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Leveraging Internet-Based Opportunities towards Poverty Alleviation and SDG1 among Unemployed Nigerian Youths

Precious Hepzibah Ph.D

School of Business and Law University East London, United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian population explosion, currently at 236 million and projected to reach 400 million by 2050, makes the nation one of the three most populous countries in the world, behind only India and China. The counteractive impacts, however, have led to resource depletion, high crime rates, unemployment, and poverty in different corners of the nation, particularly among Nigerian youths. With the spread of the internet, some of these youths are using the system to achieve positive educational gains and social connections. The internet, however, has not been fully explored as a viable tool for driving and implementing Nigeria's Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), particularly in poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study attempts a critical evaluation of the possibility of exploring internet-based opportunities as a vehicle for poverty alleviation and the fulfillment of SDG 1 among unemployed Nigerian youths. The study bridges the gap between technology and economic empowerment for youths in Nigeria and poses key questions. It evaluates the extent to which internet-based opportunities can be explored for youth employment and poverty alleviation, the significant challenges involved, and the support system for connection and sustainability. Findings show that over 75% of respondents already use the internet daily, but only a small proportion engage productively for income generation. This paper concludes that accessing internet-based opportunities requires the coordinated efforts of the government, corporate bodies, and individuals. Only through this can Nigeria economically realize the vision of translating the youths' efforts into reality.

Keywords: Internet-based Opportunities, Nigerian Youths, Poverty Alleviation, Digital Economy, SDG 1, Unemployment, Youths

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is undoubtedly the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa. This population explosion has been both advantageous and otherwise in terms of cultural, religious, political, and socioeconomic distributions. Adamu & Bulus (2024) suggest that Nigeria’s labour force is connected to its high population, and this in turn largely contributes to an abundance of human resources, increased productivity, cultural and innovative strength, an expanded domestic market, and a demographic dividend (Adamu & Bulus, 2024). This ostensibly positions the nation competitively among other high-ranking nations worldwide. However, at the core of the demerits of this population escalation are several challenges with far-reaching ripple effects. Major concerns often include environmental stressors such as resource depletion, land degradation and deforestation, waste management and pollution, and a lack of infrastructure and social services for both urban and rural populations. Other associated challenges of concern arising from the ever-growing Nigerian pollution include agricultural stress, food security challenges, widening inequality, and increasing pressure on already overstretched health and educational systems. Collectively, these factors are responsible for the rising levels of unemployment and underemployment (Ahmad, Mohammad, & Hussaini, 2024), increased poverty, heightened risks of violence, social unrest, and both physical and digital crimes, particularly among the Nigerian youths. In this context, the negative consequences of overpopulation increasingly outweigh its potential benefits and the positive implications for the nation.

One proactive way to redirect the wheel is to strategically engage with human investment capitalization. These issues are neither time-bound nor confined solely to Nigeria’s cultural or historical narrative; rather, they are embedded within broader structural and developmental contexts. In response, Nigeria has proactively aligned itself with the United Nations' global development vision by adopting and endorsing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The country has developed policy frameworks and implementation strategies to address its economic, political, and environmental challenges. It has also committed to ensuring compliance with these global development benchmarks.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to address critical areas of economic, environmental, and social development. These goals focus on issues such as zero hunger, health and well-being, education, equality, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation, sustainable cities, climate action, life below water and on land, peace and justice, and partnerships for development, with poverty eradication identified as the first priority under SGD 1 (No poverty). Nigeria formally adopted these goals in 2016, following the submission of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, as the year for achieving the SDGs approaches, Nigeria continues to face significant challenges, largely due to rapid population growth and a persistent reliance on conventional economic instruments that have proven insufficient in addressing deep-rooted structural problems. Despite various intervention programs across multiple sectors, poverty remains pervasive. A recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) shows that more than 40 per cent of Nigerians live in multidimensional poverty, with youth unemployment and underemployment rates surpassing 30 percent. More recently, the 2024 review gazette advances that “there is worsening poverty with 63 percent (133 million people) of Nigerians considered multidimensionally poor. Regional disparities persist, with 65 percent of the poor living in the North and 35 percent (nearly 47 million) in the South. Poverty levels vary significantly across states, from 27 percent in Ondo to 91 percent in Sokoto state” (OSSAP-SDGs, 2024, p. 21). This suggests deterioration alongside pronounced regional disparities. These realities underscore the fact that poverty among Nigerian youths is not merely an economic issue but a systemic developmental concern that, if left unaddressed, may lead to heightened social instability and unrest beyond patterns of rural to urban migration.

At the same time, the internet has emerged as a transformative force, influencing and reshaping how people learn, work, communicate, and participate in economic activities. From e-commerce and remote employment to social-media entrepreneurship, internet-based opportunities are increasingly redefining livelihoods across the globe. In Nigeria, the growth of internet culture has created new spaces for innovation, education, and economic participation. Nevertheless, despite expanding access to digital technologies, many Nigerian youths remain unemployed and continue to live in conditions of poverty. While some youths are beginning to access and engage with digital platforms for learning and income generation, many others are exploring this medium for all shades of wrongdoing, using it and violating its terms. These types of unproductive or harmful engagements may include cyberbullying, online fraud, hate speech, and other forms of digital misconduct, which Eke (2024) describes as epidemic among Nigerian youths. These activities not only harm individuals but also contribute to broader reputational and institutional challenges. This study, therefore, addresses these dual concerns by examining how Nigerian youths can more effectively leverage the affordances of Internet-Based opportunities for legitimate economic engagement. Specifically, this study seeks to explore how digital platforms can be harnessed to support Poverty Alleviation and SDG 1 among unemployed youths in Nigeria. In essence, the study examines how internet-based opportunities can be used more proactively and responsibly to mitigate unemployment and poverty among Nigerian youths while simultaneously advancing national development objectives.

In furtherance of this, the study raises four (4) germane questions aligned with its overarching objectives. These questions include: To what extent can internet-based opportunities be explored as a viable vehicle for youth employment and poverty alleviation in Nigeria? What are the major challenges confronting the effective exploration and harnessing of these internet-based opportunities for Nigerian youth? What socioeconomic or cultural factors limit Nigerian youth from fully engaging with and benefiting from internet-based opportunities? Finally, what forms of institutional support, connectivity, and sustainable mechanisms can the Nigerian government provide to enhance youth participation in the digital economy?

This study anchors its theoretical lens on the hypothetical premise of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), a developmental framework originating in the mid-1980s and closely associated with the scholarship of Robert Chambers. Chambers, in collaboration with Conway, conceptualized livelihood as "the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, without undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway, 1992). This framework emphasizes that livelihood outcomes are fundamentally determined by three interrelated elements: human capabilities, access to assets, and the activities through which resources are mobilized. Central to this perspective is the prioritization of human agency over material resources. Consequently, any attempt to reduce poverty at any level must take cognizance of available livelihood strategies within its social context and of the capacity of people and communities to mobilize these strategies. For the Sustainable Livelihood approach to be functional or practicable, individual inherent potential and collective efforts must be determined to carefully align with the vision of achieving individual and collective socioeconomic objectives. This theoretical framework further underscores the multidimensional nature of poverty, recognizing it as a condition shaped not only by income deprivation but also by vulnerability, unemployment, and socioeconomic instability, limited access to human, financial, and physical capital, and weak or anaemic institutional support systems.

The point of divergence, however, between the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) and development activities is that, at the core of SLA, is the attempt to bridge or blur the gap between the micro and macro levels, thereby integrating both dimensions, whereas the other focuses on only one of the two. This particular approach makes the framework appropriate for this study because it provides a lens for holistic examination. This is the channel, the study considers not only the human elements but also livelihood strategies for engaging internet-based opportunities for the desired outcome, which includes empowerment, income diversification, and reduced poverty through strong institutional supports.s.

The significance of this study is considerable. Nigeria's sociocultural, economic, and political challenges are multifaceted; any study that digs into and interrogates any aspect of Nigeria's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1-17 evaluates key aspects of Nigeria's sociocultural, economic, environmental, and social developments. This study is particularly significant because it is timely, as it directly addresses Nigeria's Sustainable Development Goal (No Poverty), offering pathways for poverty alleviation within Nigeria's contemporary digital landscape. As Nelson Mandela aptly observed, "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life" (OSSAP-SDGs, 2024, p. 20). In view of this, the Nigerian state's responsibility to ensure a decent standard of living for its citizens becomes paramount. Hence, this study is significant in that it not only deepens understanding of internet-based opportunities in Nigeria but also shows how the Nigerian government can systematically and efficiently harness these skills to support the idea of poverty eradication or, at least partially, poverty alleviation through digital affordances. Furthermore, it directs the minds of the Nigerian government and policymakers to re-strategize, particularly in relation to youth empowerment initiatives. By identifying these gaps, policymakers can ultimately reflect on policies that need to be rejigged, creating digital literary interventions for skill training and acquisition.

Again, Nigerian youths constitute the primary focus of this study. The central premise here is that the study identifies ways for Nigerian youths to reduce their employment and underemployment levels, as the internet provides both learning and earning platforms. However, beyond socioeconomic empowerment, the study seeks to orient Nigerian youths who may have used internet access for criminal or violent activities, redirecting attention to legitimate and productive uses of digital technologies. In this sense, the study holds potential for both corrective and transformative significance for Nigerian youth.

Finally, this study, from a broader perspective, aligns with the global agenda of eradicating poverty as articulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It largely contributes to the global debate on technology, digitality, internet-based access, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Given Nigeria's status as the most populous African nation and its high continental and global recognition, insights from this study may also prove instructive for countries with smaller populations facing similar challenges, such as unemployment, underemployment, and digital misconduct. Such contexts may draw on the study to understand how internet-based opportunities can be harnessed more proactively, ethically, and sustainably for development outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

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The study adopts a mixed-methods design comprising a descriptive survey using quantitative and qualitative approaches as the research design for the study on leveraging internet-based opportunities towards poverty alleviation and SDG 1 among unemployed Nigerian youths. This implies that statistical and descriptive tools were employed throughout data collection, analysis, and the presentation of findings. This process of triangulating quantitative and qualitative components yields data and evidence that are measurable in terms of numerical engagements and relationships, while the qualitative design provides a deeper, non-statistical identity for simultaneous engagements. The qualitative data basically supported the quantitative data gathered.

Sampling and Data Sources

The study has relied heavily on primary and secondary data. The primary data were gathered through a purposive sampling technique, involving the administration of an online questionnaire (Google Forms), while the qualitative data were collected in-person through interviews in Lagos, Nigeria.

The quantitative method is particularly used to select respondents for the study, targeting digitally literate individuals with access to smartphones, computers, and an internet connection. These included Nigerian youths resident within Lagos and outside Lagos, employed and unemployed. The study age for the respondents was between eighteen (18) and thirty-five (35), representing urban and rural areas. In the same vein, the respondents' gender shows a wave of contributions from both male and female participants. A set of structured questionnaires was designed, and respondents completed them via Google Forms. From data collected online over two months, from July 2nd to August 30th, 2025, a total of 200 valid responses were received. The link to the questionnaire was distributed via three major platforms, including email networks, peer referrals (snowballing), and social media platforms, so that more coverage for the desired age brackets and study focus groups could be achieved. While the total number of participants was determined before sending the form link, the age and gender of respondents were determined by algorithmic affordances. The questionnaires covered areas such as participants' demographics, educational background, residential location, digital skills, internet access, employment status, internet access device, etc. These were captured under three sections: Section 1 - Respondent's Demographic profile; Section 2 - Digital Skills and Opportunities; and Section 3 - Income Generation, Perceived Impact on Poverty Reduction, and Challenges in Leveraging Internet Opportunities.

For the qualitative design component and data-gathering tools, in-depth interviews (IDIs) with ten (10) participants and key informant interviews with five (5) participants were also conducted to elicit additional information from randomly selected individuals. These interviews were conducted in person, by phone, and via Zoom and WhatsApp. The participants for the interview were selected purposively based on their internet use and accessibility. These unstructured interviews supported the quantitatively generated data and helped to determine individual pathways to internet platform usage, earnings, and suggestions. This also helps explore their internet usage, motivations, and barriers to access, and provides recommendations for a more pragmatic use of internet-based opportunities.

Analytical Techniques

The quantitative data gathered during the data collection phase of this study were analyzed using quantitative tools and descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), and cross-tabulated in visualizations (charts and tables) to present the data. Overall findings were presented through tables and charts for clearer description and analysis. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were transcribed, coded, and thematically sorted into categories for recurrent patterns related to digital engagement, income-generation opportunities, structural constraints, and governmental support.

Finally, findings from both datasets (quantitative and qualitative) were integrated and presented descriptively in this study through heterogeneous analysis. This involved triangulating quantitative and qualitative convergences and divergences, classifying data into specific categories such as age, gender, location, and thematic areas, and drawing thematic inferences.

Presentation of Data and Analysis

This section presents and analyzes all data from both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. It is divided into three segments: the first covers respondents' demographics; the second examines Nigerian youths' digital skills and awareness of opportunities; and the third analyzes respondents' income patterns, their views on poverty reduction, and the challenges they face using internet opportunities.

The qualitative data collected during this work are integrated into the analysis. This enriches interpretation and provides contextual depth to all data generated specifically for the study. A quantitative approach to data collection was necessary. It presents descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages for the work.

Section I

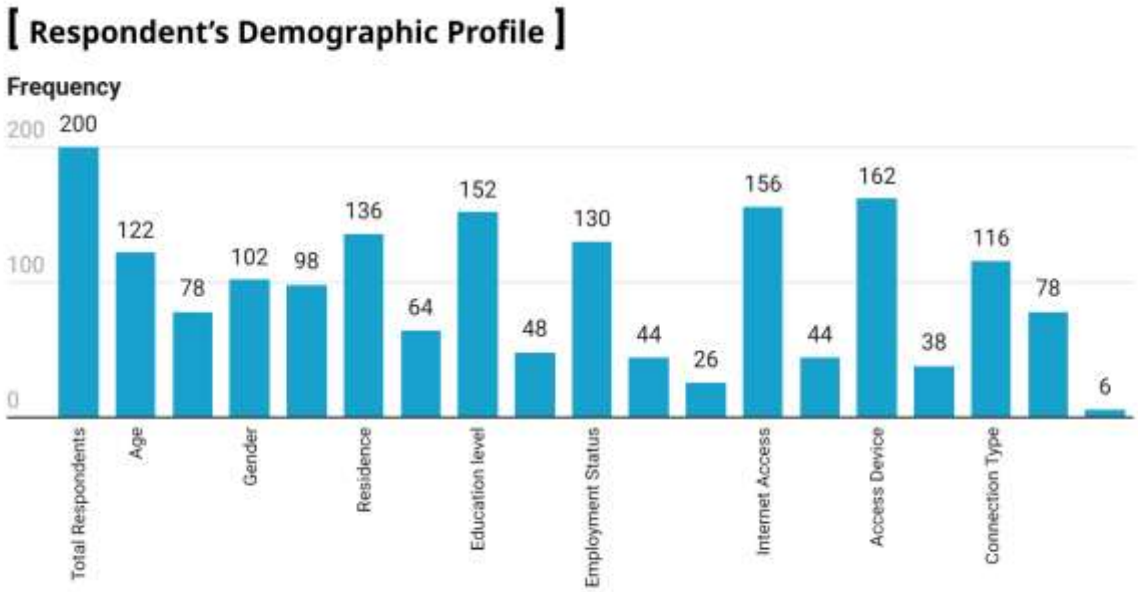

Table 1 - Respondent's Demographic Profile, with a total of tow hundred (200) participants

The demographic distribution of the youth respondents in this research is very important, providing a strong foundation for other analytical processes. The demographic profile also provides context for understanding the patterns of digital engagement among Nigerian youths. With the demographic data presented above, evidence shows that among the two hundred youth respondents who filled out the survey materials, 122 respondents (61%) were within the age bracket of 18 and 24, while 78 respondents (39%) were between the age brackets of 25 and 35 years. This survey appears to skew towards younger participants, as the collected sample was largely composed of younger youths. This implies that the study captured an early-stage perspective showing easy adaptability to modern technologies and social media access. By implication, this holds a high potential for engaging in internet-based opportunities, in line with the catchphrase "catch them young". On gender distribution, 102 respondents (51%) identified as male, and 98 respondents (49%) identified as female. Both males and females have shown not only interest but also active engagement and creation through internet access. This number suggests a near-gender-parity distribution in participation, which is observed and justified in the research. The balance justifies and strengthens not just the outcome of the work but also suggests that the dataset examined is inclusive and not differentiated by gender, even if structural inequalities appear beyond access within African societies.

In terms of spatial distribution, among the 200 respondents, 136 (68%) live in different locations within Lagos State, while the remaining 64 (32%) live outside Lagos State. This, by implication, poses more advantages, particularly with internet access in developed urban areas. Otherwise, it also reflects a strong bias in favour of Lagos, recognized as Nigeria's economic and digital hub. In essence, the concentration presents Lagos as a digitally connected environment. However, it cannot be suggested that the attention Lagos received will be reciprocated in other rural, infrastructurally deficient, or underserved communities outside Lagos. One thing, however, is clear from this data: internet access via smartphones, WiFi, or cybercafé connections is guaranteed as a way to interface with and explore the opportunities of internet-based access toward poverty alleviation and

SDG1, which is realizable in Nigeria to a reasonable extent. The question, again, may be: to what extent are online engagements yielding positive results toward achieving SDG 1 in Nigeria?

In terms of the education level of respondents, it is obvious from the data sample that many of them are highly literate, having gone through primary and secondary education, and now at the undergraduate level, taking up to 76%, and 24% of people at the postgraduate level, i.e., 152 and 48 respondents respectively. Suggestively, these respondents may have acquired the knowledge for internet engagements and the potential to efficiently leverage and access the opportunities within. This could, by extension, help alleviate the no-employment syndrome that bites at the high rate of 65%, even while in school. This indicates that while formal education may be an important indicator of this consistency, it is not really a barrier to digital engagement in Nigeria. This is because even with the level of education among the respondents, employment data reveal a contrasting reality, with (65%) unemployed, 22% self-employed, and only 13% formally employed within Nigeria's public and private sectors. This disconnection, therefore, reinforces the structural nature of youth unemployment in Nigeria beyond their educational attainment or otherwise. Again, the question is, how tech-savvy or tech-ready is this economic class of the Nigerian populace, to key into and leverage available resources and internet-based opportunities?

While it seemingly shows that many of the youths are not completely new to internet access and data usage, the patterns of internet access underscore Nigeria's mobile digital culture, as a significant number of 162 participants (78%) have access to the internet on a daily basis, with 81% of these youths predominantly through their smartphones. Only 44 respondents; 22% access this connection a few times a week, and 18% connect through other means, such as their laptops and computers. In the same vein, 58% use mobile data for online connections, 39% access the internet through WiFi in public spaces, while only 3% use cybercafes.

Key Analytical Insight:

The demographic data composition and analysis demonstrate a critical paradox. It shows that Nigerian youths are educated and digitally active. Unfortunately, they remain economically marginalized. The key insights from this first segment show that nearly all respondents have access to the internet daily either through their phones or laptops, which confirms Nigeria's mobile-first internet culture. By implication, these youths are positioned to access the key requirements for utilizing and leveraging internet-based opportunities, which can ultimately help reduce unemployment and poverty levels. Many Nigerian youths remain unemployed despite their active engagement in Nigeria's broadband cyberspace. This suggests the need to re-channel their scope and reasons for internet engagement, which could offer more than entertainment value and be more functional in bridging the opportunity gaps for entrepreneurship and employment. However, the study also raises questions about some stumbling blocks to accessing these opportunities fully; the data and analyses identifying these challenges are presented and discussed below.

Section II

Digital Skills and Awarenes of Internet-Based Opportunities

Variable	Category	Frequency
Digital Skills Level	Beginner	20
	Intermediate	136
	Advanced	44
Identified Opportunities	Content creation/monetization	106
	E-commerce and online business	42
	Digital employment (remote jobs)	30

	Digital literacy programs	12
	Agricultural-tech	6
	Fintech and financial innovations	4

Table 2 - Table of identified internet-based opportunities

This study, in tandem with existing literature, has identified six (6) types of internet-based opportunities for Nigerian youths. Digital literacy - training and skill acquisition (Apata, 2024), Internet/Digital employment - remote jobs (Edunjobi, 2023), E-commerce and online businesses (Osarosee and Adedipupo, 2024), E-Content creation and monetization (Adewole, 2024), Agricultural-tech (Bello, 2022), and Fintech and financial innovations (Akamobi, 2025).

These opportunities are explored across different platforms in respondents' states in Nigeria. The data for this segment indicates that, in spite of respondents’ digital skill levels, with 68% at the intermediate level, 10% as beginners, and 22% at the advanced stage. This means that while the majority of respondents agree that they possess the prerequisite knowledge for internet literacy, a relatively small number have reached an advanced level of competence and are able to function adequately within the digital economy, if ever they desire to.

In terms of awareness, many of these youths are objectively conversant with and identify internet-based opportunities in digital content creation and monetization, with 53% gaining massive traction. This is followed by E-commerce and online businesses at 21%, internet or digital employment (remote jobs) at 15%, digital literacy (training and skill acquisition) at 6%, with agricultural-tech and Fintech and financial innovations at the lowest at 3% and 2%, respectively.

This simply means that while content creation and monetization dominate the opportunity recognition category, agricultural and fintech options remain completely under-recognized and under-explored by many respondents, and this reflects many Nigerian youths.

Key Analytical Insight:

The data above clearly demonstrates that while Nigerian youths are not unaware of the possibility of engaging in and earning from the digital economy, the dominance of content creation suggests that other opportunities have not been fully explored or monetized. This also shows that many high-value sectors, particularly Agricultural technology, fintech, and financial innovations, appear to be the least famous, yet they hold great potential for economic transformation.

This quantitative data is also supported by the qualitative data, which show that the majority of respondents are aware of the potential of internet-based opportunities, yet the connection has been only superficial, without strategic planning or positioning. The summation of the quantitative and qualitative data, therefore, clearly reveals a wide gap between awareness of the possibilities and the deep knowledge needed to navigate them. Hence, translating digital skills or knowledge into assets will require a conscious effort in addition to technical know-how.

Section III

Income Generation

Perceived Impact on Poverty Reduction

Constraints in Leveraging Internet Opportunities

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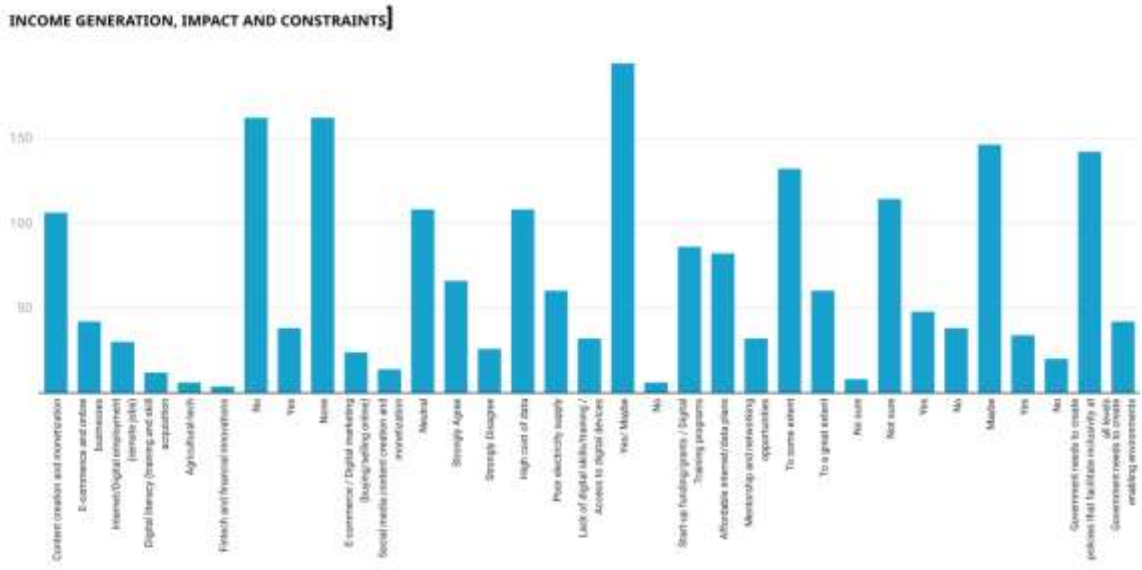

Table 3 - This shows identified internet-based opportunity and some for the challenges faced by the respondents.

This section focuses on three important aspects of the research: the extent to which the awareness of the potential of the digital economy can translate into a high-income-generating endeavour for users, the perceived impact on poverty reduction, and the constraints in leveraging internet opportunities through effective positioning and participation.

Some of the major insights in the first and second segments above are digital literacy, awareness of the possibilities, and internet access. Even with this knowledge, section three shows a wave of consistencies in some categories. Beyond awareness, 81% of respondents have never earned through any of the identified digital skills and opportunities, while only 19% have earned income through internet-based opportunities, indicating that they were able to access and benefit from them economically. Among those you earn, 12% in e-commerce (buying/selling online)/digital marketing and 7% in social media content creation and monetization, suggesting more activities and concentration tilting more in favour of e-commerce. This perspective is also supported by the qualitative data generated from the interview section, where the respondents describe content creation as a “money bag” (Respondent A). This stark disparity in low-level monetization also indicates a wide gap between awareness of available opportunities and economic participation in them. In other words, the digital economy in Nigeria remains largely untapped despite respondents' level of awareness and accessibility.

In terms of the perception of the impact of internet-based opportunities among Nigerian youths, the qualitative and quantitative data show a mixed impression. A large proportion of 54% of the respondents were neutral, and 13% expressed outright disagreement, totalling about 67%. The predominance of neutrality and disagreement suggests uncertainty; it also suggests that many respondents have limited exposure to successful pathways in internet-based opportunities or that they simply lack the confidence to tap into the digital economy streams that are evident and accessible through many digital skills. In the same vein, 33% strongly agree that internet-based opportunities can help reduce poverty among Nigerian youths. This further suggests that, while the potential is clearly recognized, realizing it may not look like a facade.

On identified constraints in leveraging internet opportunities by Nigerian youths, the high cost of data purchase appears to be the major challenge faced by internet users in Nigeria, with roughly 54%, 30% in addition to the high cost of data complaining about poor electricity supply, while 16% clearly declared that they lack the required digital skills, training and access to digital devices. These essentially reveal the study's central argument. These are without doubt interrelated barriers that collectively limit effective engagement and access to the opportunities entrenched in the internet-based digital economy. The implication of all these is that the perceived potential of the digital economy may not be replicated in youths’lived economic outcomes due to utilization and monetization gaps

Synthesizing Analytical Insights

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With the rise of internet culture in Nigeria and the opportunities it offers Nigerian youths in digital education, innovation, entrepreneurial skill acquisition, and even employment, there are immeasurable challenges that truncate the effectiveness of this medium in tackling Nigeria's youth poverty. These challenges may be classified into four major categories: knowledge and skill deficits, infrastructural and structural barriers, economic and financial concerns, and institutional or structural gaps. These identified challenges are also, by extension, delimiting Nigeria's socioeconomic ability to successfully address its Sustainable Development Goal 1 mission on poverty reduction.

In a world driven by the digital economy, knowledge about what and how is power and access. Unfortunately, knowledge and skill gaps have become major setbacks for Nigerian youths in this dispensation. The lack of knowledge among youths about the possibilities of leveraging internet access has unbelievably limited the opportunities many could access for self-growth and employment. It is the lack of knowledge and information that has prevented many Nigerian youths from using the resources at their disposal more proactively to harness the opportunities readily available through internet connections. Regrettably, the internet never rewards ignorance. While many of the youths engage different social media platforms, for instance, strictly for communication and entertainment purposes or to engage in hideous crimes, they are unaware that many opportunities abound on these platforms through which their out of job, unemployment, or poverty issues can be successfully addressed. These engagements can be converted into economic values; thus, they reflect a gap between functional literacy and strategic expertise.

These issues are not merely about not acquiring basic digital competence for navigating internet-based opportunities, but about not having gained advanced, market-oriented skills required for skill or content monetization. The idea that knowledge is power brings to mind the affordances of internet-based access; some of these youths can go into content creation, whether individually or collectively, creating content that could be monetized on any of these platforms. Unfortunately, they are also unaware that the internet and digital platforms offer more than just entertainment; advanced digital skills for specific internet engagements can also be acquired through technology and internet access. Without this knowledge and information about internet-based opportunities, these youths are completely excluded from gaining and tapping into digital economies and the higher-value opportunities. This ultimately signals the persistence of poverty for Nigerian youths. Unfortunately, the Nigerian educational curriculum does not cater to this at different levels, thus exempting many Nigerian youths from keying into these accesses.

Infrastructural and structural barriers have, in no small measure, continued to keep Nigerian youths away from internet opportunities. With 54% pointing to the high cost of data, 30% to poor electricity, and 16% to a lack of training, this study shows that these infrastructural bottlenecks are the most significant obstacles to digital engagement in Nigeria. Generally, these infrastructural and structural facilities may include power supply, internet access, and connectivity, access to technological devices, and the cost of accessing the networks. For instance, one of the major requirements for accessing internet-based opportunities is through power, but this has been Nigeria's major socioeconomic issue. Nigeria's eclectic power supply consistently limits youth engagement and largely impede productivity because power sudden outages not only disrupt ongoing work but may also destroy facilities in use (Akinwale, 2021). New and existing internet users sometimes find it difficult to access the internet on their devices, such as computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones, due to either a lack of power supply or electricity rationing. While these challenges are most prevalent in rural and semi-urban communities in Nigeria, urban communities also experience daily power outages or no supply at all, which contributes to the nation's poverty levels and its inability to tackle the commitment to SDG 1 head-on. In the same vein, Nigeria's broadband is unreliable and has weak penetration in both rural and urban settings, in countless ways, limiting engagement across different internet platforms.

Economic and financial constraints largely contribute to Nigeria's low access to internet opportunities, as identified by 54% of respondents. Leveraging internet-based opportunities to alleviate poverty and achieve SDG 1 among unemployed youths in Nigeria, for instance, requires a certain level of initial capital. This is basically to facilitate the purchase of digital tools such as computers and software, tablets, smartphones, and marketing facilities. At other times, when some people manage to get this sorted, the issue of internet subscription, which, of course, is very expensive and unreliable in Nigeria, becomes another barrier. Unfortunately, the level of poverty has so impacted this that many Nigerian youth just ignore the type of employment that could have happened through this. This partially excludes many unemployed Nigerian youths from accessing available digital or internet-based opportunities.

Other factors that continue to challenge Nigerian youths and impede their full participation in internet opportunities include institutional and structural gaps in which specific genders face restrictions due to cultural and traditional beliefs; institutional policy delimitation, which challenges Nigerians in different ways, particularly in terms of policy strategies and implementation, and cybersecurity, among several others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations address two key areas through which interventions can help support new and existing structures on the ground in Nigeria to access internet-based opportunities for unemployed youths and to support Nigeria's fulfillment of SDG1. To create an enabling environment to leverage internet-based opportunities towards poverty alleviation, targeting youths and implementing SDG 1 in Nigeria, this study recommends three cohorts of responsibilities. The first shall involve the Nigerian government at the federal and state levels, classified and charged with multiple responsibilities. The second cohort shall involve corporate bodies, the private sector, NGOs, and interest groups in Nigeria, while the third addresses individual perspectives. In the first cohort, the provision of a reliable power supply, the creation of affordable or subsidized high-speed internet access, particularly for youths, the establishment of digital hubs at the federal and state levels, and the creation of infrastructure and dependable structures should take top priority on the Nigerian government's agenda.

The Nigerian government, through its vision to alleviate poverty and effectively address SGD1, must ensure that it inculcates knowledge and training in its youth by creating or investing in skill-acquisition programs at the community, state, and national levels. They can also ensure that this knowledge is integrated into Nigeria's educational system and curriculum, particularly in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. This will prepare out-of-school youths, rather than waiting for employment opportunities in federal and state parastatals or corporate bodies, to readily connect with global practices and digitally accessible opportunities for skill acquisition, growth, employment, and digital economic provisions. Additionally, creating and strengthening policies that support the inclusion of Nigerian youth in the digital economy should be within the purview of the Nigerian government, not individuals. These policies may include supporting digital economy inclusion, providing better coverage and affordable internet access for the target youth, offering tax incentives, and providing grants for freelancers to encourage engagement and growth.

To effectively tackle the levels of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria, the responsibility cannot be left solely in the hands of the Nigerian federal and state governments. To better reach people at the grassroots level and for these interventions to yield more positive effects, corporate bodies and the private sector in Nigeria must also rise to the occasion through youth-centric public initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. This cohort can partner with the government, NGOs, or interest groups to organize internships, training, and mentorship programs, especially in rural areas and cities with limited participation and connections. This group, like the first, can also donate digital devices and tools to different regions and centres to upskill unemployed youths within those regions. It is sometimes pertinent to create more pragmatic avenues to support these youths by providing community-sponsored Wi-Fi projects and seed funding for new startups, as many developed nations do.

However, individuals in the third cohort also have a role to play in creating and managing access to facilities to leverage internet-based opportunities in Nigeria. It is not enough to accuse the Nigerian government of infrastructural deficiencies and a lack of amenities; individuals are also responsible for acquiring the necessary digital skills to access opportunities. These services may be accessed either through individual or government provisions. These youths are advised to join online communities for networking and better opportunities within the identified fields of digital skills employment. It is recommended that, to access and benefit from the innovation, these individuals must practice and engage ethically, with digital integrity at the forefront, and understand and guide themselves against any fraudulent act that may be self-destructive or damaging to the reputations of other Nigerians.

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest challenges bedeviling Nigeria in today's dispensation is its inability to cater to the more than 30% of the population who continue to live in poverty, largely due to unemployment among the youths. In the bid to proactively respond in tandem with the United Nations' Vision 2030, Nigeria, which has instituted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, has yet to make much impact, with records showing that over 133 million people still live in multidimensional poverty. This is not without implication, as the crime rate in Nigeria seems to be on the rise, with Nigerian youths having to cater for themselves and their families. It is within the context of this sad reality, set against the realities of internet-based opportunities, that this study becomes relevant, addressing Nigeria's SDG 1. This study, "Leveraging Internet-Based Possibilities Towards Poverty Alleviation and SDG 1 Among Unemployed Youths in Nigeria", therefore, is not only timely, its relevance and interdisciplinary effort at bridging digital literacy, youth empowerment, and government policy also become significant at a time when Nigeria conspicuously attempts to align with alleviating poverty as part of her vision 2023. The study has attempted to critically evaluate the possibility of exploring internet-based opportunities as a vehicle for poverty alleviation and the fulfillment of SDG 1 among unemployed Nigerian youths. The study identified six major areas where internet-based initiatives can create jobs to alleviate unemployment among Nigerian youths. These include content creation and monetization, E-commerce, remote jobs, digital literacy programs, agriculture, and Fintech. The findings of the study show a paradoxical truth: Nigerian youths are aware not only of the existence but also of the economic viability of leveraging internet-based opportunities, yet are constrained, as the potential remains mostly untapped. The reasons are manifold, but with proper governmental and individual support, Nigeria's unemployed youths can better key into and leverage internet-based opportunities to alleviate poverty; thus, Nigeria partially addresses its commitment to SDG1 on poverty reduction among citizens.

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