



INFLUENCE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON CRIME RATE IN LAGOS ISLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study tried to investigate the causes and effects of youths unemployment in Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State. One major challenge that hits the youths or young adults' mostly is the ability/inability to achieve their dreams, ability/inability to do what they love most and becoming what they actually want to be in life. This study is therefore aimed at examining the relationship between unemployment and crime among the youths in Lagos Island LGA of Lagos state. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Purposive and accidental sampling method was adopted to collect data from 120 unemployed youths residing at Lagos Island LGA. The Functionalist theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Data generated from the study was analysed with the use of simple frequency tables and percentages. The findings revealed that unemployment rate is high among the youths in Lagos Island, yet, some of those employed are not satisfied with their jobs and most of the unemployed are diving into quick and easy means of making money to acquire wealth such as internet fraud of all sorts. The study recommended among others, that youths should be empowered by providing jobs and entrepreneurial friendly policies created to enable youths pursue their dreams and actually have their dreams come true.

Keyword: Youths, Unemployment, Crime, Stratified, Quick money.

Introduction

In most industrialized countries, the unemployment rate is regarded as an important indicator of labour market performance. In low-income countries, however, the significance and meaning of the unemployment rate is much more limited. In the absence of unemployment insurance or other public relief schemes, relatively few people can survive lengthy unemployment without family support. The majority of the workers must engage in some form of economic activity, however insignificant or inadequate. This is often in the informal economy and/or in self-employment.

Global youth's unemployment rate was projected at 12.7 percent in 2012. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2015), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 1999 and 2014 are represented in the table below:

Table 1: Unemployment rate in Nigeria (2000-2015)

Year	Percentage (%)
1999	8.2
2000	13.1
2001	13.6
2002	12.6
2003	14.8
2004	13.4
2005	11.9
2006	12.3
2007	14.7
2008	14.9
2009	19.7
2010	21.4
2011	23.9
2012	27.4
2013	24.7
2014	25.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2015)

Nigeria has been faced with the challenge of chronic youth unemployment for a long time. The situation was worst in 2012 with unemployment rate of 27.4%, closest to that was 2014 with 25.1%. Though it showed a drop in 2013 with 24.7% but today, the situation seems to be worsening by the day as more youths are graduating from the universities and polytechnics every year to join the existing youths seeking employment. Thousands of graduates are turned out from the universities and higher institutions of learning every year with no available job opportunities not to talk of the increase in population annually. Hence Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have been gainfully employed in some enterprises; or would have demonstrated their skills and resourcefulness if there are enabling environments and reliable management structures on ground. This is why it has become necessary to look into the causes of youth unemployment, reasons why it is prolonged and the necessary recommendations that can bring about job opportunities for the youths and everyone within the employmentage.

The resultant effect of this is the shift in the “means to make it” (financial ability), which has led so many youths into Cybercrime popularly known as ‘419’ and related internet frauds called yahoo-yahoo, dating frauds etc. Though this is the wrong use of technological innovation but it proved to be the next available option open to youths and young school leavers and older ones alike who have been unemployed for years without thinking of the repercussion or dangers involved.

The problem therefore is that there are evidences of many graduate unemployed youths who accept employment as factory workers, hawking in the traffic/highway roads, selling in the markets, serving at “mama-put” restaurantsetc, all in the bid to make ends meet. These types of jobs bring about frustration, dissatisfaction and eventually “stale brain”(Author’s opinion), little wonder they make use of available options of fraud and internet datings which need a lot of brain work. The resultant effect in the prevalence of crime among the youths necessitated the examination of a possible link in the increase in crime and youth unemployment in Lagos State.

The Statement of the Problem

Youths are the leaders of tomorrow. If these youths are idle now what would the future look like. Also an idle mind they say is the devil’s workshop. On the other hand, if the youths are unemployed, frustrated and hopeless for a long time, the likelihood of devising deviant means of making money will be very high. If this persists, how will the future look like? A deviant set of youths will definitely become deviant sets of leaders tomorrow. This is the reason why this study is geared towards finding a lasting solution to youth employment. If the future must be crime free, then the youths have to be gainfully engaged in order to have a crime free state now and in the nearest future.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between unemployment and crime among the youths in Lagos State.

The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the causes of unemployment among the youths in Lagos State,
2. To examine the roles played by government and private bodies to provide job opportunities for the youths.
3. To examine the coping strategies adopted by unemployed youths in Lagos state.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Youth is the time of life when one is young especially the period between childhood and maturity; the early period of existence, growth, or development. According to the African Youth Charter, “Youth” means “every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years”. It is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community.

Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. However, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment. In other words youth is often indicated as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education, and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment. This latter age limit has been increasing, as higher levels of unemployment and the cost of setting up an independent household puts many young people into a prolonged period of dependency (UNESCO, 2013)

Unemployment or joblessness occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Which means the unemployed are people able, available and willing to work at the going wage rate but cannot find a job despite an active search for work.

The concept of unemployment has been defined in various dimensions by eminent scholars over the years. Okafor, 2011 describes unemployment as the condition of people who are without jobs.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2007) defines the unemployed as the number of the economically active population who are without work but available and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1993). The National Bureau of Statistics (2009), described the unemployed as individuals with no work, but are looking for work at the time of any study.

Some other scholars' defined unemployment with a nexus between unemployment, family status and poverty as seen in Valentino Piana's, (2001) definition of unemployment. To him, unemployment is often an element of a vicious circle with poverty, low education and human capital, health disease, social and political marginality. Moreover, the same risk of remaining unemployed is a reduction in utility and welfare for the actual employees. In addition, unemployment is said to be an economic condition marked by the fact that individuals actively seeking jobs remain un-hired. It is expressed as a percentage of the total available work force and the level varies with economic conditions and other circumstances (Investor words, 2013).

Looking at the Lagos State experience just as it is in other states in Nigerian, the level of poverty and economic deprivation have affected the economy so much so that majority of the youths are unemployed, underemployed, lack business or hope for a better employment or means of getting loan to start any business. This has left most of them with no choice other than to commit serious crimes, fraud and internet crimes all in the name of making money to meet basic their needs and to "Live Big".

Theoretical Framework - Functionalist theory is a sociological theory that originally attempted to explain social institutions as collective means to meet individual biological needs (originally called functionalism). Later it came to focus on the ways social institutions meet social needs (structural-functionalism). The basis for social order was not economic, but rather moral. In a functionalist society, everyone has a role and a purpose. In order for this theory to be successful, the individuals in a society need to believe everything is in their best interest. In this modern age, this seems nearly impossible.

Functionalist theorists assume that the different parts of a society each have their own role to play (their own "function"), and work together smoothly in order to form a harmonious whole. The metaphor often used to describe functionalism is that it views society as a body, with the different parts of society—government, media, religion, the family, etc., and, of course, schools—being like the different organs in a body, each contributing in a different way to keeping the entire body healthy.

Functionalists believe everything serves a specific function in our society and these functions need to be understood. Everyone has a role to fill in this functional society, in other words we need to have stratification so as everyone has a purpose. For this theory to really work there needs to be a consensus amongst the individuals that make up society.

More so, Functionalism interprets each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. Society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions

of society, each of which is organized to fill different needs and each of which has particular consequences for the form and shape of society.

All the parts of the society depend on each other for survival. For example, the government, or state, provides employment for the youths from different families, who in turn pay taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. The family is dependent upon the school to help children with standard education and skill in order to be gainfully employed so that they can raise and support their own families and the society. In the process, the citizens become law-abiding, taxpaying, employers of labour and developers of the society who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society maintains order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. When one part of the system is not functioning well or is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which brings about social change

Research Methodology

This study made use of descriptive survey method, Lagos Island was chosen as the location of study. Focus group discussion was adopted as the sampling technique for this study. The sample size was 120 respondents selected from among the unemployed youths residing in the locality for the questionnaire administration. The questionnaire was subdivided into two sections, section 2: contains twelve questions grouped into three categories. The research questions designed purposely to know the causes, effects, and coping strategies adopted by the youth in the face of unemployment using Agree (A), Undecided (U) and Disagree (D). The frequency distribution of the respondents obtained and the data collected from the various sources were analysed with the use of frequency tables and percentages.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

TABLE 4: The Effects of Unemployment among the Youths in Lagos State

No	Unemployment	Responses			Total
		A	U	D	NO
					%
1	Unemployment is common among the youths Lagos state	70 63.4%	30 23.4%	20 13.2%	120 100%
2	Low family income is one of the major reasons for youth unemployment in Lagos state	50 43.4%	40 33.2%	30 23.4%	120 100%
3	Parental low socioeconomic status also affect youth unemployment Lagos state	90 83.2%	10 3.4%	20 13.4%	120 100%

4	Lack of creativity is one factor contributing to youth unemployment in Lagos state	85 70.8%	25 20.8%	10 8.4%	120 100%
5	lack of business orientation can also be considered as one of the factors causing youth unemployment in Lagos state	80 73.2%	30 23.4%	10 3.4%	120 100%
6	The Lagos State Government played a major role in creating job opportunities for the unemployed youths in Lagos State	85 70.8%	20 16.7%	15 12.5%	120 100%
7	The private companies are creating opportunities to accommodate some of the unemployed youths in Lagos State	55 45.8%	45 37.5%	20 16.7%	120 100%
8	Crime is one of the ways adopted by the youths to cope with unemployment	70 63.4%	30 23.4%	20 13.2%	120 100%
9	Crime is therefore prevalent among unemployed youths in Lagos State	70 63.4%	30 23.4%	20 13.2%	120 100%
10	Internets fraud and hacking are the common types of crimes adopted by the youth as coping strategies in Lagos state	62 51.7%	23 19.2%	35 29.1%	120 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4, shows that unemployment is common among Nigerian youth as 63.4% of the respondents agreed. 43.4% agreed to low family income being one of the reasons for youth unemployment. 83.2% agreed that parental low socio-economic background is one of the major reasons for unemployment among the youths in Lagos state. It was also agreed by 70.8% of the respondents agreed that lack of creativity was a major factor of youth unemployment in Lagos state. 73.2% also agreed that lack of business orientation was a contributory factor to youth unemployment in Lagos state. 70.8% agreed that the Lagos State Government played a major role in creating job opportunities for the unemployed youths in Lagos State, 45.8% also agreed that the private companies are creating opportunities to accommodate some of the unemployed youths in Lagos State. 63.4% agreed that crime is prevalent among the unemployed youths in Lagos state and 51.7% agreed that youths have employed internet fraud as one of the coping strategies to unemployment in Lagos state.

Discussion of results

The results of the data collected and analyzed showed that unemployed youths were males (72%) and females (48%) within the age brackets of 18 -40 years (34.1%-. 11.7%) the highest being youths between the ages of 18 - 25years (31.7%) Their educational qualifications ranged from primary school leaving certificates (4.2%) to Masters and professional certificates (12.5%). The highest being Higher National Diploma (HND) or First Degree (B.SC) which were 35.8%.

The study revealed that the youths were engaged in petty businesses (18.3%), while 21.7% were awaiting admission into higher institutions, 31.7% were unemployed, and 28.3% were self-employed / skilled workers. This shows that a large number of the youths are not employed. Those

employed said they were not satisfied with their jobs because it is not bringing out the best in them (underemployed).

70.8% agreed that the Lagos State Government played a major role in creating job opportunities for the unemployed youths in the State. In the bid to curb youth unemployment in Lagos State the government have created new state parastatals to provide job opportunities for the teaming youths in the state. Some of these are the increase in the number of teachers in State owned schools and investment in transportation business (BRT) etc. However the 12.5% that disagreed could just be reacting to the fact that a large number of the youths are still unemployed. 45.8% also agreed that the private companies are creating opportunities to accommodate some of the unemployed youths in Lagos State. An example is the **Primero Transport Company** in charge of the BRT buses in Lagos State

In addition it revealed that unemployment is common among youths in Lagos state as 63.4% of the respondents agreed. This also corroborated Okafor, 2011 where he said that “Every year, thousands of graduates are produced but there are no jobs for majority of them. Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprise”. Statistics from NBS 2010 also attested to the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria as presented in the table below.

Table 1: National Unemployment rate by Educational level, Age group and Gender (2010)

Educational Level	Urban	Rural	Composite
Never attended	19.2	17.7	17.9
Below primary	24.9	23.1	23.5
Primary	21.8	21.8	21.8
JSS	24.5	22.4	23.1
Vocational/commercial	27.9	24.1	25.7
SSS	24.2	23.6	23.9
NCE/OND/Nursing	22.3	20.4	21.5
B.A/BSc/B.Ed/HND	24.0	21.5	23.1
MSc/M.A/M Admin	20.7	18.5	20.1
Doctorate	19.6	19.6	19.6
Others	22.0	23.7	22.8
Age group			
15-24	26.0	24.8	25.2
25-44	22.7	19.6	20.7
45-59	20.8	19.3	19.9
Gender			
Male	21.6	18.5	18.6
Female	24.2	23.1	23.5
National	22.8	20.7	21.4

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012)

For Lagos State in particular, Table 2 represents the data on unemployment rate between the years 1999-2011 (NBS, 2012).

Table 2: Unemployment Rate between the years 1999-2011 in Lagos State.

Year	Percentage (%)
1999	8.8
2000	4.8
2001	5.3
2002	8
2003	25.6
2004	16.1
2005	6.5
2006	15.5
2007	13.7
2008	7.6
2009	19.5
2010	27.6
2011	8.3

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012)
General House Hold Survey Report (1999-2011)

Lagos State has been faced with the challenge of chronic youth unemployment for a long time. The situation was worst in 2010 with unemployment rate of 27.6%, closest to that was 2003 with 25.6%. Though it showed a drop in 2011 to 8.3%. This could be attributed to the efforts made the Lagos State Government in the establishment of new parastatals which brought about employment of many youths across the state e.g. Lastma, etc.

The major causes of youth unemployment ranged from low family income (43.4%), parental low socio-economic background (83.2%), lack of creativity (70.8%) and lack of business orientation. (73.2%). This corroborates Valentino Piana's (2001) suggestion of unemployment being often an element of a vicious circle with poverty and low level of education. Dahrendof, (1976) also opined that poverty as a social condition plays a vital role in crime. He said the poor commit crime because of their relative deprivation and acute sense of want. Hence, the social environment of the poor and jobless youths strongly influenced them to committing crime.

As a result of unemployment in the state, 63.4% agreed that crime is prevalent among the unemployed youths in Lagos state. This is corroborated by Ajufo, (2013) where he said in Africa, youth's unemployment has been a major problem giving rise to other criminal tendencies in the youths and threatens the social-economic peace and stability of the continent.

However the study revealed that the most common strategy that have been adopted by the youth to cope with unemployment in the state are the different types of internet fraud (51.7%). This explains why most of the youths in Lagos state are into internet fraud and playing "fast one" on unsuspecting citizens locally and internationally. The researcher found out that internet crime is so rampant among the youths that they have formed a group called the "**G Boys**". Surprisingly it became a common slang among the youths in 2016 that they even take pride in being associated with the name "**G Boys**". It is worth noting that this group involves undergraduates, graduates and non-graduates in Nigeria today. Some of the youths go to the extent of hypnotizing their victims which they call "clients" with local charms and these set of youths (males/females) are called "Yahoo Plus" (Authors experience 2016).

Implication of Youth Unemployment

Unemployment has far reaching effects on the society. Stratification in the areas of age, race, class, gender, ethnicity, sex and disability is rife amongst the employed and unemployed alike; unemployment creates further segregation amongst these already stratified people.

The youths constitute a large army of the unemployed. There is therefore a tendency for them to look at their plight as the making of a cruel society that does not seem to care for them. Therefore the unemployed youths make themselves available to be used as political thugs and blood-thirsty hoodlums at the disposal of the politicians just for some little stipend. This was supported by Adepegba, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011; Lartey, 2011; Olatunji and Abioye, 2011; Okafor 2007 when they argued that “The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political class for clandestine and criminal activities. They are used to perpetuate ethno-religious clashes in the present democratic dispensation and are well documented (Ibrahim, 2006; Okafor, 2007b).

Aside being used as political thugs, they are being used as local militants to attack, bomb, vandalize and destroy oil pipelines, lives and property in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Gilbert, 2010; Ojatorotu, 2010). For more than a decade, this category of youths have constituted the larger population of the militants in different areas, who have been terrorizing and kidnapping both the expatriate and local oil workers and demanding hefty ransoms (Epelle, 2010). The most recent being the Boko Haram resurgence in the North, the Niger Delta Avengers in the South-South and the Biafra boys in the east.

Another implication of youth unemployment is the resurgence of urban urchins popularly called “area boys” in Nigeria parlance as are the cases in Lagos, Aba, Warri, Agbor, Benin, Onitsha, etcetera. These area boys are a threat to the security and development of a state. In addition, there has been increase in the involvement of youths in various anti-social activities and offences as a result of unemployment. Such offences include; arson, assault, murder, abduction, terrorism, stealing, armed robbery, sex offences, unlawful possession of arms and so on. National Bureau of Statistics, 2009:248 confirmed that persons admitted into the prisons by age group between 2004 and 2008 are youths between the ages of 16 and 20 years, 31,700 youths were admitted in 2004. Others include; 40,170 youths (in 2005); 19,122 (in 2006); 16,236 (in 2007); and 25,317 (in 2008). As regards the youths between ages 21 and 25 years, 39,045 youth were admitted in 2004; 34,600 (in 2005); 28,705 (in 2006); 57,736 (in 2007) and 28,049 (in 2008). Also, for persons between ages 25 and 50 years, 63,100 persons were admitted in 2004; 65,140 (in 2005); 75,491 (in 2006); 80,134 (in 2007) and 73,071 (in 2008). All these figures indicate that a large number of youths are into antisocial and criminal activities, this can be attributed largely to a result of unemployment. Consequently, this has the potential to destabilize and truncate the security and development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study concluded therefore that unemployment is a major hindrance to youth development and progress which has an adverse effect on the society with the resultant effect of high criminal activities on the internet, waste of youthful years, and strength in Lagos state. This also has a damaging effect on the integrity of Nigerian youths in general.

Recommendations

Some recommendations have been raised following the findings of this study. These are:

1. Government and stakeholders should be more creative in their bid to tackle unemployment by establishing new companies e.g. Manufacturing and production companies, servicing companies etc.
2. There should be palliative measures on all taxes to encourage manufacturing industries in Lagos state such as tenement rate, income tax electricity consumption rates etc,
3. There should be more company friendly income tax revenues rather than the harsh and unfriendly company taxes to encourage local and international businesses to grow.
4. Government should be more concerned with economic empowerment programs such as poverty alleviation and skill acquisition by implementing policies which seem to have a recurring effect for the government in terms of income while at the same time serving the needs of the people.
5. There should be investments to address shortage of career-oriented entry level jobs for young people. In these circumstances, employers can engage in investments and adaptive strategies that will help improve the labour market environment for young people.

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