

Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: An Interrogation into the Survival Strategies of Lagos Youths

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Abstract

Unemployment in Nigeria has attracted a lot of attention because statistics show that the economically active ages (15–64 years), which represent 115.5 million of its population, are unemployed. This has been traced primarily to the decline in the manufacturing sector, resulting in over half of the 500,000 graduates that Nigeria produces annually continuing to look for jobs. To this end, this paper attempts to interrogate the survival strategies embraced by unemployed graduates in Lagos in order to cushion the effects of staying jobless. Using a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative methods), findings revealed that these unemployed graduates are involved in both legitimate and illegitimate means to survive; however, these illegitimate means are detrimental to the economic sustainability of Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that attention be paid to both the manufacturing and industrial sectors in order to bring back these misplaced jobs.

Keywords: Deindustrialization, Economically Active Age, Graduate Unemployment, Lagos Youths, Survival Strategies

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1. Introduction

Decent work for all, including youths, and industrial growth are part of the core objectives as captured in the 8th Sustainable Development Goal (Vandenberg, 2017; Fessehaie and Morris, 2018). The link between industrialization and job creation is well established in the literature (Rodrik, 2016; Cowan, 2018). However, deindustrialization, which is manifesting rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria, is having an impact on graduate employment. While new sectors are emerging and perhaps contributing to deindustrialization, the survival mechanisms employed by graduate youth remain to be critically and fully explored. In this present world, the rise in the rate of graduate unemployment has become an all-encompassing anxiety. It is a major problem that most countries are encountering in their present social and economic situations (Oppong & Sachs, 2015).

Oddly enough, according to Babatope (2020), 134 polytechnics are currently recognized in Nigeria (57 privately owned, 48 state-owned, and 29 federally owned polytechnics) as of October 2019. In the same vein, presently, Nigeria has 174 universities (79 privately owned, 52 state-owned, and 43 federally owned). In sum, there are 308 degree-awarding institutions in Nigeria, that is, 174 universities and 134 polytechnics, which admit a population of about two million students and graduate about 600,000 students annually. In a couple of years to come, say five years, the total number of institutions awarding degrees will double, and up to one million graduates may be turned out and added to the employment queue and unemployment market annually (Ajibefun, 2015).

Statistically, in Nigeria, unemployment has gotten to a level that is disturbing and alarming. For example, findings from Akintoye (2008) specified that, no doubt, graduate unemployment is a fraction of the total national unemployment rate, aside from other forms of unemployment; it increased to 4% in 1984 from 1% in 1974. Between 1992 and 1997, which is less than a decade, it accounted for 32% of the unemployed labor force in Nigeria (Dabalén, Oni, & Adekola 2010). Eneji et al. (2013) also documented the rate of graduate unemployment at about 60% of the labor supply market in Nigeria. An earlier submission by the National Bureau of Statistics (2016) showed that 52 million nationals within the economically active population of Nigeria have no job, hence are unemployed, and this number is made up of mostly newly trained graduates from tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Youths have been exposed to various challenges as a result of unemployment, for example, infliction of psychological injury due to the breakdown in social contacts and isolation from the work place, lack of self-confidence, loss of prestige and economic strength, loss of status, identity, responsibility, and loss of purchasing power, to mention a few. Many of them have been involved in many disparaging ways in order to cope with unemployment situations, like smoking, clubbing, stealing, and pickpocketing, among others. Having established a background, none of the previous studies have been narrowed down to the psycho-social challenges of unemployment; hence, there is a gap in research.

2. Earlier Studies

The concept “youth” has been comprehended and utilised in different ways by many scholars, governments, and non-governmental organisations. However, in Nigeria, the age range of 15-36 years is perceived as representing the classification of youth (Adegboyega, Okesina & Mustapha, 2016). On this note, the definition of a youth in this study refers to anyone who is aged between 15-36 years. Sociologically, youth signifies a boundary between childhood and adulthood (Chigunta, 2012). Youths in any social setting have the capacities to fuel economic growth, social advancement and national development (Echebiri, 2015). However, youths are prone to extreme behaviour (Etuk, 2013).

Unemployment is a situation which exists when members of the labour force wish to work at the prevailing wage rate but cannot obtain a job. It is therefore used in the sense of “involuntary” unemployment, rather than the voluntary decision on the part of someone to choose leisure rather than work. It can be deduced from the above definition that the unemployed is the stock of all those individuals who are not in employment and who are either in the process of moving to a new job or who are unable to find work at the prevailing wage rate (Onwukwe, 2013). In similar dimension, The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the unemployed as the members of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1999).

As a result of insufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, youths may be forced to resort to casual work and other unconventional livelihood sources, leading to different coping strategies (Echebiri, 2015). Survival strategy according to Torimiro and Kolawole (2015) is the method used by youths who are unemployed as a means of last resort to earn their living in the midst of poverty situation. These strategies are perceived as inconceivable situation driven by idleness and poverty. This has to do with desperation and with no regard for personal integrity (Saka, 2011; Adeosun et al., 2022). Previous studies have identified some coping strategies devised by Lagos youths to cushion the effect of joblessness. For example, buying and selling/street hawking (Onah, 1988), motor Park Touting (Adeleke, 2015; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Anasi, 2010), armed Robbery (Obadan & Odusola, 2000; Jahoda, 2012), involvement in daily paid casual labour (Okigbo, 1986; Torimiro & Kolawole, 2015), parents support (2010), prostitution (Anasi, 2010; Onyekpe, 2007; Anasi, 2010; The Herald, 2013), part time jobs/self-employment (UNAIDS, 2014).

2.1. Dearth of Industries and the Case of Selected Industries in Nigeria

During the past 25 years, employment in manufacturing as a share of total employment has fallen dramatically in Nigeria, a phenomenon widely referred to as "deindustrialization." It is a process of economic and social alteration caused by the reduction of industrial capacity or activity

in a country or region, especially heavy industry or manufacturing industry (Vandan, 2018). It has caused considerable concern in the Nigerian economy and has given rise to a vigorous debate about its causes and likely implications. Several studies have identified the cause of this in Nigeria, more specifically in Lagos state.

Ashely (2019) identified a shift from manufacturing to service sectors of the economy. As countries develop, manufacturing often declines as production is shifted to trading partners where the costs of labor are lower. This was what happened to the textile industry in Nigeria. Textile production experienced the "largest decrease among all manufacturing industries with a decrease of 85 percent over the last 25 years (Raheem, 1993). Nigerians are still buying as many clothes as ever, but most apparels come from overseas. Secondly, Stack (2014) documented the fact that trade deficit whose effects preclude investment in manufacturing. When a country purchases more goods than it sells, it experiences a trade imbalance, which can reduce the resources needed to support domestic manufacturing and other production. Other factors are relatively cheaper to import these manufactured goods from low-cost labour producers in Asia, Europe and America (Philips, 2012). Multiple taxation (Okun, 2015), Naira devaluation (World Bank, 1999) and High cost of running business (Patton & Noller, 1984) among others.

Going by these factors, instances have shown in 2009, a total of 176 firms became terminally sick and collapsed in the Northern area, comprising the Kano and Kaduna manufacturing axis (Babatope, 2020). According to Chukwu and Igwe (2012), in the South-East area with Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi and Abia states, a total of 178 businesses closed shop during the period, while in the South-South area, which consists of Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, 46 companies shot down operations before December 2009. The study listed the South-West area, comprising Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Kogi and Kwara states, as having lost 225 member companies during the same year in review.

Specifically, in Lagos, the headquarters of the Dunlop Nigeria Plc, once a beehive of business activities, has become a ghost of its old self. Dunlop, whose factory is sited along Oba Akran Road, Ikeja, was the cynosure of all eyes. Its operating environment glittered like another progressive firms (Michelin Tyre) of that era; with a combined workforce of over 15, 000 Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike (Ogege, 2011), both companies claimed high production cost, resulting from the near absence of available infrastructural facility like electricity supply as the major reasons for closures. They have since relocated to neighbouring West African country, Ghana, where their businesses are thriving once again. The gigantic machines that used to compete with those of the neighbouring Guinness now lay in solitude with no hope of ever getting attention again.

In addition, in the 1990s, Eleganza, a company owned by a doyen of the Nigerian industrial sector, Razaq Okoya, was employing both skilled and unskilled labour from different parts of the country (Uddin, 2013). Eleganza industries, located along the Oregun industrial axis, also in Ikeja, faced similar situation before it packed up. The manufacturing firm, which is a few poles away from

7-Up Bottling Company, was equally a wonder to behold in its good days. It was famous for the manufacture of plastic products and ball pens (Danjos & Ali, 2014). Indeed, Eleganza industries practically produced all manner of household goods and utensils including cutleries, food warmers, ice chest, electric fans, cosmetics and ballpoint pens. But, that was then; the flamboyant and ageing owner of Eleganza, Rasaan Okoya, has since retreated, quietly to his Lekki Peninsula abode. Okoya had responded to the effect of the Japanese economic incursion on the global market in the 1970s and '80s.

When a company stops operation, the workers there become frontline victims. According to Babatope (2020), 834 firms officially closed shop in 2009, hence, an estimated workers of not less than 83,400 jobs were lost in that year alone (with the assumption that they were all medium-size manufacturing firms, with each having 100 workers). Apart from job losses, the depletion in the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a scare syndrome it creates to the outside investment market (Adetayo, Oke & Aderonmu, 2015) are serious reasons why the government should consider tackling the problems associated with the declining state of our industries.

3. Theoretical Orientation

Robert Merton's (1938) adaptation in Anomie/Strain theory better informs the main thrust of this research work. His Theory was informed by Durkheim's writing on anomie and argued that anomie does not result simply from unregulated goals, but rather, from a faulty relationship between cultural goals and the legitimated means to access them. While we are all socialized to desire success, we do not all have the same opportunities to become successful (Wajim, 2020). Thus, Merton defined several adaptations to anomie and strain. He argued that there are five general adaptations to anomie (Merton, 1938). The key to each is whether there is an acceptance or rejection of the cultural goals of success, and whether or not the choice is to strive for the goal via legitimate or conforming means. Hence, he identified Conformity, Innovation, Ritualism, Retreatism and Rebellion as the modes of adaption when the goals are to be achieved.

Conformity: is the most common adaptation (Deflem, 2018). Conformists have accepted the cultural goal of success or wealth attainment, and they are trying to achieve it via legitimate means. Most college students might be considered conformists as they work hard to earn degrees to get better jobs and have more success after graduation. For Merton, conformity was only the non-deviant adaptation to strain and anomie.

Innovation: is the adaptation for those who have accepted the cultural goal of success/wealth attainment but are trying to achieve it via illegitimate means. Any crime for profit would be an example of innovation (Okorie and Raphael, 2018). Robbers, thieves. Drug dealers and high priced call girls among others would be classified as innovators on Merton's adaptations.

Ritualism: This is the category for those who have abandoned the cultural goals of success/wealth attainment but continue to use legitimate means to make their living (Wajim, 2020).

The dedicated workers who will never advance to management might be considered ritualists in Merton's typology.

Retreatism: This is the adaptation of those who have rejected the cultural goal of success/wealth attainment and have also rejected the legitimate means. The chronically homeless and serious drug addicts according to Shimfe and Wajim (2020) might be considered retreatists in this model.

Rebellion: This is the category for political deviants (Price, 2015); those who don't play by the rules but work to change the system to their own liking. Rebels reject the cultural goal of success/wealth attainment and replace it with another primary goal; they may use either legitimate or illegitimate means to achieve this goal. The clearest example of rebellion would be terrorist groups, who often use violence in an attempt to achieve political goals (Okorie and Raphael, 2018).

The analysis of coping behavior in a situation of unemployment, with the reflection on the theory of anomie and adaptation mechanisms, allows better understanding of various reactions to this particular situation of strain. Unemployment is an individual experience and youths are faced with the problems of survival, this informs the strategies they adopt utilizing any approach put forward by Merton, whether legitimate or otherwise. This was in consistency with (Moffitt, 2014; Deflem, 2018) where it was documented that unemployment brings strain between expectations and the lack of opportunities for success. This encourages people especially the underprivileged to engage in stealing, drugs and other illegitimate activities to achieve their goals.

4. Methods

4.1. Design and study setting

The study utilised a cross-sectional research design and a descriptive survey. The mixed research method was used (quantitative & qualitative research methods) and employed for data collection. The population of the study comprised of youths who reside in Lagos with no jobs and have graduated for at least one year. It made use of these graduates that have looked for jobs but have ended up not getting any or they are being forced into doing what they never intended doing. In Lagos, youth are believed to constitute about 50 per cent of the population (Oje, 2020), equalling over 10 million people. Lagos stands as the largest city in Nigeria and Africa with a population estimated at 21 million (World Population Review, 2019) and it has been estimated to hit 30 million by 2035.

4.2. Sampling

Using a non-probability sampling technique, the purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the study location, while the snowball sampling technique was utilised to select 450 respondents who participated in the quantitative study and 15 respondents for the qualitative study. The Snowball technique was used because the samples were rare to find (Bhat, 2020), hence, existing subjects provided referrals to recruit samples required for the study. The study made use of

the three senatorial districts in Lagos state- Lagos Central, Lagos East and Lagos West (Lagos State Government, 2020: <https://lagosstate.gov.ng/about-lagos/>). These are the official units recognized by the federal government of Nigeria. Hence, 150 participants were selected from each senatorial district to give a total of 450 participants using the purposive sampling technique. Same goes for the qualitative study, as 5 respondents were selected across the three senatorial districts to give a total of 15 participants. Purposive sampling is a good representation of the population for its arbitrary selection of respondents (Adegboyega et al, 2016)

4.3. Research instrument and data collection

Due to the use of mixed method for the study, the questionnaire and the in-depth interview guide were employed. Specifically, the “Survival Strategy Scale” (SUSS) questionnaire developed and designed by the researchers- Owolabi and Oluyemi (2020) was used for the qualitative study. This was divided into two section (A and B); the former being the aspect which collected responses regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents while the latter was a twenty-five (25) items questionnaire to measure the extent of survival strategies of unemployed youths in Lagos. It required participants to indicate their responses in a scale as appropriate by ticking the spaces provided such as SA – Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D- Disagree and SD- Strongly Disagree. The instrument was administered to the participants by the researchers. The involvement of researchers in the administration was to monitor the participants on how to answer the questionnaire, to guarantee them of privacy and confidentiality and also, ensure quick and complete recovery of the research instrument. The in-depth interview was administered face to face and it contained questions that addressed the objectives of the study.

4.4. Data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis of the quantitative study. That is, frequency count and percentage were used to analyse the demographic data section of the instrument. While Spearman Rank Correlation statistical tool was used to test the direction of the relationship (Adegboyega et al, 2016) between unemployment and survival strategies employed by these unemployed youths in Lagos metropolis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyse the data. On the other hand, the qualitative study was analysed using content analysis.

4.5. Ethical issues

Research ethics were strictly adhered to because the consents of participants were sought before the research commenced and they were not forced to do so. Also, the principle of confidentiality was upheld as the researchers promised participants of non-disclosure of their identities.

5. Results

5.1. Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents

The study revealed that more men participated in the study, representing 60.6% of the participants, while their female counterpart represent 39.4%. This shows that males are more unemployed in Nigeria compared to the females. This was supported by National Bureau of Statistics (2018). With regards to the age of the participants, ages 26-30 years are represented with 30.0%, which shows more representation, followed by 31 years above represented by 25.1%. Ages 21-25 years are represented with 23.3% while 16-20 years are represented with 21.5% of the participants. This is also in consistency with National Bureau of Statistics Report (2018) which supports that ages 25- 34 have the highest unemployment rate which supports the findings of this study that discovered ages 26-30. This supports the argument in (Omoniyi, 2016; Shadare & Elegbede, 2012) that Nigeria consists of younger populace which leads to early age of leaving school. This impact on the labour market, hence, the more the age, the more likelihood of being unemployed.

In addition, considering the highest qualification of participants, more respondents have acquired professional qualifications and certifications, being represented by 53.3%. Holders of B.Sc/HND are represented with 42.4%, M.Sc holders are represented with 3.5% while respondents with doctoral degrees represent 0.7%. Aspects regarding their marital status was also asked and majority are single, representing 78.7% while the married are represented by 2.0%. Individuals cohabitating represent 17.5% while those married and divorced/separated represent 1.8% of the population.

5.2. Survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths

Table 1. Mean and rank order of survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths

| ID No. | Variable | Mean | Rank |
|--------|---|------|------------------|
| 1 | Commercial driving (UBER, TAXIFY, etc) | 4.01 | 1 st |
| 17 | Street Trading/Hawking | 3.89 | 2 nd |
| 12 | Marriage (As an escape route) | 3.67 | 3 rd |
| 22 | Arts (Singing, Writing, Dancing, Event, etc) | 3.49 | 4 th |
| 9 | Volunteering for activities (Church, NGO, etc) | 3.49 | 4 th |
| 13 | Farming | 3.47 | 6 th |
| 7 | Post Graduate/Professional Studies | 3.43 | 7 th |
| 6 | Part-Time/Casual Work | 3.43 | 7 th |
| 18 | Vocational Training/Entrepreneurship | 3.43 | 7 th |
| 5 | Parental Assistance | 3.22 | 10 th |
| 2 | Planning to relocate abroad (legitimately/Illegitimately) | 3.21 | 11 th |
| 14 | Drug Trafficking | 2.99 | 12 th |
| 8 | Prostitution (Sugar Daddy/Sugar Mummy) | 2.97 | 13 th |
| 11 | Impersonation (Examination, Interview, etc) | 2.95 | 14 th |
| 24 | Internet/Online Fraud | 2.93 | 15 th |
| 21 | Motor-Park or Garage Touting | 2.91 | 16 th |
| 16 | Stealing/Armed Robbery/Smuggling | 2.85 | 17 th |
| 20 | Political Participation | 2.71 | 18 th |
| 25 | Begging | 2.71 | 18 th |
| 10 | Multiple Sexual Partners (Perceived Economic Benefits) | 2.70 | 20 th |
| 23 | Mounting of road blocks | 2.68 | 21 th |
| 19 | Blood Touting | 2.64 | 22 nd |
| 4 | Online Business (buying and selling) | 2.63 | 23 rd |
| 15 | Seminary | 2.62 | 24 th |
| 3 | Freelance Marketing | 2.61 | 25 th |

Table 1 presents the mean and rank order of the survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths in their bid to cope with unemployment. The table indicates that ID no 1 (with mean score 4.01), ID no 17 (with mean score of 3.89) and ID no 12 (with mean score of 3.69) were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. The first ID no stated “Involvement in commercial driving (UBER, TAXIFY, etc)”, ID no 17 stated “engaging in street trading and hawking” while ID no 12 stated “venturing into marriage as an escape route” as the coping strategies of unemployed youths in Lagos.

On the other hand, ID no 23 (with mean score of 2.68), 19 (with mean score of 2.64), 4 (with mean score of 2.63), 15 (with mean score of 2.62) and 3 (with mean score of 2.61) were the least rated items, that is, 21st, 22nd and 25th respectively. However, all the items have more than mean score of 2.5, which implies that unemployed Lagos youths engage in most of the listed behaviours in coping with unemployment situation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the survival strategies

of unemployed youths in Lagos are both legitimate and illegitimate. The former, for example, engagement in commercial driving, street trading, artistry, volunteering activities, post graduate programmes, etc. while the latter represents strategies like drug use and trafficking, impersonation, internet/online fraud, armed robbery and stealing among others.

Furthermore, the study proposed and tested three hypotheses for the study utilizing t-test, and ANOVA statistical methods at 5% significant level.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the coping strategies of unemployed Lagos youths by gender.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value illustrating survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths based on gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal t-value | P-Value |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------------|---------|
| Male | 273 | 58.2 | 10.67 | 468 | 2.21* | 0.03 |
| Female | 177 | 51.22 | 11.22 | | | |

*Significant at 0.05 alpha level

The table above illustrates if there is a significant difference in survival strategies by gender, and it shows that calculated p-value of 0.03, which is less than 0.05 significant level. This therefore means that there is a significant difference in the coping strategies of unemployed Lagos youths based on being male or female. To this end, the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the coping strategies of unemployed Lagos youths by educational qualification.

Table 3. ANOVA showing the survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths by educational qualification.

| Source | Df | SS | Mean Squares | Cal. F-Ratio | P-Value |
|---------------|-----|----------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Between group | 191 | 391.556 | 540.34 | 2.15 | 0.00 |
| Within group | 259 | 5657.476 | 280.39 | | |
| Total | 450 | | | | |

Table 4 above shows that the p-value of 0.0 is lesser than 0.05 significance level. By this, it means that there is a significant difference in the survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths based on educational qualification. To this end, the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the coping strategies of unemployed Lagos youths by age.

Table 4. Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing direction of difference in survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths by age.

| Gender | Mean | N | Rank | Age |
|---------|-------|-----|------|----------------|
| Group 1 | 56.71 | 135 | 1 | 26-30 years |
| Group 2 | 53.65 | 113 | 2 | 31 years above |
| Group 3 | 51.11 | 105 | 3 | 21-25 years |
| Group 4 | 50.09 | 97 | 4 | 16-20 years |

The table above shows that group 1 (with a mean score of 56.71) differed significantly from group 2, 3 and 4 (with mean scores of 53.65, 51.11 & 50.09 respectively). This also differ slightly from one another. Thus, group 1 (with an age bracket of 26-30 years) is responsible for the variation noticed in the survival strategies of unemployed youths in Lagos on the basis of age.

6. Discussion

The key findings of this study are based on the fact that, in the efforts of youths coping with unemployment situations within Lagos metropolis, they venture into commercial driving; majorly through structured and platforms like UBER and TAXIFY. This was further supported by the qualitative study as indicated from a participant's response.

"... I finished school since 2015, and haven stayed in my parents' house for years, I had to get loan to purchase a Toyota car which I started using for Uber for about a year now. It really pays because of the income I get from the business..." – **Male/32 years/B.Sc. graduate.**

Another participant had this to say:

"... I have started this Taxify business since when I was in 400 level. I had a hire purchase agreement with a friend of mine then. I graduated like a year ago, the car is now mine. With this, I get a steady income every day doing this transport business. I knew this is Lagos where things are hard, so I never planned looking for job after graduation and this has paid off". – **Male/26 years/B.Sc. graduate.**

This shows that Lagos youths have realized the need to be self-employed rather than waiting for white collar jobs that are not forthcoming. This was in consistency with Awonusi (2018) where he noted that Uber and Taxify have enabled the introduction of corporate drivers, who just need a car and the internet to start their own business. This have enabled graduates who have failed to get jobs or are out of jobs to be gainfully employed. This has reduced poverty and unemployment rate in the state among young people. To Adegboyega et al (2016), apart from it contributing significantly to national and economic development by reducing poverty, it would reduce the emotional problem created by unemployment.

Also, in a study conducted by the Uzo (2020), street trading or hawking in Lagos is a unique phenomenon that arose out of the need to solve societal problems like unemployment. In this study, it was discovered that street trading is not only applicable to none graduate, but also holders of tertiary education. A study conducted by the Lagos Business School through Agada (2018) shows that majority of these street hawkers make about N200,000 (approximately \$550) on monthly basis; this to a large extent would contribute to their daily upkeep and survival. A respondent corroborated this and he had this to say from the interview.

“I graduated five years ago, after job several job hunts all to no avail, I resorted into street trading after a friend of mine introduced me to UAC Plc. I sell their chips mostly in traffic, at least it is better than doing nothing. Though stressful, I make about 150% on every carton of chips I sell, and I sell about two (2) cartons every day and double of that during weekends”. – **Male/34 years/HND graduate.**

In similar vein, some youths deliberately engage in marriage in order to escape from the issues and challenges that unemployment brings like emotional instability/suicidal ideation (Adebayo, 2013), stigmatization (Ajufu, 2013) and poverty (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010). This made Price (2019) to document that these unemployed youths venture into early marriages, which makes them shift their responsibilities to their spouses. This can be supported by the response of a participant:

“... I must be honest with you, getting a job has been tough. Though I worked in an advertising firm for a year, but due to irregular payment of salary, I had to leave because it doesn't worth it. I have no family member in Lagos, I had to stay back after completing my youth service. I was fortunate enough to see a suitor whom I agreed to be with. We ended up getting married last year (2019), if not, I would have been in hardship because the decision was made out of the need to survive hardship. Currently, we are working on how to raise funds for me to start a business now. – **Female/32 years/B. Sc graduate**

In another dimension, Lagos youths get involved in illegitimate activities like crime, internet fraud and prostitution among others. These activities are employed to cushion the effects of no jobs. Literatures and earlier studies have documented and supported this finding. For example, Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) as well as Adebayo (2013) argued that the occurrence of youth unemployment is overwhelming to both the individual and the society at large; having huge impacts both psychologically and economically. The degree of the threat which youth unemployment poses to the state is better understood when huge population of the youths are unemployed. Unemployment causes frustration, dejection, desperation and dependency on family members that daily torments the unemployed, hence, the creation of a fertile ground for crime to thrive. Furthermore, Adejumola and Tayo-Olajubulu (2019) contended that unemployment has been identified as the major cause of social vices like armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, political

thuggery, kidnapping and many more. A participant's response as stated below supports these arguments.

"I have really suffered while growing up; even making my way through the university was hell. I cannot live to experience this anymore by suffering because there are no jobs out there, this was why I went into credit card scam. I must tell you, in my own way, I am self-employed. ... while in my final year, I started it and it is what is paying my bills now..." - Male/27 years/ HND graduate

The first hypothesis showed a significant difference in the survival strategies of unemployed Lagos youths based on gender. Findings indicate there is a bias in the manner male and female unemployed youths cope with unemployment situations. Substantial number of studies seem to support the idea that women suffer less from the unemployment experience than men (Van der Meer, 2014; Owolabi et al., 2021) Just as women miss employment as men do, the societal expectation determine the rate at which male and female survive. In Africa, where Lagos occupies, patriarchy plays dominance (Williams, 2019). That is, females are seen to largely depend on the males for their survival (Chadi, 2010; Adeosun et al., 2022). This leads to the case of early marriage, family support etc. against this backdrop, as a result of the changing conditions of the society, females are also striving every possible means to survive, hence, identifying strategies for them to sustain themselves. Leana and Feldman (1991) found that men relied more on problem-focused activities such as job-seeking while women more often used a symptom-focused coping strategy such as seeking social support

Also, it is also expected that women take up a job, though it might be part-time job. But women will suffer much less from behavioural confirmation once they lose their job than men. In that sense becoming unemployed will much less affect their subjective well-being than men. It could also be said that paid work is much less central in the lives of women than men. Due to this centrality of work in the lives of men, the loss of a job has much more severe consequences for men than for women. This holds especially for married and cohabitating men. Smaller differences are to be expected between single men and women.

The second hypothesis revealed there is a significant difference in the survival strategies of unemployed youths in Lagos based on educational qualification. To this end, education does affect the survival strategies adopted by unemployed youths. This informs that, the level of youths' educational would determine and drive how well they cope with unemployment situations. This is in consistency with the findings of Christensen et al (2016) where it was discovered that in relation to educational background, unemployment drives variety of survival strategies. They observe that while youths with lower education background use problem solving coping strategies less often, youths with medium and higher educational background use less avoidant coping. This is common among youths who go into cohabitation.

The last hypothesis revealed a significant difference in the survival strategies of unemployed youths in Lagos based on age. This was in consistency with Kulik (2000) that found out that younger unemployed youths spend more time looking for jobs than youths that are middle-aged who prefer to be out working on their own than accepting jobs that accept low-paying jobs. This is because older youths who reside most especially in cities like Lagos have the mindset that ageing reduces their chances of gaining employment opportunities. In this light, they venture into activities of their own.

7. Conclusion and Policy Implication

The study examined issues on deindustrialisation and graduate unemployment in Nigeria, with specific reference to the survival strategies employed by these youths in Lagos. The study has shown that Industrialisation plays a vital role in advancing socio-economic objectives like employment opportunities, poverty reduction and improved infrastructure among others. Industrialization comes with socio-economic and political development, that is, the more the industrial capacity of a society is developed, the greater the socio-economic and political growth and development. However, the case in Lagos is a far cry from what is expected of an industrialised society because of the dearth of its industries which has brought a reduction in youth employment. This has made unemployed Lagos youths to adopt different survival strategies to cushion the effect of unemployment. For example, engaging in commercial driving, mostly with Uber and Taxify, involvement in street trading and hawking, getting married as an escape route and engaging in some professional certification among others. These are for those who venture into legitimate means. From all indications, unemployment situation is a worrisome experience for youths in Lagos, this has led many into illegitimate means to survive, for example, crime and the exhibition of deviant behaviours.

Hence, findings from this study revealed that unemployed youths in Lagos employ both acceptable and unacceptable means as strategies to survive this scourge. On this note, the study recommends that the government should create more employment opportunities for youths in all sectors. For example, the agricultural sector of the economy which employs larger percentage of Nigerians should be resuscitated. Despite the fact that Lagos is a city, it can encourage this venture among youths.

Parents should support their children to choose good coping strategies that will benefit the society. The counsellors with the help of all stake holders should organize programmes that will create appropriate employment opportunity for youths. Private investors in partnership with the state government can open spaces for the development of entrepreneurial activities to train, equip and build the capacity and skills in these youths to make them venture into them if jobs do not arise. In addition, industrialisation guarantees employment creation and reduction in poverty, therefore, the government must earnestly pursue a resuscitation of all abandoned industries to pave way for the unemployed youths. This can be further facilitated in conjunction with private investors.

For theoretical implication, the study recommends further research with the primary objective of improving studies on deindustrialisation and graduate unemployment. Firstly, the research employed a cross sectional research design (that is, the study of a group of respondents only at a given point in time), but this might not capture the changes that might occur after the implementation of some proposed recommendations. To this end, the study recommends a longitudinal research design (that is, studying a group of respondents over a longer period of time, or more than once). This would continually measure the same sample of the population over a given period in the future study.

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