

IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF KUMBOTSO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KANO STATE, NIGERIA

Auwalu Sale Yakasai, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology College of Social and Management Sciences, Al-Qalam University Katsina

Email: ausayak@yahoo.com Phone No.: 08065025789

Abstract

Youth unemployment is a pressing global issue, particularly in developing nations, where young people struggle to find meaningful work. This does not only affect individual economic stability but also hinders societal progress by wasting human potential. A study in Kumbotso Local Government Area, Kano State, Nigeria, aimed at examining the impact of youth unemployment on socioeconomic development, identifying causes, consequences, and solutions. Questionnaires were for data collection and the data were analyzed using percentage. The study found that lack of vocational skills, poor education, corruption, and favoritism contribute to youth unemployment, leading to increased crime and social issues. Effective strategies include establishing vocational centers to promote self-reliance. The study concludes that addressing youth unemployment requires tackling inadequate education, weak policies, job creation, and corruption, and recommends coordinated efforts from government, private sectors, and civil society to mitigate its effects, including poverty, dependency, and reduced productivity.

Keywords: Impact, Kano State, Nigeria, socioeconomic development, youth unemployment

Background to the Study

Youth unemployment is a pressing global issue, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. This phenomenon does not only affect individuals' economic stability but also hampers societal development by wasting human potential. In Nigeria, the situation is worsened by a growing population, weak economic policies, and inadequate skills among youth to match labour market demands, leading to increased poverty, social unrest, and slowed economic growth. Kano State, and specifically Kumbotso Local Government Area, faces significant challenges due to limited job opportunities, poor infrastructure, and a skills mismatch. The consequences are stark: rising poverty, crime, and social instability. Scholars argue that youth unemployment perpetuates intergenerational poverty and inequality (Adebayo, 2013; Oviawe, 2010).

Conceptual Review

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment refers to the situation where individuals between 15 and 35 years old, who are willing and able to work, are unable to find gainful employment despite actively seeking it (National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2020; International Labour Organization, 2020). This issue is a significant challenge globally and nationally, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where the labor market struggles to absorb the growing number of young graduates and school leavers. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) further asserts youth unemployment as the share of the labor force aged 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment, while Nigeria's National Youth Policy (2019) defines "youth" as individuals between 18 and 35 years old, which is the definition adopted in this context.

Youth unemployment encompasses underemployment, job insecurity, and poor working conditions, often involving mismatched or low-paying jobs ("disguised unemployment", Okafor, 2011). This limits individual growth and hinders national development. Key factors contributing to Nigeria's youth unemployment include skills mismatch, limited entrepreneurial capital, corruption, poor infrastructure, population growth, and rural-urban migration (Onah, 2001; NBS, 2022). The consequences are far-reaching, with increased crime, poverty, and social unrest (Olayemi, 2014).

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment in Nigeria is fueled by a mismatch between education and job market demands, with institutions focusing on theoretical knowledge over practical skills (Adebayo, 2013). The lack of industrial development, poor infrastructure, and inconsistent policies have also led to job losses and limited opportunities. As a result, graduates lack the skills needed for available jobs, contributing to high unemployment rates (Onah, 2001; Okafor, 2011). Nigeria's rapid population growth has outpaced job creation, leading to a 42.5% youth unemployment rate in 2022 (NBS, 2022). Corruption and nepotism in recruitment processes marginalize qualified youths, while inadequate entrepreneurial support and limited access to capital hinder self-employment (Olayemi, 2014; ILO, 2020). Government initiatives like N-Power and You Win have been ineffective due to poor implementation, leaving young entrepreneurs without access to credit facilities (Oviawe, 2010).

Poor governance and policy inconsistency also contribute to youth unemployment. Many youth empowerment programs are poorly managed, politicized, or unsustainable. According to Arowolo and Aluko (2010), without a consistent national strategy to address youth unemployment, interventions will remain ineffective. Lastly, insecurity and political instability, particularly in northern Nigeria, have worsened the employment crisis. Many businesses are unable to operate effectively due to threats of violence and kidnappings, leading to business closures and loss of jobs (Ajaegbu, 2012).

Consequences of Youth Unemployment on Socioeconomic Development

Youth unemployment has severe socioeconomic consequences in Nigeria, affecting individuals, households, and the economy. It leads to poverty, with jobless youths unable to access basic needs like food and healthcare (NBS, 2022). Unemployment also fuels crime and insecurity, as idle youth are recruited into activities like theft, cybercrime, and terrorism (Okafor, 2011), contributing to social unrest and violence, particularly in northern Nigeria. Youth unemployment leads to brain waste, as skills and potential diminish over time (Adebayo, 2013). This results in limited innovation and economic productivity, hindering sustainable development. It also fuels political instability and social unrest, with disillusioned youth resorting to protests, demonstrations, and violence (Ajaegbu, 2012). Marginalized and unemployed, they become instruments for electoral violence, destabilizing Nigeria's political space. Youth unemployment leads to psychological issues like depression and low self-esteem, reducing motivation and social integration (Oviawe, 2010). It also hampers economic growth, reducing tax revenue, consumption, and national income (ILO, 2020). Furthermore, it fuels rural-urban migration, straining city resources and leaving rural areas underdeveloped (Onah, 2001).

Measures for Mitigating the Incidence of Youth Unemployment

Addressing Nigeria's youth unemployment requires a multi-dimensional approach. Promoting skill acquisition and vocational education is a key, with a focus on practical skills training (Oviawe, 2010). This can be achieved by expanding and funding technical colleges, skill centers, and apprenticeship programs, and integrating entrepreneurial training into school curricula to prepare youths for self-employment and job creation. Nigeria can tackle youth unemployment by promoting entrepreneurship through programs like YouWin Connect and N-Power, providing startup funds and training, and making them more accessible to rural youth (ILO, 2020). Revitalizing industries like manufacturing, agriculture, and ICT can also create new jobs, requiring infrastructure development, improved electricity, and a conducive investment environment (Adebayo, 2013). Integrating youth employment policies into national plans can ensure sustainable job creation and economic growth.

Agricultural development can employ youths in rural areas like Kumbotso with access to land, inputs, and microcredit, making farming profitable (Okafor, 2011). Public-private partnerships can facilitate internships

and job placements, bridging the education-employment gap (Onah, 2001). A transparent, merit-based recruitment system can ensure equal access to jobs, reducing favoritism and nepotism (Olayemi, 2014).

Also, the promotion of digital literacy and ICT-based employment is gaining attention. In today's world, remote work, freelancing, and tech-based services are major sources of income. Training youth in areas like coding, graphic design, digital marketing, and online business can help them become globally competitive. According to Ajaegbu (2012), leveraging ICT can open up new employment frontiers that were previously unavailable to Nigerian youth. Lastly, effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of youth empowerment programs is vital. Policies often fail due to poor execution, corruption, and lack of continuity. There must be institutional mechanisms to assess the impact of such programs, ensure transparency, and make adjustments where necessary.

Empirical Review

Adebayo (2013), studied the National Directorate of Employment's (NDE) effectiveness in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria, finding that NDE programs had limited impact due to poor funding, political interference, and lack of post-training support. The study suggests that proper funding and monitoring are crucial for youth empowerment programs to contribute to economic development. Okafor (2011), found that youth unemployment fuels social unrest, crime, and instability, with a 1% increase in unemployment linked to a 0.45% rise in crime. Ajaegbu (2012), similarly linked joblessness to violent crimes in cities, highlighting the need for job creation policies, ICT training, and support for small businesses to curb this trend.

Adesina (2013), found that youth unemployment drives rural-urban migration in northern Nigeria, straining urban resources and depriving rural areas of human capital. Olayemi (2014) confirmed high unemployment among secondary school leavers and graduates, citing a skills mismatch as a major cause, and recommending curriculum reform and industry-university collaboration. Iwayemi (2013), found that Nigeria's high youth unemployment reduces productivity, consumer spending, and increases security spending. Globally, ILO (2020), reports sub-Saharan African youths face higher unemployment and underemployment, advocating for investment in entrepreneurship, digital skills, and labor-intensive sectors to address this issue.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design using the quantitative method. The population of this study consists of youths residing in Kumbotso Local Government Area, Kano State, aged between 18 and 35 years. According to the 2023 population estimate from the National Population Commission (NPC), the youth population in Kumbotso LGA is 42,000. The sample size of the youth was 380 and simple random technique was used for the selection of the respondents. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The researcher was assisted by two research assistants in the administration of questionnaires to the selected respondents. The data were analyzed using simple percentages.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	220	57.9%
Female	160	42.1%
Total	380	100%

Table 1 shows that (57.9%) of the respondents were male, while (42.1%) were female. This indicates a fair gender representation, with a slightly higher male participation.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–22	96	25.3%
23–27	120	31.6%
28–32	100	26.3%
33–35	64	16.8%
Total	380	100%

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents (31.6%) were between 23–27 years, followed by 28–32 years (26.3%), and 18–22 years (25.3%).

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	30	7.9%
Primary	64	16.8%
Secondary	130	34.2%
Tertiary	156	41.1%
Total	380	100%

Table 3 shows that a majority of respondents (41.1%) had tertiary education, while (34.2%) had secondary education. This indicates that most of the respondents were educated.

Table .4: Employment Status of Respondents

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed	76	20.0%
Unemployed	158	41.6%
Self-employed	96	25.3%
Student	50	13.1%
Total	380	100%

Table 4Data reveals that (41.6%) of the respondents were unemployed, while (25.3%) were self-employed, and 20% were employed. This confirms the high incidence of youth unemployment as a pressing issue in the study area.

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	210	55.3%
Married	150	39.5%
Divorced	12	3.2%
Widowed	8	2.1%

Total	380	100%
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Table 5 shows that more than half of the respondents (55.3%) were single. This suggests that many respondents were in the early stage of adulthood, where employment is crucial for financial independence and family support.

Results and Discussion

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Table 6: Lack of Vocational Skills among Youths Contributes to Unemployment

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	180	47.4%
Agree (A)	130	34.2%
Undecided (UD)	30	7.9%
Disagree (D)	25	6.6%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	15	3.9%
Total	380	100%

A table 6 shows that (81.6%) agreed that lack of vocational skills contributes to youth unemployment, indicating a skills gap in the labor market.

Table 7: Lack Capital to Start Business for Entrepreneurship Increases Unemployment

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	170	44.7%
Agree (A)	120	31.6%
Undecided (UD)	38	10.0%
Disagree (D)	32	8.4%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	20	5.3%
Total	380	100%

Table 7 shows that (76.3%) of respondents agreed that lack of capital to start business contributes to youth unemployment, stressing the importance of credit facilities and entrepreneurship funding.

Table 8: Corruption and Favoritism in Job Recruitment Affect Youth Employment

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	180	47.4%
Agree (A)	125	32.9%
Undecided (UD)	30	7.9%
Disagree (D)	28	7.4%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	17	4.5%
Total	380	100%

Table 8 shows that (80.3%) believed corruption and favoritism limit youth access to employment. This underscores a perceived lack of fairness in recruitment processes.

Consequences of Youth Unemployment on Socioeconomic Development

Table 9: Youth Unemployment Contributes to the Rise in Crime and Social Vices

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	195	51.3%

Agree (A)	125	32.9%
Undecided (UD)	26	6.8%
Disagree (D)	20	5.3%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	14	3.7%
Total	380	100%

Table 9 shows that (84.2%) of the respondents believed youth unemployment is a key driver of crime and social vices, indicating its severe threat to social stability.

Table 10: Youth Unemployment Increases the Rate of Rural-Urban Migration

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	150	39.5%
Agree (A)	125	32.9%
Undecided (UD)	40	10.5%
Disagree (D)	40	10.5%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	25	6.6%
Total	380	100%

Table 10 shows that (72.4%) of the respondents agreed that youth unemployment causes rural-urban migration, which may lead to overpopulation in urban areas and rural economic decline

Table 11: Youth Unemployment Leads to a Decline in Community Productivity and Development

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	140	36.8%
Agree (A)	135	35.5%
Undecided (UD)	40	10.5%
Disagree (D)	38	10.0%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	27	7.1%
Total	380	100%

Table 11 shows that (72.3%) of the respondents agreed that youth unemployment reduces productivity and hinders local development.

Measures for Mitigating Youth Unemployment

Table 12: Government Should Provide More Vocational Training Centres

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	175	46.1%
Agree (A)	140	36.8%
Undecided (UD)	30	7.9%
Disagree (D)	20	5.3%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	15	3.9%
Total	380	100%

Table 12 shows that (82.9%) agreed that establishing more vocational centres is key to reducing youth unemployment, indicating strong public support for skill-based empowerment.

Table 13: Youth Empowerment Programs Should be Intensified and Sustained

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Strongly Agree (SA)	165	43.4%
Agree (A)	135	35.5%
Undecided (UD)	35	9.2%
Disagree (D)	25	6.6%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	20	5.3%
Total	380	100%

Table 13 shows that (78.9%) of the respondents supported enhanced youth empowerment programs as a sustainable solution to unemployment.

Table 14: Access to Soft Loans for Youth Entrepreneurs Should be Increased

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	155	40.8%
Agree (A)	140	36.8%
Undecided (UD)	40	10.5%
Disagree (D)	25	6.6%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	20	5.3%
Total	380	100%

Table 14 shows that (77.6%) of the respondents believed that improving youth access to business capital can significantly reduce unemployment.

Table 15: Career Guidance and Counseling Should Be Introduced at All Levels

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	145	38.2%
Agree (A)	130	34.2%
Undecided (UD)	50	13.2%
Disagree (D)	30	7.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	25	6.6%
Total	380	100%

Table 15 shows that (72.4%) agreed that career guidance is essential in helping youths make informed job-related decisions, suggesting it is underutilized in the study area.

Table 16: Public-private Partnerships Can Help Create More Job Opportunities

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	150	39.5%
Agree (A)	140	36.8%
Undecided (UD)	40	10.5%
Disagree (D)	30	7.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	20	5.3%
Total	380	100%

Table.16 shows that (76.3%) of the respondents supported public-private collaboration in job creation, recognizing it as a viable approach to address youth unemployment.

Discussion of the Major Findings

The study on Kumbotso Local Government Area, Kano State, identifies key causes of youth unemployment: lack of vocational skills (81.6%), poor education quality (77.6%), skills mismatch (78.9%), inadequate

government policy (75%), limited access to capital (76.3%), and corruption in recruitment (80.3%). These findings align with Adebayo (2013) and Ojo and Olanipekun (2015), highlighting structural issues, poor governance, and institutional barriers. Furthermore, Olayemi (2014) reported that most Nigerian graduates are not equipped with employable skills, mirroring the result that lack of vocational training is a major driver of unemployment in Kumbotso. The findings also align with the report of National Bureau of Statistics (2020) which identified youth unemployment in northern Nigeria as particularly severe due to lack of educational reform and enterprise development programs. The study established that youth unemployment increases crime and social vices (84.2%), causes poverty and dependency (78.9%), drives rural-urban migration (72.4%), lowers community productivity (72.3%), reduces civic responsibility (65.8%), induces psychological/emotional distress (72.3%).

The relationship between unemployment and crime is supported by Odeyemi and Ahmed (2016), who found that unemployed youth are more likely to engage in social vices like drug abuse, theft, and violent crimes. Similarly, Ajaegbu (2012) reported that prolonged unemployment among Nigerian youths' fuels restiveness and criminality, especially in urban areas. On emotional distress, Okafor (2011), found that long-term joblessness negatively affects the self-esteem, mental health, and social integration of young Nigerians a trend echoed by your findings. The association with reduced community development is also in line with Ogunwale (2018), who emphasized that youth unemployment limits innovation and labor input, both of which are essential for local development. Rural-urban migration caused by unemployment, as highlighted in your findings, is also noted by Nwosu and Oduguwa (2015), who observed that unemployed rural youths migrate to cities in search of elusive jobs, thereby straining urban infrastructure.

Respondents strongly agreed that effective strategies to address youth unemployment include: Government provision of vocational centers (82.9%), youth empowerment programs (78.9%), access to soft loans (77.6%), career counseling (72.4%), public-private partnerships (76.3%), compulsory skill acquisition for graduates (77.6%). These findings align closely with UNDP (2018) recommendations that African governments prioritize skill acquisition, youth entrepreneurship, and educational reform. Emeh (2012) also advocated for compulsory entrepreneurship and technical education to equip Nigerian youths with practical skills. Your respondents' support for public-private partnerships is similar to suggestions made by Akinyemi and Abiodun (2017) who found that collaboration between government and industries can help bridge the gap between academic qualifications and labor market expectations. Moreover, the call for increased access to credit for young entrepreneurs is strongly supported by NBS-SMEDAN (2020), which reports that a lack of startup capital is a major barrier to youth-led business development in Nigeria.

The study affirms that youth unemployment in Kumbotso is caused by both systemic and policy-based failures. The consequences are not only economic (poverty, migration) but also social (crime, loss of civic values, emotional distress). Respondents support multi-pronged solutions, similar to national and international best practices: skills development, funding access, institutional reforms, and policy commitment.

Conclusion

Youth unemployment is a critical challenge hindering socioeconomic development in Kumbotso LGA and Nigeria. The main causes are: Inadequate educational systems, weak policy frameworks, lack of job creation mechanisms and corruption. The consequences include among others increased crime rates, and social instability, poverty and dependency and reduced productivity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should create more vocational training centres in Kumbotso LGA to provide market-relevant skills.
2. Educational institutions should integrate employability and entrepreneurial skills into their curricula to better align with labor market demands.
3. Both federal and state governments should increase funding and coverage of youth empowerment initiatives such as N-Power, NYIF, and CBN AGSMEIS.
4. Financial institutions, with government backing, should provide soft loans and grants to youth entrepreneurs without collateral requirements.
5. Collaboration with industries, businesses, and NGOs should be encouraged to create internships, apprenticeships, and direct employment.
6. Schools at all levels should establish career guidance units to help students make informed career decisions based on job market realities.
7. Job recruitment processes should be made more transparent, merit-based, and strictly monitored to eliminate favoritism and nepotism.
8. National policy should mandate all higher education graduates to complete a compulsory certified skill acquisition program before NYSC or final clearance.
9. A coordinated effort from government, private sectors, and civil society is needed to empower youths.

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