Impact of Graduate Unemployment on Students' Study Habits and Students' Academic Performance in Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study was designed to investigate the impact of graduate unemployment on study habits and students' academic performance of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A self structured questionnaire validated by experts and tested was used as the research instrument. The instrument was administered to 192 undergraduate students of Abia State polytechnic, Aba. Data collected was analyzed using simple percentages, frequencies and chi-square statistical test tools. Contingency tables facilitated the analysis. The result revealed that there is an association between graduate unemployment and students' study habit resulting to poor academic performance and self-concepts amongst the students. Result findings showed that casual factors of graduate unemployment were nepotism, meritocracy, favoritism and lack of employable skills. The study concludes that payment of bursary allowances to students in Nigeria should be revisited while employment by favoritism should be stopped. The study also recommends adequate job opportunities and launching of national campaign on the importance of skill acquisition for youths.

Keywords: Graduate unemployment, study habits, academic performance

Introduction

One interesting but emerging feature of Nigerian economy is graduate unemployment. This remains the most pressing challenges facing the country at the moment. This development has led Nigeria to experience spate of violence due to idling hands, brain drain, low economic productivity and decrease in actual gross national product (GNP).

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2016) report indicates that 150,000 graduates were produced by tertiary institutions in 2013 against an employment rate of 12.3 percent. It suggests that two-thirds of universities graduates are not gainfully employed. This has tremendous negative effects on the nations graduates and on Nigerian economy generally.

Graduate unemployment is defined as the number or proportion of degree holders (Graduate and Post graduate) in a given economy who are capable and willing to work, but unable to find jobs (Oppong and Sachs 2015). Graduate unemployment is caused by countless factors such as mismatch between aspirations, skills, and self concept of graduates and employment opportunities available to them.

Akpan (2005) sees it as dysfunctional educational system caused by inadequate effort by the government in the areas of policies and programmes targeted at increasing and attaining

economic growth and full employment.A research by the National Board for technical Education (NBTE 2005) reveals that most graduates were not well equipped with skills necessary to perform certain job functions required of them on the labour market and about 85% of Nigerian graduates fall in this category.

This implies that job creation and job opportunities are inversely proportional with the number of graduates in the country. In Abia State, graduate youth unemployment situation is worse as there are non functioning industries and companies to absorb the plethora of youths turned out yearly from tertiary institutions located in and outside the states. Abia State has a total of four thousand, eight hundred and eighty-eight (4,888) graduates reported to be without any means of economic sustenance (National Directorate of Employment 2014). This number excludes unofficial and undocumented graduate youths without jobs.

This situation has made unemployment graduate youths vulnerable to illegal activities and anti-social behaviours. Both male and female unemployed graduates are affected. They are situationally forced to learn trade, or attached themselves as sales boys/girls or agents to private individuals with businesses for subsistence like kidnapping and keke driving. The girls however took to illicit behaviours like prostitution and petty trading.

Due to the increasing rate of unemployment amongst the graduates in Abia State, the frequencies of anti-social activities have increased tremendously. It is observed that the employment opportunities available space filled was either for the highest bidder or hijacked for their cronies thereby denying majority of job seekers and beneficiaries access, thus contributing insignificantly to employment generation quota needed to create impact to the state's economy. This study contends that if the current spate of unemployment continues andunabated, many Nigerian graduates may be recruited into kidnapping, militants and insurgents of anti social behaviours.

Reports of large scale educational failure among Nigerian school adolescents has raised more attention and greater concerns among all.Notable amongst them are students indiscipline, drug addiction, poor socio-economic background of the parents, inadequate motivation on the part of the students, lack of information and teachers non-challant attitude to work and students negative self-concept, which have often resulted into students inconsistent poor academic performances in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Scholars have suggested that problems of learning are the artifacts of discontinuities which are brought by the separation of learning from real life functions and situations and by exclusions of the child's language, values, and mode of cognition from the school environment (Fagbemi and Ugodinma as cited in Udo 2019).

However, causes of low academic performance among students are diverse and cannot be associated with a single major factor alone. For instance, proponents of self-concept and its variables maybe a paramount factor of academic failure. Causes of fluctuating performances among students have also been attributed to teacher-student interactions or relationships, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and other extraneous variables (Udo 2019).

Studies on the relationships between graduate unemployment on students study habits cannot be exhaustive in Nigeria. Successful achievement in any form of activity is based upon study,

interpretation, application and purpose. It therefore depends on individual to decide whether he/she wants to study or not. What one learns as a result of the study thus depends on the degree at which one succeeds in achieving that purpose.

Nevertheless, this study is linked to the theory of frustration and aggression developed by Dolland and associates (1939). It appears to be the most common explanation for violent behaviour stemming from inability to fulfillment of needs. According to Dolland and associates as cited in Ihedioha (2019) individuals are motivated to achieve life ambitions and fulfill destiny, but when these expectations are thwarted, frustration sets in and that existence of frustration leads to some form of aggression.

Many Nigerian youths are jobless and hardly secure gainful employment some years after graduation. The available job vacancies are for the sons and daughters of the ruling class and their friends. In some cases, vacancies are sold to prospective buyers whether they are the right candidates for the job so far as he or she pays for it, he or she gets it. The ones that deserve the positions are therefore denied the opportunities because they do not belong. These make youths to resign to fate and can be lured into using their untapped intelligent wrongly. These however have led to socio-economic injustice and inequality meted on the people of south-south, south-east and north-east that have resulted to the youths in these states taking up arms against the state.

In a study by Essien and Onukwubiri (2015) to appraise the cause and socio-behavioural effects of graduate youth unemployment in Abia State, South-East, Nigeria, the result showed that inadequate job skills, lack of investment in industrialization were some of the causes of unemployment among graduate youths. It was revealed that over dependence on parents, begging from relatives and friends, co-habitation and marriage, armed robbery and prostitution were common socio-behavioural effects of unemployment among graduate youths. Ayodele and Adebiyi (2013) examined study habits as it influenced academic performance of university undergraduates in Nigeria. The study investigated how course of study and gender influenced students study habit including family background, socio-economic status of parents and course of study.

Purpose
The main purpose of the study is to find out the impact of graduate unemployment on study habits and students' academic performance of Abia State Polytechnic in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

Research Questions
1.   What level of influence has graduates unemployment on students' study habits and academic performance?
2.   What is the opinion of male and female unemployed graduates on the causes of graduate unemployment?
3.   What possible ways can government investment in industrialization reduces graduate unemployment?

Research Hypotheses
1. There is no association between graduate unemployment on students study habits and academic performance.
2. There is no association in the opinions of male and female unemployed graduates on the causes of graduate unemployment.
3. There is no association between lack of government investment in industrialization and graduate unemployment.

Method
A descriptive survey was used for the study. A self structured questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The study used Abia State Polytechnic Students, a school which has maintained its leadership in academics in Aba and beyond the Eastern heartlands of Nigeria. Abia State Polytechnic is resilient in the acquisition and dissemination of information Communication Technology (ICT)- driven skills, comparable to graduates anywhere in Africa. The study used 192 male and female undergraduate students through stratified sampling technique.

A questionnaire was employed as an instrument in this study which included two major parts: Part one was about the demographic data of the research participants, their age, gender, marital status, and course of study. The second part contains both direct and indirect answers organized in a logical sequence, proceeding from the general to the specific.

Data was analyzed with the aid of tables, percentages and statistical instruments in analyzing single variables. The null hypotheses were tested with the use of chi-square (x^2) test statistics. The chi-square (x^2) critical value can be any number between (O) and plus (+) to infinity.

Results

Research Question I
What level of influence has graduate unemployment on students study habits and academic performance.

Table 1: Respondents'assessment on the link between unemployment, study habits and academic performance.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	9.3
Disagree	5	2.6
Strongly Agree	165	85.9
Strongly Disagree	4	2.1
Total	192	100

Table 1 shows the percentage of negative relationship between unemployment, study habits and academic performance. It shows that agreed response has the frequency of 18 with (9.3%), disagree has the frequency of 5 with (2.9%), strongly agree has the frequency 165 with (85.9%), while strongly disagree has 4 with (2.1%).

Research Question 2:
What is the opinion of male and female unemployed graduates on the causes of graduate unemployment?

Table 2: Respondents' opinion on the causes of graduate unemployment.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Godfatherism/Favoritism	71	37.0
Zoning/Quota System	30	15.6
Skills acquisition	57	29.7
Nepotism	21	10.9
Meritocracy	13	6.8
Total	192	100

Table 2 shows the percentage of causes of unemployment in Nigerian employment economy to include godfatherism/Favoritism 71 (37.0%), zoning/quota system 30 (15.6%), skills acquisition 57 (29.7%), nepotism 21 (10.9%) and meritocracy 13 (6.8%).

Research Question 3
What possible ways can government investment industrialization reduces unemployment?

Table 3: Respondents assessment on Industrialization and unemployment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	10	5.2
Disagree	36	18.8
Strongly Agree	44	22.9
Strongly Disagree	102	53.1
Total	192	100

Table 3 shows the assessment of respondents on whether government investment in industrialization can reduce unemployment in Nigeria agreed responses has 10(5.2%), disagree responses has 36 (18.8%), strongly agree has 44 (22.9%), while strongly disagree had 102 (53.1%).

Hypotheses
H_{o1}: There is no association between graduates unemployment and students' study habits and academic performance.

Table 4:
Contingency table showing the relationship between graduate unemployment, study habit and academic performance

Study habit

	Variables	Good	Poor	Total
Unemployment	Positive	30 (41.3)	80 (68.8)	110
	Negative	42 (30.8)	40 (51.3)	82
	Total	72	120	192

Chi-square Calculation

O_i	e_i	$O_i - e_i$	$(O_i - e_i)^2$	$(O_i - e)^2$
30	41.3	-11.3	127.69	3.09
80	68.8	11.2	125.44	1.82
42	30.8	11.2	125.44	4.07
40	57.3	-11.3	127.69	2.48
Total				11.46

Since x^2 (11.46) > X^2_t (3.84), we reject H_o and accept the alternative which means that there is an association between graduates unemployment, student study habits and academic performance.

Hypothesis 2

H_{o2}:   There is no association in the opinion of male and female unemployed undergraduate on the causes of graduate unemployment.

Table 5:

Contingency table showing the relationship between graduate unemployment, study habit and academic performance

Graduates

	Variables	Merit	Skills	Total
Unemployment	Nepotism	19 (25.87)	50 (43.12)	69
	Meritocracy	33 (16.12)	10 (26.87)	43
	Favoritism	20 (30.00)	60 (50.00)	80
	Total	72	120	192

Chi-square Calculation

O_i	e_i	$O_i - e_i$	$(O_i - e_i)^2$	$(O_i - e)^2$
19	25.87	-6.87	47.19	1.82
50	43.12	6.88	47.33	1.09
33	16.12	16.87	284.93	17.67
10	26.87	-10.00	284.59	10.59
20	30.00	10.00	100.00	3.33
60	50.00		100.00	2.00
Total				36.5

Since x^2 (36.5) > X^2_t (5.99), we reject Ho and accept the alternative meaning that there is an association in the opinion of male and female unemployed graduates on the causes of graduates unemployment in Abia State Polytechnic graduates.

Hypothesis 3

H_{o3}:   There is no association between lack of investment in industrialization and graduate unemployment.

Table 6:

Contingency table showing the relationship between graduate unemployment, study habit and academic performance

Industrialization

Unemployment	Variables	Allowances	Job creation	Total
	Agriculture	40 (27.75)	34 (46.25)	74
	Tourism	12 (13.50)	24 (22.50)	36
	Entrepreneur	20 (30.75)	62 (51.25)	82
	Total	72	120	192

Chi-square Calculation

O_i	e_i	O_i-e_i	$(O_i-e_i)^2$	$(O_i-e)^2$
19	27.75	12.25	150.06	5.40
50	46.25	-12.25	150.06	3.24
33	13.50	-1.50	2.25	0.16
10	22.50	1.50	2.25	0.10
20	30.75	-10.75	115.56	3.75
60	51.25	10.75	115.56	2.25
Total				14.9

Since x^2 (14.9) > X^2_t (5.99), we accept Ho and reject the alternative meaning that there is an association between lack of investment in industrialization and graduate unemployment.

Discussion
Based on the findings of the study, there is an association between graduates unemployment, student study habits and academic performance. This in effect means that unemployment affects students study habits thereby leading to poor academic achievement and students' self-concept. Supporting this assertion Ayodele and Adebiyi (2013) reports that self concept and course of study were very strong determinant of the study habit of graduate unemployment.

There is an association in the opinion of male and female unemployed undergraduates on the causes of graduate unemployment. This means that the causal factors of unemployment like nepotism, meritocracy and favoritism affects graduate unemployment indicating that acquisition of skills from tertiary institutions appeared dysfunctional and irrelevant. This is also supported by Longe (2017) who asserted that there was no effective collaboration between universities and labour employers in providing relevant skills required for employability and employment fulfillment of university graduates. In such a manner Essien and Onukwubiri (2015) reported that inadequate job skills, lack of investment in industrialization were some of the causes of unemployment among graduate youths.

Conclusion
Many variables can cause graduate unemployment on students study habits and academic performance of students in the higher institutions like Abia State Polytechnic. Factors that can improve a student's study habits include the use of merit rather than nepotism, favoritism, adequate national policy on employment and vocational training programmes for undergraduates and graduate youths in Nigeria. These factors can stimulate students' study habits and therefore improve the standard of living and the economy of the nation.

Recommendations

In solving the problem of graduate unemployment and its impact on student study habits and academic performance, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Federal and State governments should aid a motivational factor towards the enhancement of healthy students' study habit by resuming the payment of bursary allowances to higher school students in the nation.
2. There should be adequate job opportunities to absorb university graduates
3. Launching of a nationwide campaign on the importance of skill acquisition for graduate youths.
4. Government should strive to adopt the merit principle in job selection rather than favoritism and other bad means of employment in Nigeria.

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