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An Assessment of Coping Mechanism for Reducing Unemployment Syndrome among Graduates in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study was conducted to access the impact of coping mechanism on unemployment syndrome reduction among the graduate youths in Osun state, Nigeria. Survey method was used in this study and purposive sampling technique was adopted to collect data through administration of questionnaire. Two set of groups were involved. Four hundred and seven copies of questionnaire were administered on graduate beneficiaries of N power in Osun State and 60 copies of questionnaire were also administered on the supervisors in each of the 30 local government areas of Osun State. (2 per local government). Linear Regression analysis was used to achieve the formulated hypotheses and objectives. The findings showed that Hypothesis 1 $R^2= 0.620$, $\text{sig}= 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), for Hypothesis 2 ($R^2=0.455$, $\text{sig} =0.000$, $p < 0.05$). The study established that individual commitment, self assiduous, focus and goal oriented are keen to self sustainability in this current situation in Nigeria today. The study concluded that individual determination (individual commitment, Focus, goal oriented and self assiduous) as coping mechanisms have significant impact on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State. Therefore, the study recommended that government should intervene and practically involve in the activities of the beneficiaries of any fund release to reduce unemployment in this era of ongoing COVID 19 pandemic in Nigeria to reduce economic wastage of fund.

Keywords: Unemployment syndrome; coping mechanism; individual commitment and Government intervention

JEL Classification: E24

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1. Introduction

Unemployment amongst graduates is one of the most critical problem African region is facing. Nearly half of the 10 million graduates churned out of the over 668 universities in Africa yearly do not get employment (The African Center for Economic Transformation report on Africa, 2016). There is no single cause of the graduate employment challenge in the African region. Rather, a blend of factors contributes to the situation that has become a topmost priority for the region.

A recent International Labor Organization report for Africa (2017), the unemployment rate in Northern Africa is expected to drop from 11.7 per cent in 2017 to 11.5 per cent in 2018. The number of unemployed, however, remained steady at 8.7 million. Altogether, Northern Africa has the highest unemployment rate, with very high rates among youth and women. In fact, youth make up more than 34 percent of the total unemployed population. This makes Northern Africa's graduate unemployment rate the highest in the world (ILO, 2017c).

In sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment rates are relatively small, as majority of employable graduate cannot afford not to work. Nevertheless, these graduates habitually suffer from under-employment and absence of good working conditions (International Labor Organization report for Africa, 2017). Sub-Saharan Africa's unemployment rate was at 7.2 percent in 2017, basically remaining un-changed. For instance, in South Africa, the unemployment rate remained at 27.7 percent in 2017 (ILO, 2017c). But, the unemployment rate reflects only a part representation of the labor market position in sub-Saharan Africa, given that a large share of the working-age people is just too poor not to work and most countries do not provide unemployment aids.

In Nigeria today unemployment is fast increasing and the situation has been compounded by the non-existence of job for graduates who come out of about 174 recognized tertiary institutions yearly. Unemployment rate in Nigeria is 23.1 percent, and the rate is expected to reach 33.5 percent by 2020 which is alarming (National Bureau Statistics, 2019). From research reports and other government statement, the unemployment situation in Nigeria has gone out of hand large percentage of those who are willing to work cannot find rewarding employment in Nigeria, especially among the school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions (Okafor & Ojukwu, 2019). As a result, many youths have engaged in numerous crimes including robbery, online fraud, prostitution, kidnapping, drug and child trafficking and all kinds of vices just to a earn their living. It no longer matters whether the survival means is legitimate or not. The condition seems to have gone past remedy (Ideyi, 2010; Okafor & Ojukwu, 2019).

To decrease unemployment in Osun State and Nigeria at large, government over the years has made efforts aimed at graduate empowerment/employment. Some of the

effort made include: National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic Employment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Open Apprenticeship Programme (OAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Subsidy Re-Investment Programme (SURE-P) and Youth Enterprise and Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin). Yet, it is on record that the interventions mentioned have been unable to significantly lessen graduate/youth unemployment in the country (Umar, 2016; Effiong, 2019).

The inability of the interventions to lower graduate unemployment percentage can be linked to factors such as lack of strong policy framework and national strategy to fight unemployment, lack of programme continuity and numerous deviations in philosophy, insufficient budgetary provision, absence of coordination, and frail monitoring and evaluation (Bashir, John & Mbagha, 2017). In June 2016, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated a new programme called N-Power which is clearly designed to drastically cut graduate unemployment; equipping young graduate and non-graduate with skills, tools and livelihood to enable them advance from unemployment to employment; and to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation (Bashir, John & Mbagha, 2017; Effiong, 2019).

Despite these programmes, unemployment has been on the increase among graduates in Osun metropolises. Recent statistics put the unemployment figure of the state at 10.1 percent, although the rate is slightly lower than Oyo state which is 10.3 percent (National Bureau Statistics, 2019). This situation has become bothersome to the government, parents, graduates and the society at large and it is pertinent to address the problem of graduate unemployment in the country. Unemployment is still a problem that plaques the minds of graduates residing in the state. Despite all these studies on unemployment reduction, (Ogbenne, 2015; Adewole, 2016; Bashir, John, & Mbagha, 2017; Effiong, 2019) effective result has not been seen, instead the rate of employment among youths is increasing on daily basis. Much attention has not been given to youth self-determination, government intervention with total control as a mean to increase youths self-sustainability. However, this study assessed the coping mechanism for reducing unemployment syndrome among graduate in Osun state Nigeria

The broad objective of this study is to assess the coping mechanism for reducing unemployment syndrome among graduate in Osun state, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to;

i.examine the impact of individual determination as a coping mechanism on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State.

ii.determine the impact of government intervention with total control mechanisms on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State

The hypotheses tested in this study include:

H₀1: Individual determination coping mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State.

H₀2: Government local intervention with control mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment reduction among graduates in Osun State.

2. Literature Review

Unemployment

According to International labour organization (ILO) being unemployed is the figure of all economically active population who are without work but are available for and are seeking work, including those who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 2019). Likewise, in the view of Fajana (2000), unemployment refers to circumstances where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. n Similarly, Adebayo (1991), unemployment occurs when members of the labour force desire to work but cannot get jobs.

Youth unemployment, hence could be defined as the number of youths with varied background willing and able to work but cannot find any, or cannot find the type of job that they are trained to do and which they will be proud to do as their area of proficiency (Adegboyega, Okesina & Mustapha, 2016). As soon as the supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour, this results to joblessness and unemployment. Considering the insufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, young people may have no choice but to engage in casual work and other unconventional livelihood sources, consequently leading to underemployment (Gibb & George, 1990; Onah, 2001; Echebiri, 2005; Adegboyega, Okesina & Mustapha, 2016).

Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms is the tactic employed by the unemployed youths as ways of last resort to earn their living amid poverty situation (Torimiro & Kolawole, 2005; Adegboyega, Okesina & Mustapha, 2016). Such strategy is viewed as unimaginable situation driven by poverty. It has to do with extreme desperation and with no consideration for personal integrity; it is in fact not considered their intended job.

2.1. Individual Coping Mechanisms

Determination to settle for Self Employment

According to Youth Employment World Youth Report (2003), in both developing and developed countries, substantial percentages of the population live beneath nationally defined poverty lines. Quite a large number of youths work in what is

well-known as the intermediary zone; they are self-business oriented and self-employment to move out of unemployment instead of waiting for white collar job. Self-employment, underemployed or hold a variety of part-time jobs reduces poverty among youths (ILO, 2001; Adegboyega, Okesina & Mustapha, 2016). While young people commonly do part-time jobs and at the same time partaking in a formal education, there are also situations, in which part-time or impermanent jobs are the only options existing as there is an inadequate number of regular full-time jobs to go around. Self determination to drive out of poverty and unemployment is required by the youths in Nigeria.

Several unemployed youths are often found grouped together in different locations at the various community axes almost on a daily basis, awaiting anyone who may want to absorb them in a casual work for the day. Such works include clothe washing, heavy load lifting, bus conducting, construction site labour, fetching of water, general cleaning, cutting of grasses, and digging of wells. Above 20% youths in this group according to Torimiro and Kolawole (2005), are non-indigenes of the community, but other from the settlements or neighboring villages or completely from different tribes.

Buying and selling/street hawking coping mechanisms are employed by both young men and women. Youth of this type are mostly educated up to at least school certificate level. Profits from such business are often used to provide for their needs, while some bring the profit to their parents who principally own the enterprise to (Torimiro & Kolawole, 2005).

2.2. Government Interventions and Control Mechanism

N-Power

N-Power is a youth empowerment scheme funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The scheme addresses the challenges youth faces because of unemployment by providing a arrangement for large-scale and important work skills acquisition and development. N-Power aims to create a platform where most Nigerian youths can access skills acquisition and development (FGN, 2018). N-Power scheme is designed for Nigerian citizens between the age range of 18 and 35. The programmes in N-Power will ensure that each partaker will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (FGN, 2018; Effiong, 2019).

2.3. Empirical Review

A study of Effiong (2019) examined comparative analysis of the N-Power programme and unemployment in Akwa Ibom State. The study compares unemployment rate in the state before N-Power (2005- 2015) and during N-Power

(2016 – 2018Q3). Trend analysis was adopted and the average unemployment for the two periods was compared. The average unemployment before the N-Power programme stood at 22.23% while that during N-power programme stood at 33.45%. This shows that unemployment has still been on the increase in Akwa Ibom despite the adoption of the N-Power programme across states in the federation. To further proof this, the Student's t-test was employed and the result shows that there is no significant difference between unemployment before N-Power and unemployment during N-Power in Akwa Ibom State.

Okafor and Ojukwu (2019) examined entrepreneurship development as a means of reducing unemployment in Nigeria, using selected small-scale businesses in Anambra State as the study area. The study which was designed as a descriptive survey evaluated the role of government in trying to make the process an effective means of tackling the menace of unemployment. Chi-Square inferential statistics was used to verify the claims of the null hypotheses. All tests were carried out at a significance level of 0.05. The study revealed that tertiary institutions and other entrepreneurial training centers can be reformed to make them responsive to the needs of the trainees. It was found also that the cost of doing business in Nigeria negatively affect entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Adegboyega, Okesina and Mustapha (2016) investigated the coping strategies of unemployed youths in Kwara State, Nigeria. The influence of variables such as gender, highest educational level and age were also examined. Quantitative research design was adopted for this study, while descriptive survey was also adopted as a research method for this study. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used to draw a total sample of 600. Coping Strategies of Unemployed Youths Questionnaire (CSUYQ)" was used to collect relevant data. The instrument was subjected to test re-test reliability co-efficient which yielded 0.68 and the hypotheses tested were analyzed using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic data. The study revealed that the coping strategies employed by unemployed youths include dependent on parents, attending vocational training workshops, engaging in casual labour etc. The research hypotheses tested revealed no significant difference in the coping strategies of unemployed youths in Kwara State based on educational qualification while there was a significant difference based on gender and age.

Oduwole (2016) explored coping mechanism among unemployed graduates in Lagos State, Nigeria. The entire population of unemployed graduate in the study area were examined, the study made use of simple random sampling method in chosen selected respondents. One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to the selected respondents from the huge number of populations. Regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The study revealed that youth should engage in

profitable activities such as acquiring soft skills and expertise while still searching for job/employment rather than sitting idle at home or been lure into crime.

Omoniyi (2016) examined the psychological impacts of unemployment and underemployment on the mental health of Nigeria youths and the place of good governance and agricultural revolution as panacea. Research hypotheses were raised to guide the study. A self-constructed 25 item questionnaire was used to elicit information from the 167 subjects for the study. The data collected were subjected to appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics. The results revealed that the perceived level of stress due to unemployment among both male and females were not significantly different. The results further indicate that irrespective of how long youths have remained unemployed and their level of education, the preserved level of stress is not significantly different.

Obumneme (2015) focused on managing higher education: implication for graduate unemployment in Rivers state. The study investigated the factors associated with graduate unemployment and the coping strategies among the unemployed graduates in Rivers State. The population of this study was targeted at all the 40,368 higher institutions unemployed graduates registered with the ministry of Economic Empowerment and employment Generation in Rivers State. A simple random sampling was use in the selection of 600 unemployed graduates (400 male and 200 female) in the State. Data was analyzed using means and standard deviation. The findings revealed that no significant difference was found between male and female unemployed graduates on the factors associated with graduate unemployment in Rivers State. Again, no significant difference was established between male and female unemployed graduates on the coping strategies among the unemployed graduates in Rivers State.

Lastly, Ogbonne (2015) investigated the coping strategies adopted by unemployed graduates in Enugu State to reduce financial stress. It was hypothesized that unemployed graduates in Enugu would depend on families, friends, engage in menial jobs, be optimistic and patience as coping strategies for reducing financial stress. Through a purposive means, 150 copies of the questionnaire were administered to unemployed graduates in Enugu State, Nigeria. The Chi-Square goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses raised. The result showed that the coping strategies adopted by unemployed graduates in Enugu State to reduce financial stress are depending on family members, friends, engaging in menial jobs and optimism.

Despite all these studies on unemployment reduction, effective result has not been seen, instead the rate of employment among youths is increasing on daily basis. Much attention has not been given to self-determination, government intervention with total control as a mean to increase youths self-sustainability. However, this study assessed the coping mechanism for reducing unemployment syndrome among graduate in Osun state, Nigeria from the angle of individual coping mechanisms

(Self-determination) and intervention of government with total control at local level has not received adequate attention; hence this study intends to bridge this gap.

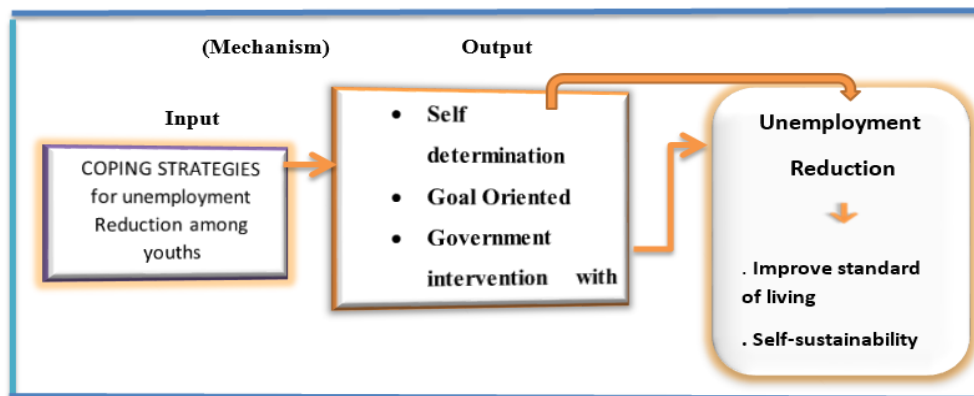


Figure 1. Researchers' Conceptual Model, (2020)

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted the survey design in its investigation of the variables.

Population

The population of this study was graduates who are beneficiaries of N-Power scheme in Osun State.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the study was selected through a purposive technique. Subsequently, 407 unemployed graduates but were engaged in N-Power scheme were purposively selected in Osun state across the 30 local government areas to participate in the study.

Validity and Reliability Tests

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha of the Variables Measured

Cronbach's Alpha	.884
Number of Items	7
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. KMO	0.788

Authors' computation, (2020).

Table 2. Construct Scale Reliability and Item of Marketing Intelligence – Total Correlation

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha of Item Deleted
UNEM	.770	.790
IDS1	.643	.810
IDS2	.661	.803
IDS3	.610	.820
GISWCv1	.560	.790
GISWCv2	.795	.880
GISWCv3	.680	.822

Authors' computation, (2020).

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient provides an assessment of overall scale reliability. Table 2. Shows that 0.884 for all scale used in the study were reliable.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.788 indicate sampling adequacy in the Table 1. The result of KMO test confirms that the sample is a true representation of the population.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Two sets of questionnaires were administered, 420 copies were administered on beneficiaries of N power graduates and 407 were adequately filled and collected. Also, 60 copies were personally administered on the local government supervisor to enable researcher obtain information on government intervention and supervision of the fund (2 from each local government).

Method of Data Analysis

Linear regression was used to analysis the data collected in order to achieve the stated objectives.

Model Specification

Based on the literature, theoretical framework and hypotheses stated in the study, the model is formulated thus.

$$UEMR_v = f(\text{IDS}, \text{GISWC}). \quad UEMR_v = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{IDS} + \beta_2 \text{GISWC} + \varepsilon$$

Where, UEMR_v = Unemployment Reduction (Self Sustainability and improved standard of living)

IDS = Individual determination, (Focus, goal oriented and self assiduous)

GISWC = Government intervention with total control at local level. (Quarterly report on utilization of government capital intervention GISWC_{v1}, Local level supervision GISWC_{v2}, Close monitoring from federal level GISWC_{v3})

α..... constant; β and log are. Estimate of parameters; ε... Error Term.

For H₀₁: UEMR_v = α + β₁IDS, + ε

For H₀₂: UEMR_v = α + β₂ GISWC_v + ε

4. Results and Discussion

H₀₁: Individual determination as coping mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State

For UEMR_v = α + β₁IDS, + ε

Table 3. A Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of the Interactive Relationship between self-Determination and Unemployment Reduction among the Graduates in Osun State.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.776	.620	.617	3.03898	1.961

a. Predictors: Self-determination (Focus, goal oriented and self-assiduous)

b. Dependent Variable: Unemployment Reduction (self sustainability). *p<0.05

Source: Researchers' computation, (2020)

The model summary in Table 3 gives the R (0.776) and R² (0.620). This shows that a Strong positive interaction (relationship) exists between self-determination (goal oriented, self-assiduous and reduction of unemployment syndrome among youths in Osun State. Thus, this model is predicting 62% of the variance in the level of unemployment reduction among the unemployment youth in the state using all predictors altogether; meaning that 62% of the variance in unemployment reduction is predicted by self focus, goal oriented and self assiduous of the youths. Durbin Watson value of 1.961 > 1.5 and close to 2 mean the absent of auto serial correlation in the model.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Significance of Predictors on unemployment reduction in the state

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	408.701	3	134.685	257.911	.000
Residual	138.981	401	.266		
Total	547.6582	406			

*p<0.05

Source: Researchers' computation, (2020)

The Table 4 shows that the variables used is highly significant in predicting the high level of self sustainability among youths in Osun state, $F(3, 406) = 257.911$, $sig. = .000$, $p < 0.05$. This is an indication with enough evident against the acceptability of null hypothesis. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The resulting prediction equation was $Y = .546 + 0.860 (IDS)$

H₀₂: Government intervention with total control mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment reduction among graduates in Osun State.

$$UEMR_v = \alpha + \beta_2 GISWC + \varepsilon$$

Table 5. A Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of Government Intervention with Total Control Mechanisms and Unemployment Reduction among Graduates in Osun State.

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.675 ^a	.455	.454	1.127	1.897

a. Predictors: GISWC (Local level supervision, Close monitoring from federal level, quarterly report on utilization of government capital intervention).

b. Dependent Variable: Unemployment Reduction.

Source: Researchers' computation, (2020)

Table 5 shows capacity of the model in determining the possible reduction of unemployment rate in Osun State. Meaning that 45.5% of the variance in increase in standard of living among youths in Osun State is strictly determined by different programmes embarked on by Government in the state with adequate control measure (close monitoring and regular report of progress activities) on all the participants.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Significance of Predictors on unemployment reduction in the state

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	378.781	3	158.075	267.910	.000
Residual	158.081	66	.256		
Total	537.591	69			

*p<0.05

Source: Researchers' computation, (2020)

The Table 6 shows that the variables used is highly significant in predicting the high level of self sustainability among youths in Osun state, $F(1, 69) = 267.910$, $\text{sig.} = .000$, $p < 0.05$. This is an indication with enough evident against the acceptability of null hypothesis. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7. Contribution of Each Predictor to Unemployment Reduction through Government Intervention.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.546	.205		2.618	.012
Local level supervision	.369	.053	.369	6.906	.001
Close monitoring from federal level	.332	.038	.332	4.327	0.04
Quarterly report on utilization of fund	.458	.123	1.028	7.216	.000

* $p < 0.05$

Source: Researchers' computation, (2020)

Government intervention with total control at local level. (Local level supervision, Close monitoring from federal level, quarterly report on utilization of government capital intervention)

The Table 7 shows the contribution of each of the predictors in the model. In this case, quarterly report on utilization of government intervention fund has highest contribution with Beta = .458, $\text{sig} = 0.000$, $p < .05$ and $t\text{-value} = 7.216$, Local level supervision contributed Beta = .369, $\text{sig} = 0.001$, $p < .05$ and $t\text{-value} = 6.906$, Close monitoring from federal level contributed least with Beta = .332, $p < .05$, $\text{sig} = 0.004$ and $t = 4.327$. All the predictors contributed significantly. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The resulting prediction equation was

$$Y = .546 + .458 (\text{GISWCv1}) + .369 (\text{GISWCv2}) + .332 (\text{GISWCv3})$$

Table 8. Summary of Findings

Hypotheses (null)	Analyses conducted	Decision
H01: Individual determination as coping mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State	Linear Regression; R= 0.776, R ² = 0.620, Adj. R ² = .617. sig. = 0.00, p <0.005. Durbin- Watson = 1.961	Alternate Hypothesis retained.
H02: Government intervention with total control mechanisms does not have impact on unemployment reduction among graduates in Osun State.	Linear Regression; R= .675, R ² = 0.455, Adj. R ² = 0.454. sig. = 0.00). Durbin- Watson = 1.897	Alternative Hypothesis retained

Source: Compiled by the Authors (2020)

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The situation of the country calls for sober reflection. The rate at which unemployment syndrome is increase is at alarming rate, therefore individual under this category needs to reflect on the need to take rapid step that will improve their standard of living. The major findings from this study were based on the results of the analyses of the data collected and the hypotheses tested. This study has established the fact that individual commitment, self assiduous, focus and goal oriented are keen to self sustainability in this current environment today.

In this era of ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, Government should intervene in the activities of the beneficiary of any fund release to reduce unemployment in Nigeria. The study concluded that individual determination (Focus, goal oriented and self assiduous) as coping mechanisms have significant impact on unemployment syndrome reduction among graduates in Osun State. This result support the conclusion of Adegboyega, Okesina and Mustapha (2016); Oduwole (2016) and Ogbeenne (2015)

Government intervention with total control mechanisms have significant impact on unemployment reduction among graduates in Osun State. Quarterly progress report should be monitored by government, close supervision at both federal and local level will also reduce the wastage and mismanagement of government fund intervention to reduce unemployment in the state. Effiong, (2019) conclusion supports this finding that government intervention will reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria.

Therefore, based on the findings of this study and the empirical supports from other researchers, this study recommended that youth under the categories of unemployment should determine to be goal and results oriented, self assiduous to enhance government opportunities provided to drive out of unemployment condition. This can only be achieved when the beneficiary is ready to be focused, industrious and manage the fund received to achieve greatly through small business implementation.

Government should introduce to all the beneficiaries mean of providing feedback. Quarterly report on the utilization of fund given to the beneficiary. Close monitoring at local level and federal level should be introduced to recued mismanagement of the intervention fund.

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