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by means of a single theory. Perhaps, this is the reason why Wood and Alleyne (2010) argued that gang theory is indeed a combination of deteriorating social structure and bonds, low economic status and inequality of opportunity, and status frustration that could lead to gang free membership. It

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thus means that the nature and activities of gangs are mainly determined by their social context and their intending objectives (Baird, 2012). On the account of the above analysis, gangsterism could be right to conclude and perceived as an unethical, callous and dangerous culture that threatens the existence of law-abiding citizens.

Giving a comprehensive description on the word gang, Kinnes (2000) described it as a criminal group consisting of an organized group of members which has a sense of cohesion, is generally territoriality bound, which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the community and whose members engage in gang-focused activity either individually or collectively. This postulation of Kinnes could therefore be argued to be one of the reasons why teenagers join gang-groups, particularly when they are not socially brought and nurtured to be good in social activities but want to attract other's attention (fame or popularity) and belong to one society or the other. This is because, in recent times, studies have revealed that youths are majorly influenced by multi-media sources of different kinds, such as internet, television, radio to mention but a few, on its account of it accessibility to the youths and make them become gangsters or a gang member. According to Kingsley (2021)), a report that declared that youth-gangs have submitted themselves to long-term bad parental upbringing, domestic violence, alcoholism, and child sexual abuse and involve in gangsterism because of the orientation given by violent family whose teaching centered on criminal and violent activities within their environment.

Concept of Youth: An Islamic Viewpoint

The fact that there is nothing that has beginning without an end except Allah (SWT), Islam as a religion and a state, believes so much in taking care of its citizens according to their ages and status. That is why the existence of man on earth has been categorized into four stages: infanthood, childhood, adulthood, old age (Oseni, 2016). Youth chronologically fall between the childhood and the adulthood ages. Hence, the term youth could be best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. In other words, youth age is a transition from childhood to adulthood. In Nigeria, according to National Youth Policy, youths are "young persons (boys or girls) of ages between eighteen and thirty-five years" (Olukayode, 2012). This description nearly conforms to the Islamic views on young persons, as Allah (SWT) Himself states in the following scripture: **حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً** *"(He grows) until, when he reaches maturity and reaches (the age of) forty years...* (Q 46:15). The Nigerian National Youth Policy (2014) also declared youth "as young person's attaining puberty till the mature age of forty.

Furthermore, the term youth had been viewed by some scholars who opined that youth is a person between age 15 and 30. To Eisentadt (1975) cited in the work of Nair-Murali et-al (1989), postulated youth as the period of transition from childhood to full adult status of full membership in the society. According to him, the individual is no longer a child (especially from the physical and sexual point of view), but ready to undertake many attributes of an adult and to fulfill adult roles. Although, he is not yet fully acknowledged as an adult, a full member of the society, rather, he is being 'prepared' or is preparing himself for such adulthood. Still on youth, the United Nations (2013) equally described youth as persons between the ages of 15 to 24 years, but in Malaysia, according to the review on the youth situation on national policy chaired by united in 2002, youth are those aged between 15 and 40years'. To them, youths are "treated as a key indicator of the state of the nation itself".

However, the variance in the above categorization of scholars on the above subject matter, is a pointer to the fact that youth life is a stage when the child develops intellectual strength, not only to learn but develop the skills needed for a sustainable future. It is therefore characterized as period when the parents are expected to equip their wards adequately, given them both the spiritual, intellectual, academic and as well as ethical training that will enable them to be both spiritually and financially independent in the future. Hence, in the quest for national development, the leaders of such nation would not only propound policies on the development of their youths but also establish institutions that are well equipped to train the youths and engage them in useful endeavors.

To achieve this therefore, the youths in the first instance, must be made to understand the essence of man's creation, by understanding Allah (SWT) as their Creator and Sustainer. A typical instance is in the text of Q18: 9-24, where Allah (SWT) relates the story of some distinguished youths and their resounding contribution towards nation building and development. These are known as the people of the cave (*Ashabul Kahf*) where seven young lads out of their ardent desired to meet Allah's pleasure, shunned idolatry and embraced true monotheism-*Tawhid*. This is therefore a clear indication that, as a religion, Islam does not abhor idleness as well as engaging in unproductive activities. Perhaps, is the rationale why the perfect curriculum (*Al-Qur'an*) stipulates that the child should be well brought up on the threshold of true faith (*Iman*). Because faith is considered as the bedrock of Islamic ideology.

At this juncture, it wouldn't be an understatement to opine that youth development is a very important pre-requisite to the bright future of any society. Muslims who constitute over sixty per cent (53.5%) of Nigeria population faced with different degrees of challenges in training their children and giving them a balanced education that will enable them to play the role of future leaders well.

Hence, from the above numerous descriptions on the word youth, it could be adduced that youthful period is the most vital stage of life, working to make the best of it and to strive toward excellence. This is because the youngsters are full of energy and vivid passion. Indeed, it is the period of beneficial production for generations to come. Muslim youth must be aware of the essential importance and value of their life, direct it to the right way to achieve the best outcome. It is a very sensitive period that requires caring, reinforcement, good guidance towards Allah's path and good ethics. It is in doing this, that Muslim rise in status both in this world and the world-after. Allah (swt) says in the following injunction: **إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى** *"They were youths who believed in their Lord, and we increased them in guidance"*. Q18:13

Islam therefore takes very special care of its youths and urges them to make good use of their valuable period (youth age) of their life. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) gave the following advice as a mark of recognition to the youth. He was reported to have said:

> **اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ**
>
> Take advantage of five matters before five other matters: Your youth before you become old; your health before you fall sick; your richness before you become poor; your free time before you become busy; your life before your death. (Ibn Abbas)

Taking from the above text, the noble prophet engaged in addressing the noble value attached to human existence on the earth and the significance of every moment. According to text, every Muslim would be sanctioned by Allah on the day of accountability for questioning about their life, but

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the period of youth has a special reckoning. It is based on this, that the prophet was reported to have said in other traditions cited in United Muslims World Facebook saying:

> The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah until he is asked about Five things: how he lived his life, how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did spend his money, and what did he do with his knowledge. (United Muslims World Facebook. n.d).

This tradition above portrays the situation of every human and consequential of misuse of their lives (while on earth) on Day of final verdict. Even if he succeeded in answering the rest of inquiries (be it religious or social), it will not be able to enter Al-Jannah (Paradise) unless he succeeds in giving satisfying replies to those five (5) basic questions above. Thus, in both the Quran and history of Islam, as found in the life of the Prophet (saw), there are numerous examples of outstanding youth. Indeed, the image of prophet Ibrahim (as) in the Qur'an is one of extreme inspiration, enlightenment and uniqueness. It is the image of a young man rebelling against his people's decadent traditions, a young man defying the dominant values of his society even in the presence of a tyrant king who claims divinity. His son Ismail (as) inherited these qualities of sincerity in worshiping Allah (swt) and sacrifice of everything for His sake, as clear in the story of the sacrifice when his father consulted him upon seeing in his dream that he is to sacrifice him, and he answered with determination and certainty to obey Allah's command in the following inspiring expression "*Oh my father, do as you are commanded, you will find me, if Allah so wills, of the patient."*

Furthermore, the mission of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was also one for the youth as the eldest of those who first believed in the prophet was Abu Bakr As-Siddiq who was only thirty five years old then. Most of them had not reached the age of twenty. In fact, someone like Ali bin Abi Talib was youth of ten. To give more credence to the importance of the youth in bearing their actual responsibilities in the society, it was not surprising that the leader of the Muslim army following the death of the Prophet (saw) was Usama Ibn Zayd who was only sixteen years old. India was conquered by one Mohamed Ibn Al-Qasim, a companion, who was of the same age with the former (Thamiem, 2012).

At this juncture, one may describe Muslim youth as a balanced individual exhibiting a highly spiritual life informed by absolute moral values and whose behavior demonstrates qualities such as righteousness, honesty, humility and conscientiousness in everything he does. He or she does not do things just because it is what the vogue was, but because they are the right things to do. They fear no blame from anyone, as far as they are on the right track of attaining the pleasure of Allah. This is because they are well acquainted with the fact contained in holy Book **وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى** '*A man receives but only that for which he strives; that his endeavors will be Judged, and only then will he receive his recompense in full.* Q53: 39 - 41

In conclusion, it wouldn't be an underscored fact that, the supreme goal of Islam is a peaceful society, and this can only be achieved if the individual Muslims resort to engaging their youths more in the spiritual affairs, such as Qur'anic memorization, Hadîth expositions, listening to sermons on weekly basis to instill the fear of Allah (SWT) in their hearts and creating more Islamic scholarship in them. Also, the Islamic organizations, which include NGOs and institutions, should introduce youth orientation programs and event to give an average Muslim youth a sense of direction in life instead of forming a destructive gang.

Factors Responsible for Youth-Gangster Formation in Lagos State

Many attempts have been made to ensure youths are well behaved in all facets of life. Most of such efforts have not yielded appreciable changes in the display of morality among the group. This is because of some problems which are taken to be impediments to moral standard in an individual, hence having negative reflection on the groups' individual personality. These impediments are considered as factors responsible for the youth-gangster formation and broadly grouped into two which include Push factors and Pull factors.

Push Factors

These are dragging factors that drive young people away from being morally sound, psychologically balanced and socially behaved. Under this factor, the following are among other agents causing youths involvement in unethical behavior:

Poverty: According to the statistics showing the level of poverty in the country-Nigeria analyzed by Pascal (2022), 10.87 million of the population of people in the South East, 19.66 million in the South-South, 16.27 million in the South West, 45.49 million in the North West, 20.47 million in the North East, and 20.19 million in the North Central of Nigeria respectively are in poverty. Looking at the above analysis, the menace of poverty is considered a factor that causes not only the inability to enjoy the essential needs of life, such as shelter, feeding and clothing but also it optimum standard of living as citizens. Low level of income, wages or salary and as well as unemployment is of great concern in this regard. The condition of university graduates that went through rigorous training to acquire certificates to meet the necessities of life that turn out to be unaccomplished vision is something to brainstorm over. This rate of unemployment in the country is quite alarming and calls for concern of reasonable individuals as well as groups, especially the youths of teams that graduate on annual basis in universities and being idle roaming about the street.

Moral Degeneration: The various moral mal adaptiveness in individual youth as well as group is at alarming rate. Youths have been seen as future of tomorrow but the hope of them being tomorrow's leader has been dashed out because an inclined individuals that are conscious of their image can only be a leader in an organized society but reverse is the case in Nigerian society where hooliganism, drug addicts, pharmaceutical industries producing fake and substandard drugs, commercial sex workers, bakery industries producing potassium and bromate made bread, agent of assassination, political thuggery among others are among the youths. The most annoying factor in this regard is that youths with this moral decadence are the most celebrated individuals in society. Hence, increase in the waywardness becomes inevitable.

Parental Negligence: Home (parents) according to research is the first and most important agent of change and socialization if there is a better society. Many youths of nowadays lack parental care and were raised by neighbors who are either socially imbalanced or psychologically crumbled. Parents have therefore neglected their responsibility in the hands of people that are injurious to children development. Abayan (2012) sees parents as agents to educate children about norms and values of society and enforce discipline to bring about desirable youths but who have failed and made the children seek information from wrong hands.

Absence of Sanity in Political System: The continuous increase in gangsterism and show off gang members in Nigeria today is because of absence of sanity in political system because politics in Nigeria is becoming more unethical in every dispensation. It makes it difficult for a Godly

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person to venture into. President Muhammad Bukhari in his advice to All Progressive Congress Executive members asked the party not to give ticket of the party to the highest bidder. Surprisingly, primary election of virtually all political parties for the 2023 general election in Nigeria become worrisome where a delegate is offered between five thousand to twenty-five thousand US dollar ($5,000 – $25,000) at primary election to become a party candidate. Buying electorate and electoral officers to triumph in an election cannot but be mentioned as well.

The activities of political thugs who are sometimes sponsored by either the politicians in or outside the corridors of power are indeed going out of hand. The electoral body either at Federal, State or Local government level is supposed to be free body to conduct free, fair and credible election but the results of elections and court cases after elections and how results of elections are upturned in courts at times is of great concern. The amazing aspect of this is that most agents, staff and ad-hoc staff of this electoral body are youths.

Peer Undue Influence: The rate at which members of age group are influencing one another in our society if immediate solution is not taken to redress the problem now, then, Nigeria as should be wary of havoc that might not be averted anytime soon. Members of age mates imitate one another and are easily carried away with bad manners of their peers than good behavior of colleagues. The rate at which promising youths engage in different kinds of heinous drinking liquors are compelling factors of their engagement in crime of different kinds.

Pull Factors

Unlike the former factors discussed above, pull factors, **o**n the other hand, are those factors that entice the youth and subsequently luring them into joining the gangs of interest. Some of these factors include:

Social Enjoyment/Comfort: The rate at which gangs take social life necessitates the continuous increase in the circle. The rate at which these gangs behave at different locations of eateries, hotels, clubs etc. definitely prove reason behind youth turning in to become one.

Connection/Influence: The fact that some of these gangs are instruments for people at the corridors of power proves reason behind teaming increase on daily basis. They have strong belief in the influence and connection that come their way through godfathers. So, the fact that connection comes through different means aggravates the level of increase. Contracts and jobs in Nigeria are secured based on how cruel an individual is in the society or what becomes the faith of well-mannered individuals whose panel of interview with which he/she is seeking employment is comprised of thugs and hoodlums!

Public Figure: The fact that society celebrates the rich without minding the source of their riches is a factor that allows youths to troop into gangs. Whatever might be the crime someone has committed in society, immediately such person appears with wealth, it becomes talk of the same community and different titles start coming his/her way.

Buying Justice: The rate at which judgement is delivered across the nation proves the rate at which gangs are on increase. The corrupt level of judges, unnecessary adjournment of cases and misplacement of justice are worrisome. Even policemen in Nigeria are notorious for their collusion with miscreants to dispossessed citizens of their belonging while innocents are arrested, tortured and even imprisoned for offenses not committed.

Youth and Gangsterism: It's Implication on National Peace and Unity

The activities of youth gangs have posed a lot of havoc on the peace and unity of our dear country that none of the indigents or residents that are exempted from feeling the heat at large. Some of the implications of these groups are as follows:

Insecurity Threat: the rate at which attack is being carried out across the nation is alarming and worrisome. Several criminal activities are reported on daily basis in news that saddened heart. These activities include but not limited to thuggery, inciting religious/civil unrest, vandalization of national properties, gang raping, kidnapping, advanced fraud among numerous others have all brought a great loss to individuals as well as collective Nigerians.

Ethnic Feud: the activities of the gangs have directly or indirectly placed ethnic groups in Nigeria on a watch against one another because there is no ethnic group today that trusts other ethnic groups. This has great threat to the extent that ethnic groups now see other ethnic groups as rivalry. Formation of security operations are now on ethnic base. It therefore means that, the unity of Nigeria is not negotiable appears to be a mere dream if the situation continues.

Loss of Hope: Nigerian themselves have lost hope in the future leaders called youth and the leaders of today known as politicians who do not ready to have futuristic plans for the country on one hand and are not much concerned with welfare of the populace on the other hand but are rather after self-enrichment. The inability of government to formulate and implement policies that will guarantee respect for public opinion, fundamental rights of individuals, independent of judiciary and electoral commission and effective control of crimes have all shattered the hope of Nigerians government and youths alike and has resulted in the collapse of national ethos

Economic Setback: the activities of vandals and fraudsters be it internet or otherwise, bunkers, traffickers have all crippled the various economic monetary and reformation policies of the government. Though, government herself is not sincere as swindling and squanders form their targets. The smugglers, fake manufacturers were also another major factor for the collapse of many companies, loss of millions of Naira by the companies and loss of job by workers.

Health Deterioration: with circulation of fake or substandard drugs, potassium bromates made bread in the market, the increasing rate of diversion drugs meant to save lives of people coupled with all kinds of intoxicants that has become a norm among the youth and turning innocent individuals to perpetual smokers from inhaling the substance smokes, the health sector of this country is subjected to great threat and sabotage from the people involved in various malpractices

Anarchy and collapse: this country is closely approaching state of anarchy as some issues that need urgent attention are left unattended to while minor issues that can easily resolve itself if major issues have been tackled are now the target. Bandits are on increase on daily basis killing both military and civilians, yet they are enjoying governmental pardon while freedom fighters are treated like bandits. This must be addressed with immediate effect if the government does not want this country to collapse anything soon as a result of anarchical nature of the present nature of this country.

Bad Image/Reputation: the various forms of fraudulent acts perpetrated by dubious Nigerians which include bank fraud, robbery, human and money trafficking, all forms of advance free fraud activities (419) and inability to make an average Nigerians enjoy basic amenities with poverty

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level of this country despite the surplus endowed of human and mineral resources have robbed the country of respect among the comity of nations. This is because they have given the country a negative impression and lowered its integrity before the international community.

Negative Effects of Gangsterism on the Youth and Lagos Society

Gangsterism has become a social phenomenon that occurs widely among the youths in many developing countries like Nigeria. Its affiliated crises and violence practices in the 21st century and it various degrees of negative effects on the peace-strength of the Nigeria society in general and the youths of Lagos State in particular cannot be over emphasized. This phenomenon have been in progress according to Encyclopedia Britannica edited by Al Capone (n.d) since the 19th century and has always been prominent in parts of the United States, where the report of more than 2,000 killings between 1920 and 1930 were ascribed to gang warfare.

This occurred during the prohibition era between 1920 and 1933. During the US underworld battled over markets controlling the illegal manufacture and distribution of liquor. The wave of these social agents and their activity began around the mid-1970s in California, specifically in Los Angeles where several gangs were formed and impacted negatively on the neighborhoods around the country, yet it's most prominent impact seems to be towards the youths.

However, this menace does not leave Nigerian states particularly Lagos in exclusion. It does only bring negative effects to those specific youths concerned but also to the domiciliary society where its victims reside. Hence, society began to worry about when the gang activities will become increasingly active in the town. Such that everyone needs to be aware of gang activities that take place in their respective towns that led society to become not peaceful. The neighborhoods are therefore fear of becoming one of the victims of youths gangster to pay them a certain amount of money in exchange for their "captivity" and gain "protection" as it currently happening in many parts of Nigeria society, such as the cases of Boko-Haram and Headsmen in the Northern parts of the country and kidnapping in South-western States respectively.

Another destructive effect of youth gangsters is the vandalization of the public facilities situated in strategic places of the town, such as settling public offices ablaze e.g. Independent National Electoral Commission(INEC) offices, Police Stations, Correctional centers, Toll-gates, BRT Bus Parks in Lagos State (which housed not less than 200 luxurious buses) to mention a few, a devastating moment witnessed across the country during the October 20th, 2020 of #EndSars# pandemonium with no exception of Lagos State, caused inconvenient to the affected communities and the residents. Unfortunately, there are several factors leading to how and why gangs have severely impacted on youth negatively. These include among others:

Illicit Drug factors: the report received from Bill (2012), state that gangs introduce illicit drugs into their host communities and this had cause individuals' youth to become drug addicts. This, however, affects the youths both physically and mentally. Thus, the engagement of some people in such practice could lead them to become unending threats to society leading to not only loss of lives of targeted victims but disruption of age-long acquired properties within a tinkle of eyes as a result of illicit drug trafficking and influence. This could sometimes cost governments at all levels substantial amount of money to put in place towards preventing, responding, incarcerating, and rehabilitation of the affected youths and the society in general.

Children in such communities, if they do not have a strong foundation at home, can also model the behavior of these gang members with utmost promises of better life without mentioning the consequences of their actions. Yet, not much help or refuge is available for such children and families affected by gang presence.

Relationship factors: these refer to family, friend, intimate partner and peer relationships, poor parental supervision of children; harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices; witnessing violence or experiencing abuse as a child; low levels of attachment between parents and children; low parental involvement in children's activities; parental alcohol/substance abuse or criminality; experiencing parental separation or divorce at a young age; poor family functioning; coming from a single-parent household; and low socioeconomic status of the household. Associating with delinquent peers is also an important risk factor for youth violence and gang formation.

Community factors: this involves high residential mobility; high unemployment; social isolation; proximity to drug trade and vendors; ease of access to alcohol; and weak social welfare policies and programs in some schools where the teenager attends.

Societal factors: this referred to rapid social change; economic and gender inequalities; social policies that create and sustain or increase economic and social inequalities; poverty; weak criminal justice systems that allow the excessive use of force by police with impunity; the availability of firearms; and socio-cultural norms that support violence, such as non-secured or guided masquerade display or dance during cultural celebrations e.g. Kilajolu festival display in Epe, Eyo festival display in Island, Eluku and Igunuko festival display in Ikorodu, Sangbeto and Igunuko festival display in Badagry and Egungun festival display in Ikeja etc.

Risk factors: risk factors can also be considered in terms of (1) factors that "push" youth into engaging in violence; (2) factors that "pull" or attract youth towards violent acts; and (3) factors that may "trigger" violence. (Social Development Direct, 2009).

Individual factors: this also includes traits such as hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and poor behavioral control and attention problems; a history of early aggressive behavior; early involvement with drugs, alcohol and tobacco; antisocial beliefs and attitudes; low intelligence; low commitment to school and school failure; exposure to violence and conflict in the family. Additionally, studies also show that drunkenness is an important immediate situational factor that can precipitate violence.

Youth-Gang Formation and Criminological Implications on Lagos Residents after EndSARS

The #EndSARS movement represents a defining moment in Nigeria's contemporary socio-political history, emerging as a youth-led protest persistent allegations of police brutality, human rights violations, and institutional excesses associated with the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a security unit of the Nigeria Police Force. The body according to Udeuhele (2022) was officially inaugurated in Lagos State during the year 1992 through professional initiative of Simeon Danladi Midenda, a Superintendent Police officer, later retired as a Commissioner of Police, toward curbing rampant armed robbery cases and other violent related crimes. Over time, this unit of security agency came to be widely perceived as oppressive, following persistent reports of operational misconduct, which involve unlawful arrests, extortion, and harassment leading to extrajudicial killings, particularly among young Nigerians (Udenze, Antoni and Pires, 2024). In Lagos State, being the most populous urban centre

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in Nigeria hosting residents of diverse nationalities, such abuses were more pronounced, as youths were frequently profiled based on their appearance, possession of smartphones, or engagement in informal economic activities.

Although. The long-standing grievances of public against SARS predated the 2020 protests and had been expressed through petitions documented through civil society reports, legal petitions, and digital advocacy. The October 2020 demonstrations marked a critical escalation, as youths digitally mobilised en masse across Lagos and other major cities in the federation, escalating the agitation into a nationwide movement. Meanwhile, according to the reports contained in the European Union's 2023 governance and human rights assessments on Nigeria, the protests reflected not only concerns about policing practices but also deeper structural challenges, including youth unemployment, socio-economic inequality, poor governance and political exclusion, and declining public trust in state institutions (Udenze, Antoni and Pires, 2024). These systemic pressures created fertile ground for mass mobilisation of youths, while simultaneously exposing institutional fragilities in public order management.

However, in responding to longstanding criticisms of unprofessional policing practices, the Nigerian government enacted a new Act to guide the policing activities and their legitimate benefits shortly after the incidence of 2020 EndSARS movement. The new acts provides a revised legal framework for policing based on accountability, respect for human rights, community policing, and professional standards (Nigeria Police Acts, 2020). While the Act represents a significant institutional reform effort, the #EndSARS protests exposed the gap between statutory provisions and operational realities. The Lekki Toll Gate incident in Lagos further intensified public outrage and symbolised, for many citizens, a crisis of institutional legitimacy and a breakdown in state–citizen relations, particularly among youths who perceived limited channels for constructive civic engagement.

According to Ekene and Samuel (2021), the post-protest period revealed complex and fragile societal dynamics across several parts of Lagos State. To them, the temporary breakdown of law and order during this period was accompanied by incidents of looting, vandalism, ethnic profiling, violent confrontations, and the activities of criminal gangs. These developments intensified public anxiety over youth gangster formation and its criminological implications for residents. These scholars argue that youth gangs, driven by social strain, limited economic opportunities, weak mechanisms of social control, and fragmented community structures, became increasingly involved in violence, cultism, drug-related activities, and territorial conflicts. Within the multi-ethnic context of Lagos State, such criminal activities were at times interpreted through ethnic lenses, thereby complicating social cohesion and reinforcing stereotypes, mistrust, and communal tensions.

Viewing this from a criminological perspective, the #EndSARS experience demonstrates how social movements, institutional responses, and community dynamics intersect to shape youth behavior (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015; Newburn, 2017). Where legitimate grievances coexist with weak law enforcement mechanisms, limited institutional accountability, and socio-economic deprivation, periods of social unrest may inadvertently create opportunities for criminal exploitation, gang consolidation, and the emergence of alternative power structures (Merton, 1938; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Perhaps the reason why EU 2023 reports similarly emphasise the necessity of balanced security approaches that integrate effective enforcement with social inclusion, youth empowerment, and community trust-building, particularly within plural and multi-ethnic urban societies such as Lagos State (European Union, 2023).

From an Islamic ethical perspective, several concerns raised by #EndSARS protesters resonate with the foundational moral principles of Islam. Central among these according to Imam Al-Ghazālī (1997) are justice (*ʿadl*), as emphasised in the Qur'an (Q4:135; Q49:9); accountability and trust (*amānah*) (Q33:72; Q4:58; Q23:8); the sanctity and dignity of human life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), a core objective of Islamic law (Q5:32; Q6:151; Q2:195); and the categorical prohibition of oppression (*ẓulm*) (Q49:11; Q28:77). Stressing further, Kamali (2008) declared that Islamic teachings unequivocally condemn abuse of power, injustice, and violations of human dignity, while simultaneously cautioning against actions that may generate greater societal harm (*mafsadah*). Although Islam affirms the legitimacy of demanding justice and speaking truth to authority through lawful and ethical means, it equally underscores the importance of moral restraint, communal harmony, and the preservation of social order, particularly within plural societies susceptible to ethnic and social fragmentation (Ashur, 2006). Collectively, these principles constitute Islam's normative framework for protecting human dignity, preventing arbitrary treatment, and resisting oppression and injustice in all their forms until they are eradicated.

Consequently, the Lagos #EndSARS experience offers critical lessons for youth reform and value-based intervention. Beyond state-led institutional reforms such as the Police Act 2020, there is a need for sustained moral reorientation and civic education. Islamic da'wah, alongside other faith-based and community initiatives, can contribute by promoting ethical consciousness, peaceful engagement, inter-ethnic tolerance, and responsible citizenship. Religious institutions, scholars, and youth leaders must actively engage both physical and digital spaces to counter narratives that legitimise violence, gangsterism, or ethnic hostility, while providing platforms for dialogue, counselling, and constructive civic participation.

Islamic Moral Education as a Strategy for Youth Behavioral Reorientation

Islam is the raison d'être of the entire scheme of creation. That is to say, all that exist are divisible into two unlike kinds of reality i.e. Creator and creation. The Creator is to be worshiped by all that He created. From these galaxies to the smallest components of matter, everything was created and designed to comply with the will of Allah. Thus, every society is made up of people of different classes, values and ages, and everyone has an important and essential role in the sustenance of society of both today and the future. This therefore makes it a duty upon every member of society particularly the Muslims to participate in strengthening the society by introducing their wards to the tenets of the religion-Islam through its formal education.

The rationale underlined this is the fact that, youths are considered as integral and essential part of society, just as a society is incomplete without young blood. This is in consonance with the popular saying that "today's youths are the force, hope and leaders of tomorrow", because they are the future of society, community and country at large. The essence of this is that young people are known to be the driving force of change of any given society. Therefore, based on the, Islam being a religion of peace was never meant to be an individualistic faith, reserved for the "chosen few" but that Muslims have a duty to spread the faith (Islam) not only through proper practicing but adequate education.

Thus, Islamic education is seen as potential tool in reforming the youthful exuberant behavior in our contemporary youth, being a divinely revealed system of education that prepares individuals not only to be upright on earth but to attain happiness in this life and in the hereafter. This faith-

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based discipline is therefore postulated as a process that completely nurtures the individual aimed at the balanced growth of the total personality of human being through the training of man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses (Siddique and Bello, 2016).

The rationale is to discredit the claim of some individuals that until when they get old before they will start practicing Islam. The youths of today do not face the challenges of the youths among the companions, such as challenges of extending the tentacle of Islam beyond its shore (da'wah campaign). But they do face a whole suite of *fitna* (temptations) and conflicting identities.

However, the holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) recognized the unprecedented impact of individual youth in not only the growth but in advancing the gospel of Islam in each society. They were encouraged to learn and grow by participating in business trades rather than involving in inhuman and destructive gang group, much like Anas ibn Malik; scholarly discussions, much like Ali; and negotiations across nations, much like Usamah ibn Zayd; who led the Muslim army, including men who were old enough to be his grandfathers, at the tender age of fifteen (Zain, 2015). However, considering the above analysis the following fundamental responsibilities of the youths in a Muslim society like Lagos State are required:

1- Knowledge Acquisition: Knowledge of the fundamentals of the teachings of Islam and Allah's guidance through the right sources. It remains a crystal fact that man is lost and blind if not for the divine guidance of the Creator. And to achieve this guidance, one must know at the very least the most basics of his religious teachings and through the correct sources. This will make the youths to know what is good for them in not only in the society where he resides but both worlds; their limitations to things, and more importantly it will instill that God consciousness in anything they may be intending to do. As such, they realize that building society in the right direction is a means to attaining paradise and a positive contribution to the world in general.

2- True Values and Morals: Pursuant to the acquisition of basic knowledge stated above, it becomes imperative and in accordance with the principles of Islam that the Muslim youths take it as a responsibility upon themselves to display and put in practice what they have learnt to influence other non-Muslim youths positively. These future generations have a duty to be honest, genuine, of good values and to workday and night for the betterment of society, humanity and the country in general.

Again, youth in Islam have a duty to use their skills, strength, creativity and imaginations to advance the course of *da'wah* in the best possible manner. These are the young people who can make the difference, because they are the backbone of a nation emerged from *ummah* (Muslim community) and capable of building a bright future for society based on values and courageous behavior in them. Allah says in the following passage of the holy book:**كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ** **"***You are the best of people ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Maar'uf (what is right) and forbid Al-Munkar (what is wrong).*Q 3:110

3-Sound Education: The world we are today requires a very sound and well modeled education like Islamic education to be abreast of happenings to be able to make positive impact in it. It is necessary that Muslim youth who knows his religious obligation of inviting the non-Muslim counterparts to the fold of Islam, but to also display a behavior worthy of emulation, must build his educational carrier upon a very strong sound religious knowledge. This is one of the best ways, if not the only, to propagate the *deen*-Islamic religion that discourages all manners of inhuman attitudes of youths such as massive destruction of aged-long acquired properties belonging to both individuals and state during the End-SARS massacre and guarantee a balance in educational and worldly achievements, good morals, honesty and true dedication in one's endeavors. It is the responsibility of the youths to get all these and imbibed them to serve as a foundation upon which they will rely as they face the later challenges of life. The reason is that it is simply not possible for anyone to call to the truth (Islam) without knowledge, because first you must know what the truth is.

4- Good Home: The good and well-established home is considered as a great pillar towards building a better society. Muslims should get married to spouses as encouraged by the noble prophet (saw) who are not just beautiful damsels, but God fearing and righteous, and who will in turn form a unit of the largest society. Based on Islamic teachings and the reality on ground, beauty will surely fade off, money can diminish or dwindle away as Allah may wish it, but when the fear of God and righteousness are there, the home will forever be a bliss and the kids brought forth in such a home will also be different and unique in the society. If such is achieved, then the future of our society will be brighter and safer. Marriage should be encouraged by the youths and supported as much as possible morally, psychologically and financially. This will prevent the lots of immoralities we witness in our societies. Here, the role of the parents and guardians is very important.

5- Support of the Elders and Needy: It must be made clear at this juncture that the youths are the golden eyes of society. They have physical strength and courage, time and little responsibilities, health and less boredom. However, from the aforementioned analysis, Muslim youths are held in high esteem in Islam and seen as balanced individuals exhibiting a highly spiritual life informed by absolute moral values and whose behavior demonstrates qualities such as righteousness, honesty, humility and conscientiousness in everything he or she does. They fear no blame from anyone, even when engaging in the divine obligation of either calling or inviting the non-Muslims to Islam (da'wah) or reshaping the practices of Muslims (*Islah*), as far as they are on the right track of attaining the pleasure of Allah. This is because they are well acquainted with the fact that: **وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى** "*And that man receives but only that for which he strives; that his endeavor judged, and only then will he receive his recompense in full".* Q53:39-41

Hypotheses Tested

1. There is no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and the prevention of youth communal violence in Lagos State.
2. There will be no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and environment in curbing violent behavior among youth in Lagos State.
3. There will be no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and youth upbringing in Lagos State.

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RESULTS

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and the prevention of youth communal violence in Lagos State.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	240.040[a]	81	.000
Likelihood Ratio	214.624	81	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.205	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	250		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.980	.000
	Cramer's V	.327	.000
N of Valid Cases		250	

The results of the chi-square analysis reveal a significant relationship between adherence to Islamic tenets and the ability to avert youth communal violence in Lagos State. (χ^2 = 240.040, df = 81, p < .05). The obtained Cramer's V coefficient was .327, indicating a moderate effect size and suggesting that approximately 32.7% of the association between adherences to Islamic tenets and averting youth communal violence can be explained. These findings provide compelling evidence for the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the variables (i.e. Islamic tenets and averting youth communal violence).

The significant association discovered through the chi-square test suggests that Islamic tenets play a role in averting youth communal violence in Lagos State. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that adherence to Islamic principles is not independent of the prevention of such violence. The moderate effect size, as indicated by Cramer's V coefficient, further emphasizes the practical significance of the association. These findings emphasize the importance of Islamic teachings in promoting peace and harmony among youth in Lagos State, as well as their role in preventing communal violence. The significant relationship and moderate effect size suggest that adherence to Islamic principles may foster values and behaviors that discourage and mitigate communal violence among young individuals.

Discussion of Finding

From the foregoing, it has been discovered that, there is disparity between some people's notion that Islam is a violent religion and what Islam stands to portray. The result from the field is therefore in consonance with Ahmad (1997) who maintains that Islam as a universal religion cannot preach or cause violence because in his idea, no universal religion with global spread across the globe to unite humanity under a headship would welcome or employ force in spreading message. In corroborating his stand, he referenced Qur'an 16:126 thus:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَأَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Call unto the way of thy Lord, with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a way that is best. Surely, thy Lord know who are rightly guided

In the opinions of Kolawole and Hashim (2018) who also aligned with Shittu (2014) on the ground that Islam in her unequivocal term rejects and condemns every tendency, behavior and attitude which may lead to disorderliness, rebellion or violence. To explain rebellion, they opined beyond literal meaning which means an unjustified attempt to overthrow an established order. From Qur'anic point of view therefore, *Al-Baghyu* which is used in Arabic word for rebellion transcends armed or political uprising to rebellion against societal norms and tradition, ethical standards, religious teachings and moral values.

To reiterate the outcome of this result, Qur'an 16:91 has been contextually referenced by Ahmad (1997) that, the first segment of the verse is more of economic sphere than social relation. It enumerates a clear description of Islamic concept of justice, fair play, and benevolence in treating the less fortunate in the society. The second part of the verse however applies to the social value of a society which Islam is committed to create.

Hypothesis Two: There will be no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and environment as a factor for curbing violent behaviour among youth in Lagos State

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	190.680[a]	81	.000
Likelihood Ratio	194.987	81	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.229	1	.632
N of Valid Cases	250		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

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Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.873	.000
	Cramer's V	.291	.000
N of Valid Cases		250	

The chi-square analysis indicated a significant relationship between Islamic tenets and the environment in curbing or restraining violent behavior among youth in Lagos State. ($\chi^2 = 190.680$, df = 81, $p < .05$). The calculated Cramer's V coefficient was .291, suggesting a small effect size. These findings provide evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables suggesting that adherence to Islamic tenets and plays a meaningful role in the environment in reducing or controlling violent behavior among youth in Lagos State.

The results of the chi-square analysis suggest that adherence to Islamic tenets in an environment significantly helps to curb violent behavior among youth in Lagos State. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that these variables are not independent of each other concerning the curbing of violent behavior. The Cramer's V coefficient, with a value of 0.291, indicates a moderate effect size, indicating that approximately 29.1% of the association between these variables can be explained.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

These findings suggest that Islamic teachings and environment have a noteworthy influence in curbing violent behavior among youth in Lagos State. This implies that the integration of Islamic principles in a conducive environment contribute substantially to fostering non-violent attitudes and behaviors among the youth in Lagos State. To this, Mohammed (2018) summed the features of an Islamic society into three taking cognizance of Qur'an 3:110 thus: "*You are the best of people, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidden what is wrong and believe in Allah."* According to him, enjoying the right thing (*Al-Ma'ruf*) is grouped into three. The mandatory, the recommendatory and the permissible. He made it clear that, Islam has given clear direction on how society should be operated on regulations regarding the right things. In other to ensure compliance to this principle as Islamic society is built on the concept of brotherhood. Hence, the application of the concept of Islamic brotherhood will bring about equity and justice which will invariably ease the affairs of society at large.

Hypothesis Three: There will be no significant relationship between Islamic tenets and youth upbringing in Lagos State.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	122.160[a]	72	.000
Likelihood Ratio	133.107	72	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.473	1	.225
N of Valid Cases	250		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.699	.000
	Cramer's V	.247	.000
N of Valid Cases		250	

The chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between adherence to Islamic tenets and youth upbringing in Lagos State ($\chi^2 = 122.160$, df = 72, $p < .05$). The calculated Cramer's V coefficient was .247, indicating a small effect size. These findings provide evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables (i.e. Islamic tenets and youth upbringing).

The significant relationship found suggests that adherence to Islamic tenets has a meaningful impact on youth upbringing in Lagos State. The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that adherence to Islamic principles and youth upbringing are not independent of each other. The small effect size, as indicated by Cramer's V coefficient, however suggests that the significance in the relationship is moderate and that approximately 24.7% of the association between these variables can be explained.

These findings imply that Islamic teachings play a notable role in shaping the upbringing of youth in Lagos State. This suggests that Islamic principles and values may influence various aspects of youth development, including moral values, behavioral norms, and socialization practices.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The relative of Islamic tenets in upholding violent free society cannot be quantified as bedrock of Islamic principle is to bring about peaceful co-existence and that people in distress should be helped. Islam aims eradicating all forms of gangsterism through building responsible and religious youths. To this end, Islam enjoins proper upbringing in all ramifications, and several examples are laid in both Qur'an and Hadith. For example, the prophet was reported to have said: "Every child is born into a state of *fitrah* (pure and natural state of Islam) except one of its parents make him/her Jew or Christian."

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Child upbringing is an incumbent upon individual adults in society, especially the parents as everyone is a shepherd in society to maintain orderliness in such society. However, proper upbringing of children is a crucial responsibility according to Bello-Ja'afar (2014) entrusted to woman that must be earnestly and sincerely approached. This responsibility earns her greater reward than man. This is emphasized in a prophetic tradition that:

> Once a man came to the Prophet and asked; 'O messenger of Allah, who of all people is most entitled to my kindness and good company? The Prophet answered, "Your mother. Then, the man asked, who comes next? And the Prophet answered, "Your mother. Then, the man asked again; who comes next? The Prophet again answered, "Your mother. Then, the man asked more time; who comes next? Then, the Prophet responded to your father.

More so, the central theme of Suratu Luqman verse 12 – 19 is about nurturing the younger generation. Hence, Islam enjoins counselling children through exhortation with Allah's injunction to make the children responsible citizens and parents' status is also raised. Qur'an 9:71 states thus:

> The believers both men and women are allies of one another. They enjoin good, forbid evil, establish Prayer, pay Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely, Allah will show mercy to them. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

This Islamic doctrine will go a long way in shaping any society from all destructive display and reshaping society from maladaptive behaviors if properly mentored and monitored.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the role and relevance of Islamic tenets in curbing gangsterism among Muslim youths in Lagos State. It identifies several interrelated factors contributing to youth gang formation, both directly and indirectly, including communal conflicts, environmental influences, and inadequate moral and parental upbringing. Within the Islamic worldview, responsibility for social order is collective; every member of society is regarded as a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) and a shepherd entrusted with the moral guidance and wellbeing of others. Consequently, societal negligence and indifference are strongly discouraged, as they undermine the principles of peaceful coexistence and social harmony that Islam seeks to promote. Gangsterism, viewed as a manifestation of moral decadence, can therefore be addressed from the family level through effective counselling, ethical nurturing, and sustained moral instruction drawn from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW).

Furthermore, key social actors such as mothers, educators, peers, and community leaders play indispensable yet often understated roles in shaping the character and conduct of the younger generation, both male and female. While all members of society share this responsibility, Muslims bear an additional moral obligation, rooted in their faith, to actively uphold justice, promote peace, and foster social cohesion. As Allah's vicegerents on earth, Muslims are enjoined to embody values that contribute to a just, secure, and habitable society.

In conclusion, the #EndSARS movement in Lagos State transcended a mere protest against police brutality; it represented the expression of deeper socio-economic grievances, institutional deficiencies, and identity-related tensions. When analysed through criminological, institutional, and Islamic lenses, and situated within contemporary reform initiatives and international assessments, it highlights the urgent need for justice-oriented governance, effective policy implementation, and ethically grounded youth empowerment. The integration of these approaches remains crucial for addressing youth gang formation and for fostering sustainable peace within Lagos State's complex social environment.

RECOMMENDATION

From discussion so far, the following recommendations are brought forward to ensure the attainment of gangsterism free society where peace and security of lives and property will be watchword of every member of the society.

1. Community-Centred Policing and Institutional Reform:
   Security governance in Lagos State should prioritise community-centred policing models that emphasise transparency, accountability, and trust-building between law enforcement agencies and local communities.
2. Strengthening Ethical and Civic Education: Muslim youths should be appropriately mentored and monitored to know peers he/she moves with and advise him/her on how such peers can make or mar the brighter future of his/her dream. This could be achieved through the establishment of faith-based institutions with community organisations and collaboration to integrate Islamic ethical principles, such as justice (*ʿadl*), accountability (*amanah*), and respect for human dignity, into youth civic and moral education programmes.
3. Youth Economic Empowerment and Social Inclusion: here,
   Government and non-governmental stakeholders should expand employment opportunities, skills-acquisition programmes, and entrepreneurship initiatives targeted at vulnerable youths.
4. Periodical and Ceaseless lectures should be carried out by scholars targeting youths and several ill manners in the society should be used as central theme of such lectures.
5. Government should make religious knowledge compulsory from primary level to first degree focusing on moral development of the citizens.
6. Education/curriculum planners should target more topics of moral standard rather than illicit behavior topics.
7. Family, Religious, and Community Engagement. This implies that
   parents, religious leaders, educators, and community stakeholders must assume proactive roles in early moral guidance, mentorship, and behavioral monitoring of youths. Drawing on Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings, sustained counselling and communal support structures should be strengthened to address deviant behavior before it escalates into organised gangsterism. Also, emphasis should be laid on extended family ties by scholars to allow proper mentorship of younger generation by elders in society.

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