

Youth Unemployment and Sustainable Development in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined youth unemployment and sustainable development in Osun State, Nigeria. The survey research design and purposive sampling technique were used. The sample was 732 youths aged 15 to 39 years. The objectives of the study were to examine the relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development in the state and determine the causes of youth unemployment. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Qualitative data were analysed using percentages and mean. The hypothesis formulated was tested using Pearson Correlation at 0.01% level of significance. The study revealed that 282 (38.5%) of the 732 respondents, were jobless between 0 and 10 years. The main causes of youth unemployment were lack of available jobs due to specific entry level requirements (mean-score=3.9044) and the belief that opportunities are limited because of social class (mean-score=3.7268. The result of the hypothesis indicated negative relationship ($r=-0.318$) between youth unemployment and sustainable development hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The relationship was significant ($p=0.000<0.01$). It was recommended that youth unemployment be handled by all stakeholders through job creation, workforce development initiatives and genuine implementation of entrepreneurship while job entry level requirements are made fresh-graduate compliant and graduates should develop an equal-opportunity attitude to job search.

Keywords: Sustainable-Development, Unemployment, Youth

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I. Introduction

Youth unemployment has become a major challenge worldwide such that a group of panellists at the 2015 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland agreed that youth unemployment poses danger of destruction to the entire human society. They asserted that the unemployed youths are excluded from participating in the economy particularly now that technology is moving fast and impacting the labour market with automation, robotics and 3D printing, which are likely to further reduce future jobs for young people (Omoh, 2015). Youth unemployment appears more worrisome in Nigeria because avenues are not created for youths to channel their creative energy. They tend to indulge in activities that are detrimental to sustainable development such as political thuggery, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping, terrorism, internet fraud and prostitution among others. According to Akande (2015), as the youth population grows so does the unemployment rate of this category of people with the attendant low per capital income. In agreement, the National Bureau of Statistics (2017) reported that unemployment and underemployment continued to be highest for persons aged between ages of 15 to 34 while unemployment and underemployment were higher for women than men in the 4th quarter of 2016.

The increasing rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria is becoming alarming and unsettling in the country where youths constitute a large percentage of the population. Specifically, Nigeria tends to have a high concentration of youths that are either unemployed or underemployed hence underpaid despite having adequate education, time and technical skills. Thus youth unemployment appears to be counter-productive and a major threat to sustainable development since it affects youths with education who cannot work for themselves or for others. In Nigeria, youth unemployment has led to scrambling for the few jobs at Immigration, Prisons, Police and even fake advertisements that often result in anguish, deception and death.

It becomes very important to examine the relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development since a substantial number of youths are unable to deploy their knowledge, skills, talents, competences and other attributes in exchange for salaries, wages and other benefits for others (employers) or themselves (self employment). Osun State became a ready choice because it launched Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (O-YES) where #200 million monthly allowances are given to the unemployed youths which according to the government has brought great micro-economic impact on the state and reduced youth unemployment to 3% which is the lowest rate in Nigeria (Osun State Government, 2016). Similarly, the state government launched a second programme called Osun Job Centre (O-JOBS) which has created the platform for easy job find for

youths and database for employers of labour who need to recruit but the government does not necessarily employ workers. Thirdly, the state government engaged 20,000 youths in public works in less than 100 days after the state government's inauguration in 2014. The programmes focus on career counselling, career exploration, personal career development, employability skills training, annual job fairs, interviewing skills plus other employments directed activities. These activities are geared towards ensuring that the available resources are used, maintained and preserved for the use of future generation hence sustainable development. Despite these efforts, many unproductive and criminal activities have been attributed to youth unemployment which may adversely affect the populace. When youths are excluded from participating in the economy of the state or nation due to no fault of theirs, personal and societal development may be hampered. Perhaps, youth unemployment is still an issue in Osun State, Nigeria particularly when their youths seem to be flooding the streets of neighbouring Ondo State towns. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development in Osun State which has committed resources to tackle the phenomenon. However, the study is not an evaluation of the government launched activities but an avenue to assess youth unemployment and sustainable development in the state through the youths themselves.

The objectives of the study are to determine the causes of youth unemployment in Osun State; and examine the relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development in the state. The null hypothesis postulated for the study is there is no significant relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development in Osun State.

II. Review of Related Literature

Conceptually, youth is age related while its classification differs based on the socio-economic and developmental peculiarities of each country. According to the World Bank, United Nations, its agencies and the African Youth Charter (2006), youths are categorised as people that fall within the 15-35 years age bracket, although 15-24 years is the commonest adopted range. However, the Caribbean Development Bank (2015) reported that the age bracket could extend beyond 35 years but it is generally possible to go by what is acceptable in the local labour market or be country specific. The bank stated that youths are agile, mentally, physically and socially matured which make their involvement in business inevitable hence, companies seek to hire them. Youths in Nigeria are the citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria aged between 18 and 35 years which compares favourably with what obtains in other climes and global institutions. However, irrespective of the criteria being used to determine who youths are, they tend to face challenges of unemployment or underemployment. It is better when youths are gainfully employed because they often seem unstable in behaviour which bears consequences as being faced in today's world. Most times, youths are forced to take underpaid and unsafe employment due to absence of decent and well paid job opportunities which is contrary to sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

Wikipedia (2017) defined sustainable development as a pattern of resource usage that aims at addressing human needs while preserving the environment so that the need of the present and future generations can be met. Sustainable development advocates development that is not detrimental to the environment, economy and society such that better quality of life is ensured. This prompted the United Nations to institute fundamental sustainable development goals (SDGs) which all countries of the world aspire to achieve before the target year 2020. The number eight (8) goal specifically seeks to achieve decent jobs for youths. In return, the youths will promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive lifestyle and society. Recently, the United Nations at the UN Sustainable Development Summit adopted the 2030 Agenda containing a set of 17 SDGs to end poverty, inequality, injustice and tackle climate change. The components of sustainable development are to ensure that the environment is not harmed and natural resources preserved; socially that there is an improved quality of life through education, decent living cum decent wages and economically that the economy is buoyant such that there is peace, food security and decisions are made to the benefit of mankind. Thus, sustainable development denotes human welfare and environmental management.

Empirical studies tend to have attributed the effect of youth unemployment to high youth crime rate, poor health, poverty, community degradation involving graffiti, vandalism and unsafe environment which are detrimental to sustainable development. However, these studies focused on youth unemployment and components of sustainable development such as, security, education, poverty and economic growth among others Akinmulegun (2014) and Obajaja (2016).

The International Labour Organization (2013) had predicted an increase of the unemployed youth in emerging economies of which Nigeria is one, from 5.5% in 2014 to 5.6 % in 2015. It further reported that increase in unemployment in 2016 and 2017 will be 4.8 million. Overall, the body revealed a no significant difference between sexes when it comes to young people's search for work. Meanwhile, the prediction has been confirmed in Nigeria. According to NBS (2017), the population of unemployed was 27.12 million in 3rd quarter of 2016, compared to 28.58 million persons in the 4th quarter, which means the unemployment rate in the country rose from 13.9 per cent in the 3rd quarter to 14.2 per cent in the 4th quarter of the same year. The attendant loss of income may perhaps affect the environment, economy and society respectively.

In Nigeria, Shadare and Elegbede (2012) examined the causes, effects and remedies of graduates' unemployment. The study revealed that economic down-turn, government policy, trade union wage demand and the use of expatriates for domestic jobs are some of the causes of youth unemployment in the country. Others have also attributed the phenomenon to economic recession, government's inconsistent policies, poor education, lack of employable skills and under-regulated economy among others. Other researchers had submitted that if majority of graduates in Nigeria cannot find decent and sustainable jobs after few months of graduation on the bases of skills and competencies gained, then, the schools should be held responsible. Furthermore, Salami (2013) investigated Nigerian youths' unemployment and the way forward. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended re-orientation of the youths, creativity and hard work to avoid easy-way-out life which is detrimental to sustainable development.

Furthermore, Ejikeme (2014) revealed that unemployment and poverty in Nigeria are related to the country's insecurity. The researcher then recommended the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in agriculture as solution to insecurity and other implications of unemployment in Nigeria. In agreement, Akinmulegun (2014) established relationship between unemployment and poverty plus insecurity in Nigeria. Moreover, Obajaja (2016) in his study revealed that youth unemployment increases level of poverty of Ekiti people in Nigeria and has impacted on social vices in the state, thus reducing its economic growth. Similarly, Badejo, Agunyai and Adeyemi (2015) who studied policy, youth recruitment and empowerment in Osun State found that 84% of unemployed beneficiaries of O-YES viewed the scheme as a palliative measure to reduce unemployment in the state and not a permanent solution to unemployment. Furthermore, their study found that 57% of the respondents believed that the scheme did not improve capacity building of youths because it focused on unskilled menial jobs while 85% of the respondents were of the view that the implementation of the scheme was fraught with challenges. However, The Office of the Government of Osun State (2016) asserted that the World Bank has singled out the O-YES scheme for its success in promoting youth employment in Nigeria and has recommended the scheme for replication by the federal and other state governments. Despite the launch of the two programmes in Osun State, many of its youths are flooding the streets of Ondo State towns hence this study. Similarly, Badejo et. al (2015) found that youth unemployment may continue to be an issue in Osun State.

Meanwhile, Riley (2011) showed that effects of unemployment include loss of income, business closure, loss of national output, increase in budget deficit, social costs in form of crime, increased divorce rate, worsening health and lower life expectancy and with less qualified workers suffering longer, even though unemployment does not worsen their prospects. However, most researchers advocate creation of new jobs, deployment of fiscal and monetary policies, spending on education and creation of unemployment benefits as panacea to youth unemployment but these solutions must create demand to stimulate the economy. This will ensure economic sustainability. Riley (2011) further reported that unemployment could be beneficial too. These include an increase in the pool of available labour for businesses wanting to expand as well as unemployment itself prompting some people to become self employed by starting their own businesses. The benefits notwithstanding, many youths seek decent jobs. Amidst the pros and cons of unemployment and sustainable development it becomes necessary to examine how youth unemployment associates with sustainable development in Osun State, Nigeria,

III. Methodology

The study was carried out in Osun State, Nigeria. The state is located in the south western part of Nigeria where it shares borders with Ondo and Ekiti States to the east, Oyo State to the west, Ogun State to the south and Kwara State to the north. It was created in 1991 from part of the old Oyo State. Osun State is peopled by the Yoruba ethnic group. The state is divided into three senatorial districts of Osun Central, Osun East and Osun West respectively. Each senatorial district is made up of 10 local governments hence the state has 30 local government areas. According to the 2006 population census, Osun State population was 3,423,535. Osun Central Boripe, Bolowaduro, Ifelodun, Ila, Ifedayo, Irepodun, Orolu, Odo-Otin, Olorunda and Osogbo

The population of the study comprised all youths in Osun State aged between 15 and 35 years which is undefined although youth population in the state was put at over 700,000 according to the 2006 population census. The simple random sampling technique was used to select three local governments in each of the three (3) senatorial districts, in the state. There are twelve (12) local governments in all. These are Boripe, Bolowaduro, Osogbo and Olorunda (Osun Central), Ife Central Ilesa East, Ilesa West and Oriade (Osun East) and Ayadaade, Ede North, Ede South and Iwo (Osun West). However, purposive sampling technique was used to select 80 respondents per local government and the total sample was 960. All the respondents were youths aged between 15-39 years. A structured questionnaire was constructed based on literature review and identified gaps to elicit responses on youth unemployment and sustainable development from the respondents. The questionnaire designed was multi-choice and were distributed to the respondents in places of worship, sports viewing centres, sports centres and job interviewing/recruitment centres, motor/motorcycle parks offices

of human resource experts, post graduate schools of universities and polytechnics and newspaper stands. Its first section contained statements on the demographic variables of the respondents and its second part elicited information on the subject of study. The researcher and some trained research assistants distributed and collected the completed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean ranking were employed for the analysis of the demographic variables of the respondents. The hypothesis formulated was tested using Pearson Correlation Analysis at 0.01 level of significance.

IV. Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Out of 960 questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents, 732 representing 76.25% were properly completed and returned for the study. From Table 1, it was observed that 76 (10.4%) of the respondents were aged 15-19 years, 98(13.4%) were 20-24 years old, 284(38.8%) aged 25-29 years, 192(26.2%) aged 30-34 years and 82(11.2%) were aged 35-39 years. Gender-wise, 498(68%) were males and 234(32%) were females. On status, 439(60%) of the respondents were single, 283(38.7%) were married, 2(3%) were divorced, 6(8%) were separated and 2(3%) were widowed. On qualification,

284(38.8%) were holders of Bachelor degree/higher national diploma, 258(35.2%) are ND/NCE holders while 70(9.6%) were holders of Master's degree with only 116(15.8) being SSSC holders. As many as 478(65.3%) were jobless from 1-4 years and 98(13.4%) between 5 to 9 years. Out of the 960 respondents, 306(41.8%) were employed, 94(12.8%) were under-employed and 332(45.4%) were unemployed. It could be deduced that majority of the sampled respondents (284) were aged between 25-29 years, males (498) were more than the females, they were mostly single (439), hold Bachelor degree/HND(284), unemployed for upward of 1 to 4 years (478).

Table 1: Presentation of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-19	76	10.4
20-24	98	13.4
25-29	284	38.8
30-34	192	26.2
35-39	82	11.2
Total	732	100.0
Gender		
Male	498	68
Female	234	32
Total	732	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	439	60.0
Married	283	38.7
Divorced	2	.3
Separated	6	.7
Widowed	2	.3
Total	732	100.0
Educational Qualification		
SSCE/GCE	116	15.8
ND/NCE	258	35.2
B.SC/B.Tech/ B.A/B.ED/HND	284	38.8
M.Sc/M.A/M.Tech.	70	9.6
Others	4	.6
Total	732	100.0
Year(s) without job		
1-4	484	66.1
5-9	98	13.4
10 and above	10	1.4
No Response	140	19.1
Total	732	100.0
Employment status		
Employed	306	41.8
Underemployed	94	12.8
Unemployed	332	45.4
Total	732	100.0

Source: Field survey 2017

From Table 2, it can be concluded that the respondents agreed that lack of available jobs due to specific entry requirements such as age and experience is the main cause of youth unemployment in the state as shown

with the mean value of 3.9, followed by the belief that opportunities are limited because of social class or affiliation with mean value of 3.73, state of the economy was ranked third as the cause of youth unemployment in the state with mean value of 3.66, followed by stigma or discrimination due to ethnicity, criminal record, gender, poverty, location with mean value 3.55, lack of qualifications has mean value 3.5, lack of information(3.47), lack of relevant skills(3.42), constrained opportunities due to health status(3.4),lack of self-confidence(3.39), idea that past unemployment causing demotivation (3.37), trade union wage demand(3.33), course of study(3.32), negative experience of employment by self or others(3.28), type of school attended(3.22), lack of willingness on the part of youths(3.19) and socio-cultural factors (3.14). The outcome of the study by ManpowerGroup (2012) suggested that greater access to labour market should be provided for job seekers without undermining social protection and incentives for work. It also opined that practical barriers to initial workforce entry by young people should be overcome through apprenticeship programmes, school to work programmes and employer partnerships. In contrast, Njifen (2015) observed that education, gender and residential environment affect youth unemployment significantly in Cameroon. Mncanyi (2016) in his study revealed that the surveyed graduates perceived the lack of job market information, lack of job experience and not having political connection are some of the factors that influence graduate unemployment. Similarly, he showed that age, race, self-confidence and higher education attended were perceived as factors not having any influence on unemployment among South African young graduates aged between 20 and 24 years. One important outcome of this research on youth unemployment and sustainable development is that more men are looking for job than women contrary to ILO (2013). The global body had reported that both men and women are searching for job equally.

Table 2: Results of Mean Ranking of Causes of Youth Unemployment in Osun State

Statements	N	Mean	Ranking
Lack of available jobs due to specific entry-level requirements e.g. age	732	3.9044	1.
The belief that opportunities are limited because of social class/affiliation	732	3.7268	2.
State of the economy	732	3.6639	3.
Stigma or discrimination due to ethnicity, criminal record, gender, poverty, location	732	3.5492	4.
Lack of qualifications	732	3.5000	5.
Lack of information/networks/connections among youth especially from low social capital	732	3.4754	6.
Lack of relevant skills required in the labour market	732	3.4208	7.
Constrained opportunities as a result of health status/disability	732	3.4016	8.
Lack of self-confidence on the part of the youths	732	3.3934	9.
Idea that past unemployment trends are likely to cause future unemployment(youth demotivation)	732	3.3716	10.
Trade union wage demand	732	3.3306	11.
Course of study or degree obtained	732	3.3279	12.
Negative experiences of employment by self or from others	732	3.2896	13.
Type of school attended	732	3.2240	14.
Lack of willingness on the part of the youths to work	732	3.1913	15.
Socio-cultural factors	732	3.1475	16.

Source: Field survey 2017

Test of Hypothesis

Youth unemployment has no relationship with sustainable development in Osun State. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was computed and tested at 0.01 level of significance. The result as tabulated in Table 3 shows that there exists a negative relationship ($r=-0.318$) between youth unemployment and sustainable development in the state and the relationship is significant ($p=0.000<0.01$). The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted that youth unemployment has effect on sustainable development in Osun State. The result showed that with youth unemployment in the state, sustainable development would be negatively impacted in terms of social, environmental and economic sustainability. This agrees with the study conducted by Akinmulegun (2014), Obajaja (2016) and ManpowerGroup (2012) that youth unemployment leads to poverty and environmental degradation even as Burnett(2015) described youth unemployment as a time bomb.

Table 3: Correlations between Youth Unemployment (YUE) and Sustainable Development (SD) in Osun State

		YUE	SD
YUE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	732	732
SD	Pearson Correlation	-.318**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	732	732

Source: Field survey 2017

V. Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between youth unemployment and sustainable development in Osun State, Nigeria. The study showed that contrary to the generally held perception of the populace, youths in the state are willing to work. However, one of the findings of the study from the perspective of the youths is that entry level requirements are difficult for first graduates to possess. Age and experience are the most difficult entry level requirements to overcome. Furthermore, the study revealed that Osun State youths are of the opinion that only the children of the affluent and politically connected individuals get employed thus limiting their opportunities. The result of the correlation analysis showed that youth unemployment and sustainable development are negatively related ($r=-0.318$). The relationship is significant ($p=0.000<0.01$).

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that government at all levels should enact laws that will remove the stringent job entry level requirements for fresh graduates. Also, graduates should be placed on the scale commensurate with their year of graduation. Finally, entrepreneurship should be further encouraged and funded by government in order to turn fresh graduates to employers of labour and promote sustainable development.

Lack of accurate and adequate secondary data prevented a comparative analysis of youth unemployment and sustainable development before and after the launch of youth empowerment and employment programmes in Osun State.

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