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From Campus to Crime: Unveiling the Link Between Graduate Unemployment and Social Crimes in Lagos, Nigeria

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This study explores the relationship between unemployment and social crimes among university graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. The research aimed to answer five key questions and test corresponding hypotheses. An ex-post facto design was adopted, with a sample drawn from the population of young people in Kosofe. The sample of 400 individuals was selected through purposeful sampling from locations such as bars, betting centers, and okada rider parks. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire, the USCG (Unemployment and Social Crimes Graduate) questionnaire, which was validated through face validity. A pilot study in the Ikorodu Local Government Area confirmed the reliability of the instrument. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistical tools. The findings indicated that there is no significant relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, but a significant relationship was found between graduate unemployment and gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness. Additionally, no significant gender differences in social crimes among unemployed graduates were observed. The study concluded that graduate unemployment contributes to social crimes such as gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the government create more industries to address graduate unemployment, thereby reducing cybercrime and other associated social crimes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since Nigeria gained independence over six decades ago, one of the most alarming challenges facing the nation has been the persistent issue of graduate unemployment, which has had significant social and economic consequences. The rising unemployment rate, particularly among young graduates, has led to an increase in social crimes, such as cybercrime, prostitution, and other forms

of criminal activity (Ajayi, 2015, p.50). Despite Nigeria's vast human and natural resources, prolonged mismanagement, corruption, and adverse policies have hindered the country's economic growth and resource utilization, exacerbating the unemployment problem. As the nation's population continues to grow, the number of graduates from higher education institutions increases, but the limited availability of employment opportunities has worsened the situation (Ugal et al., 2011, p.78).

Throughout Nigeria's post-independence history, youth unemployment has remained a critical issue. During the oil boom of the 1970s through the 1990s, youth unemployment persisted, reflecting systemic governance failures, corruption, and poor economic planning. For approximately 30 years, Nigeria was under military rule, a period marked by institutionalized corruption, which contributed to the collapse of social infrastructure and the productive sector (Ugal et al., 2011, p.79). Consequently, Nigeria's unemployment rate has remained high, with little progress in addressing the growing challenges of job creation.

Education in Nigeria has been regarded as a vital tool for national development, and one of its key objectives is to foster a united, self-reliant society where all citizens have equal opportunities. However, this vision has been overshadowed by the rising army of unemployed youth, many of whom are graduates who cannot find jobs that align with their qualifications. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2016) reported that a significant proportion of Nigeria's population remains in poverty, with unemployment rates increasing each year. The inability of graduates to secure employment in their fields of expertise has led to a rise in underemployment, casual work, and unorthodox livelihood sources, contributing to social instability (Uddin & Uddin, 2013, p.400.).

Graduate unemployment is not only a national concern but also a development challenge that has attracted the attention of various stakeholders, including government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and corporate entities. Initiatives such as skills acquisition programs, entrepreneurship training, and vocational education have been introduced to mitigate unemployment. However, these efforts have had limited success, as the number of unemployed youth continues to rise (Azogu, 2020, p.18). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reported that the unemployment rate for Nigerian youth rose sharply from 15% in 2015 to 35% in 2018 (UN DESA, 2019, p.14), further underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue.

The high unemployment rate in Nigeria has far-reaching consequences, particularly for youth, who represent over 50% of the population. Many young Nigerians, especially graduates, face the harsh reality of joining the ranks of the unemployed after completing their education. The National Bureau of

Statistics (2018, p.22) indicated that as of the third quarter of 2018, 55.4% of youth in Nigeria were unemployed, which is a staggering figure given the country's large population. As the unemployment crisis deepens, social crimes such as theft, cybercrime, and drug abuse have become more prevalent (Alabi, 2014, p.17). These crimes are often driven by poverty, hopelessness, and frustration, as youth are unable to access meaningful employment opportunities.

The relationship between unemployment and social crimes is well-documented, with high unemployment rates leading to increased criminal activity. As young people are unable to secure stable jobs, many turn to illegal means to survive, resulting in a surge in criminal behavior (Alabi, 2014, p. 20). The growing insecurity in Nigeria is a reflection of this dire situation, with criminal activities such as robbery, cybercrime, and violent protests becoming more widespread. The lack of commitment from political leaders to address the unemployment crisis further exacerbates the situation, leaving many young Nigerians disillusioned and desperate.

This study aims to examine the relationship between graduate unemployment and the rise of social crimes among university graduates in Lagos State, focusing on Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State Nigeria. By exploring this connection, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how unemployment influences social instability and to offer recommendations for addressing the underlying causes of graduate unemployment and its associated social problems.

Statement of the Problem: In contemporary Nigeria, the issue of graduate unemployment has reached alarming proportions, with many individuals who have completed their National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program still struggling to secure stable employment. This persistent problem has exacerbated the socio-economic landscape of the country, where the absence of adequate social security systems and the scarcity of basic amenities further complicate the situation. The problem is particularly acute among the youth, a group that is increasingly disenfranchised by the lack of viable opportunities for economic participation.

The widespread unemployment rate has triggered alarming trends such as gambling, particularly among both educated and uneducated youths. Gambling, often viewed as a form of escapism, has become a coping mechanism for many young people who see it as a quick route to financial gain. However, this form of "hope" is illusory, with addiction to gambling leading to severe social, psychological, and economic consequences. This addiction not only undermines individual well-being but also further entrenches a culture of despair and hopelessness within the youth demographic.

The situation is compounded by the prevailing attitudes within Nigerian society, where politicians often display wealth acquired through dubious means, thus promoting a distorted image of prosperity that is disconnected from hard work. This creates a mindset in which the youth, desperate for financial independence, may resort to immoral or criminal activities such as cybercrime (popularly known as “yahoo”), prostitution, robbery, drug abuse, and other forms of social unrest. The moral decline is further exacerbated by the socio-political environment, which often encourages shortcuts to wealth, thereby promoting a cycle of unethical behavior.

Graduate unemployment breeds frustration, and when job-seeking efforts repeatedly fail, many youths may resort to criminal alternatives as a means of survival. This frustration, compounded by the socio-economic challenges, has led to an increase in social crimes, which undermine the stability of society. Consequently, there is an urgent need to examine the relationship between unemployment and social crimes among university graduates, particularly in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, in order to better understand the broader implications of this issue and inform potential solutions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between unemployment and social crimes among university graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, commonly known as ‘419’, in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
2. Analyze the connection between graduate unemployment and gambling activities in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
3. Explore how graduate unemployment is related to prostitution in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
4. Investigate whether graduate unemployment contributes to youth restiveness in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
5. Examine the existence of gender differences in the prevalence of social crimes among unemployed graduates in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We have addressed the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, particularly ‘yahoo’, in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?
2. To what extent does graduate unemployment contribute to gambling in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

3. Is there a significant connection between graduate unemployment and prostitution in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?
4. Does graduate unemployment correlate with youth restiveness in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?
5. Are there gender differences in social crimes associated with graduate unemployment in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

This study adopts an ex-post facto design to investigate the relationship between unemployment and social crimes among university graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. The ex-post facto design is appropriate as it focuses on studying past events and their ongoing effects, without manipulating variables. The study aims to examine the relationship between unemployment and various social crimes that have already occurred, such as cybercrime, gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness, and their impact on the community.

The population for this study includes all young people in Kosofe Local Government Area, particularly those frequently present in bars, betting centers, and okada rider parks. These individuals are considered to be at higher risk of engaging in social crimes due to the socio-economic pressures associated with unemployment. A sample of 400 young people is drawn from these locations, using purposeful sampling to ensure the selection of participants who are representative of the study's focus.

A self-structured questionnaire, the USCG (Unemployment and Social Crimes Graduate) questionnaire, was developed for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two sections: Section A gathers demographic information, while Section B contains research questions addressing the relationship between graduate unemployment and social crimes like cybercrime, gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness, as well as gender differences in these crimes. The items in Section B are rated on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation for hypotheses that examine relationships between variables, and t-tests for the hypothesis concerning gender differences. A pilot study conducted in Ikorodu Local Government Area with 20 respondents confirmed the reliability of the instrument, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.93, indicating strong reliability. The research aims to provide valuable insights into the links between graduate unemployment and social crimes in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, we developed following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, popularly known as 'yahoo', in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

2. Graduate unemployment is not related to gambling in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
3. There is no significant relationship between graduate unemployment and prostitution in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
4. Graduate unemployment is not related to youth restiveness in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
5. There is no significant gender difference in the social crimes associated with graduate unemployment in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

3. RESULTS

Demographic Data: Table 1 shows that, of 400 respondents involved in this study, 42 respondents were females (10.5 %) and 358 respondents were males (89.5%).

Table 1. Gender Distribution

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	358	89.5
2	Female	42	10.5
	Total	400	100

Furthermore, the majority of participants belong to the age groups 20 – 25 years (n = 78) and 31 – 35 years (n = 77). Meanwhile, only 8.75 percent of the total respondents are aged over 50 years (Table 2).

Table 2. Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age group	Number	Frequency
20-25 Years	78	19.5
26-30 Years	63	15.75
31-35 Years	77	19.25
36-40 Years	63	15.75
40-45 Years	42	10.5
46-50 Years	42	10.5
51 Years and Above	35	8.75
Total	400	100

Table 3 indicates the level of education of participants. The majority of participants hold an OND (n = 134), while only 42 respondents hold an MSc/Med.

Table 3. Level of Education Distribution of the Respondents (OND = Ordinary National Diploma; HND = Higher National Diploma; Bsc/Bed = Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Education; Msc/Med = Master of Science/ Master of Education)

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
OND	134	33.5
HND	119	29.75
BSc/BEd	105	26.25
MSc/MEd	42	10.5
Total	400	100

Test of Hypotheses

Data generated were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistical tools.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, popularly known as ‘yahoo’, in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 4. PPMC Showing the Relationship Between Graduate Unemployment and Cybercrime (N = sample size, \bar{x} = sample mean; SD = Standard Deviation)

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	p-value	Sig
Graduate Unemployment	400	15.20	1.83				
Cybercrime	400	16.40	2.94	399	0.08	0.07	0.05

Our findings showed no significant relationships between graduate unemployment and cybercrime ($p = 0.007$), which supports our hypothesis one. Despite the non-significance value observed, the r-cal (Calculated Pearson Correlation Coefficient) value suggests a very weak positive correlation between graduate unemployment and cybercrime (0.08).

Hypothesis Two: Graduate unemployment is not related to gambling in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 5. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship Between Graduate Unemployment and Gambling

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	P-Value	Sig
Graduate Unemployment	400	15.20	1.83				
Gambling	400	14.60	4.18	399	0.17	0.001	0.05

Table 5 shows the rejection of our null hypothesis which stated that graduate unemployment is not related to gambling in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, with p value equal to 0.001. This clearly indicates that

graduate unemployment is related to gambling in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to examine the relationship between graduate unemployment and gambling. This test measures the strength and direction of the linear association between two continuous variables ($r\text{-cal} = 0.17$). This means that as graduate unemployment increases, gambling behavior also tends to increase, though the relationship is weak.

Hypothesis Three: There is no relationship between graduate unemployment and prostitution in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 6. PPMC Showing the Relationship Between Graduate Unemployment and Prostitution

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	P-Value	Sig
Graduate Unemployment	400	15.20	1.83				
Prostitution	400	14.00	5.10	399	0.30	0.00	0.05

In addition, similar to the previous hypothesis, our findings in Table 6 indicate the rejection of the hypothesis. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between graduate unemployment and prostitution in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis Four: Graduate unemployment is not related to youth restiveness in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 6. PPMC Showing the Relationship Between Graduate Unemployment and Youth Restiveness

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	r-cal	P-Value	Sig
Graduate Unemployment	400	15.20	1.83				
Youth Restiveness	400	14.40	3.50	399	0.10	0.03	0.05

Table 6 showed that our null hypothesis which stated that graduate unemployment is not related to youth restiveness in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, was rejected. There is a significant relationship between graduate unemployment and youth restiveness in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant gender difference in social crimes among unemployed graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area.

Table 7. Independent T-test Showing Gender Difference in Crimes Among Unemployed Graduates

Gender	Mean	N	SD	DF	t-test	P-value	Sig
Male	16.44	358	2.93	398	0.8	0.4	0.05
Female	16.04	42	3.01				

Finally, Table 7 shows the acceptance of our null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in social crimes among unemployed graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area ($p = 0.4$).

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from Hypothesis One reveal that there is no significant relationship between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, commonly known as "Yahoo" in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State of Nigeria. Term "Yahoo" in Nigeria is a slang term for internet fraud, specifically referring to cybercrime and online scams. The phrase originated from the early 2000s when fraudsters used Yahoo Mail to deceive victims, often through email scams, phishing, and advance-fee fraud (commonly known as 419, where scam-fraudsters deceive victims into paying an upfront fee with the promise of receiving large sums of money later). This result contradicts the assertion by Igba, Igba, Nwambam et al. (2018, p. 1144), who argue that university undergraduates are often lured into cybercrime due to economic downturns, seeing it as a means of personal development, entertainment, and financial gain. Cybercrimes, such as cyber terrorism, identity theft, and credit card fraud, are said to thrive in environments where poverty and unemployment are prevalent. Additionally, Igba et al (2018, p.1146) suggest that the rise of cybercafés in universities facilitates access to the internet, where these crimes are often perpetrated. This study's findings also conflict with Obarafor's (2019, p.80) conclusion that the significant increase in internet penetration in Nigeria, coupled with high youth unemployment rates, has led many young people to resort to cybercrime. Although unemployment is a major driver of social crime, including cybercrime, the results from this study indicate that it is not the primary catalyst for cybercrime in the Kosofe area, challenging the prevailing narrative in previous studies.

The findings from Hypothesis Two suggest that graduate unemployment is indeed related to gambling in the Kosofe Local Government Area. This result aligns with Mustapha & Enilolobo's (2019, p.41) observation that gambling has become one of the fastest-growing industries in Nigeria, particularly among young people. With the increasing rate of graduate unemployment, many have turned to gambling as a quick and easy way to create wealth. This

expansion of the gambling industry, encompassing activities such as lotteries, casinos, and sports betting, has significantly penetrated Nigerian households, particularly in urban areas like Lagos. As pointed out by Okorodudu (2014, p.21), gambling, especially sports betting, has become a popular substitute for unemployment, as young Nigerians increasingly place bets on match outcomes in hopes of financial rewards. However, this behavior often leads to gambling addiction, which brings about various social and psychological issues, including depression and substance abuse, affecting the overall well-being of the youth.

In Hypothesis Three, the analysis found a relationship between graduate unemployment and prostitution in Kosofe, which is consistent with Aloba and Ndifon's (2014, p.45) view that prostitution has become a prevalent social crime in Nigeria, particularly among unemployed graduates. Prostitution is often seen as a desperate means of survival in response to economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities. Prostitutes exchange sexual favors for money, often in secretive settings like private homes, brothels, or hotels. This immoral profession is associated with a myriad of social problems, including marital instability, unwanted pregnancies, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Ugal et al. (2011, p.83) further support these findings, noting that a significant percentage of young women in prostitution cite economic hardship as the primary motivator. Moreover, the increasing number of unemployable graduates in Nigeria, who possess qualifications but lack practical skills, exacerbates this issue.

The findings from Hypothesis Four indicate a significant relationship between graduate unemployment and youth restiveness in Kosofe. This supports the views of Ome-Egeonu & Samuel (2014, p.150), who argue that high levels of graduate unemployment lead to youth restiveness, as young people, frustrated by their inability to secure employment, engage in criminal activities. Unemployment has become a chronic and pressing issue in Nigeria, contributing to various forms of social unrest, such as ethnic militias, cultism, and armed robbery. Akpokighe & Ejovi (2020, p.79) also highlight that the widespread discontent among unemployed youth threatens national peace and security. The root causes of youth restiveness are multifaceted, including the lack of basic infrastructure, inadequate social amenities, and high unemployment rates. This unrest significantly hinders national development; as young people are unable to contribute meaningfully to society due to economic disenfranchisement.

Finally, Hypothesis Five tested the potential gender differences in social crimes associated with graduate unemployment in Kosofe. The analysis revealed no significant gender difference, which contradicts the assertions of Bennett et al. (2005, p.279) and (Estrada et al. 2016, p. 1283). They argue that gender differences in crime and violence are influenced by social cognition,

with males generally being more vulnerable to delinquent behaviors. However, this study found that graduate unemployment affects both genders similarly in terms of involvement in social crimes, challenging the notion that women are less prone to such behaviors. While there may be some degree of gender disparity in the types of crimes committed, this study shows no significant difference in the overall rates of social crimes between male and female graduates facing unemployment.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between graduate unemployment and various forms of social crime in the Kosofe Local Government Area. The evidence suggests that while certain crimes, such as gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness, are closely linked to unemployment, others, like cybercrime, may not be as strongly influenced by this factor as previously assumed. These findings have important implications for policymakers, who must address graduate unemployment and its associated social impacts through targeted interventions and economic reforms.

Conclusion: In this study, we investigated the relationship between unemployment and social crimes among university graduates in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. Five research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated. The study employed an ex-post facto design, with the population comprising young individuals in the Kosofe Local Government Area. We concluded that graduate unemployment is closely related to social crimes such as gambling, prostitution, and youth restiveness in the Kosofe Local Government Area. Additionally, while no significant relationship was found between graduate unemployment and cybercrime, the overall impact of unemployment on social crime rates is evident. The challenges of graduate unemployment have been exacerbated by the rapid growth of the population in formal education and the current global economic recession, making the issue more urgent and difficult to ignore.

Recommendations: Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The government should establish more industries to absorb unemployed graduates, which would help reduce cybercrime by providing legal employment opportunities.
2. Youth empowerment programs should be organized by the government to equip unemployed graduates with skills, reducing the rate of gambling and other social vices in the area and across the nation.
3. A national campaign should be launched to raise awareness about the dignity of labor, discouraging young people from engaging in prostitution, and promoting alternative, lawful means of income generation.

4. Orientation programs should be conducted to encourage youth to protect government properties and reduce restiveness. Additionally, the government should provide alternative programs to engage the youth productively, diverting their attention from negative activities.

These recommendations aim to address the underlying issues of graduate unemployment and its link to social crimes, fostering a more stable and productive society.

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