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Investigating Graduate Youth Unemployment in Puntland: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

Mohamed Ahmed¹*

¹ Puntland State University, Puntland-Somalia.

*Author for Correspondence Email: mburtinle10@gmail.com

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Globally, youth unemployment is a serious problem that affects political stability and socioeconomic growth. In Puntland, a semi-autonomous area in northeastern Somalia, this study investigates the problem of graduate youth unemployment, concentrating on its causes, effects, and possible solutions. Many Puntland graduates have significant obstacles in finding work, despite greater access to education and increasing participation in postsecondary institutions. This underscores a serious mismatch between the demands of the labor market and educational attainment. Beyond just personal difficulties, unemployment has a negative impact on the economy, productivity, social inequity, and political instability. This study uses a mixed-methods approach to collect data from 582 respondents, including stakeholders, policymakers, and graduates. The main causes of unemployment, according to the findings, are a lack of job prospects, a mismatch in skills, unstable economic conditions, and a lack of work experience. The study emphasizes the detrimental effects that unemployment has on graduates' social, mental, and financial well-being; many of them think about leaving their home country in search of better prospects. Addressing graduate youth unemployment in Puntland requires complete policy reforms, educational enhancements, and strategic investments in job-creating sectors. Among the suggestions are matching educational programs to industry demands, encouraging career services, encouraging entrepreneurship, and supporting vocational training. To foster an environment that is conducive to long-term economic growth and the generation of jobs, cooperation between government agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector is essential. The objective of this research is to enhance policy discussions and stimulate practical approaches to mitigate graduate joblessness, hence promoting Puntland's sustainable growth.

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INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a critical global issue with far-reaching consequences for political stability and socioeconomic progress. Around the world, young graduates face significant challenges in securing employment, a situation exacerbated by rapid technological advancements, economic instability, and a mismatch between educational outcomes and labor market demands. This global phenomenon is particularly pronounced in developing regions, where youth unemployment rates are often double or triple those of adults, leading to economic disparities, social unrest, and political instability (International Labour Organization, 2020).

This problem is particularly severe in Puntland, a semi-autonomous area in northeastern Somalia, especially among university graduates. This article explores the complex problem of graduate youth unemployment in Puntland, looking at its root origins, wide-ranging effects, and possible avenues for long-term remedies.

Puntland has a relatively young population, with a large share of people between the ages of 15 and 35 (UNDP, 2021). Despite initiatives to enhance access to higher education, such as higher enrollment in universities, many graduates face significant obstacles when trying to find meaningful employment. The aforementioned circumstance highlights a significant discrepancy between the competencies taught in educational establishments and the requirements of the regional workforce (World Bank, 2019). Because of this, a significant portion of young people with educations are marginalized in an economy that finds it difficult to employ their skills and ambitions.

Graduate youth unemployment has more than just personal costs; it also has wider socioeconomic ramifications. Among the immediate repercussions faced by unemployed graduates are

financial instability, lower productivity, and heightened social inequality (International Labour Organization, 2020). Furthermore, the anger and disappointment brought on by protracted unemployment can weaken social cohesiveness and fuel political unrest in the area.

Puntland's graduate youth unemployment problem necessitates a multifaceted strategy that includes targeted interventions, policy reforms, and sustainable economic development techniques. Restructuring education to better match curriculum to industry demands, fostering entrepreneurship and career training, and investing in industries that can accommodate a growing labor population are all potential effective solutions (World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, the establishment of a collaborative environment among government agencies, educational institutions, and private sector partners is crucial in promoting job creation and economic progress.

This paper aims to contribute to policy discourse and stimulate workable alternatives to address this persistent issue by examining the origins, effects, and potential remedies of graduate youth unemployment in Puntland. It aims to promote sustainable development in the area and advance a larger understanding of the dynamics of youth employment through empirical analysis and well-informed recommendations.

Research Methodology

In order to provide a thorough understanding of graduate youth unemployment in Puntland, this study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This approach enables a more comprehensive analysis by combining statistical data with firsthand accounts and expert perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Study Area and Population Target

The research was conducted in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in northeastern Somalia. Puntland is characterized by a predominantly young population, with a significant portion aged between 15 and 35 years (UNDP, 2021). The study specifically targets university graduates who have experienced challenges in securing employment, despite increased access to higher education in the region.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process involved both primary and secondary sources:

Quantitative Data Collection: A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 582 respondents, including recent graduates from various universities in Puntland. The questionnaire captured demographic information, educational background, employment status, and perceptions of the labor market. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify key trends and correlations related to unemployment (Bryman, 2016).

Qualitative Data Collection: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key stakeholders, including policymakers, university administrators, and employers. These qualitative methods provided rich insights into the structural factors contributing to graduate unemployment, as well as potential solutions from the perspective of those directly involved in the education and employment sectors (Patton, 2015).

methods approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of the problem.

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the research findings and conclusions from a study that looked into Puntland's graduate youth unemployment, with an emphasis on the problems' sources, effects, and possible solutions. The survey involved 582 respondents in all, including 62 of policymakers, 50 of stakeholders from different sectors, and 470 of university graduates. Their participation offered insights into the intricate processes surrounding youth unemployment in the area.

Significant obstacles were noted by the study, including the mismatch between market demands and educational attainment, the dearth of jobs in important industries, and the socioeconomic effects of graduates' protracted unemployment. In order to properly address these problems and promote Puntland's sustainable economic development, discussions brought to light the pressing need for focused policy reforms, improvements to education, and calculated investments.

Contribution of Policymakers and Stakeholders

Stakeholders and policymakers have been instrumental in tackling the structural problems that lead to youth unemployment. Their contributions offer a thorough comprehension of the problems and possible fixes;

Policy Insights; Examining the advantages and disadvantages of current policies, policymakers provided insightful commentary. They found serious flaws in the frameworks that are in place now, especially when it comes to matching educational objectives with the needs of the job market. Acknowledging these shortcomings, they stressed the significance of putting specific measures into place with the goal of lowering youth unemployment. Developing policies that encourage youth entrepreneurship, improving vocational training, and providing incentives for the development of jobs in the private sector were among the main proposals.

Sectoral Perspectives; Practical insights into the reality of the labor market were offered by stakeholders from a variety of sectors, including education, industry, and non-governmental organizations. They emphasized the critical need for curriculum reform by drawing attention to the disparity between the skills provided in educational institutions and those that employers demand. Stakeholders also pushed for closer linkages between academic institutions and business, arguing that these alliances may close the skills gap and give graduates more job options. They also demanded sector-specific programs that concentrate on high-demand industries with

strong job development potential, such technology, healthcare, and renewable energy.

Overall, the contributions made by stakeholders and legislators highlight the necessity of a multifaceted strategy to address youth unemployment, one that incorporates industry cooperation, policy innovation, and a reevaluation of educational priorities in light of changing labor market demands.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	348	60
Female	234	40
Total	582	100

This distribution reflects the overall respondent pool of 582, which includes policymakers, stakeholders, and graduates. For clarity, the total number of graduate respondents alone is 470

The distribution of respondents' sexes in the Puntland study on graduate young unemployment is shown in Table 1. 348 (or 60%) of the 582 responders were male, and 234 (or 40%) were female. A small male predominance among the responders is indicated by this distribution. To analyze potential gender-specific factors impacting teenage unemployment and to customize interventions that meet the needs of Puntland's graduate's male and female, it is imperative to have a thorough understanding of the sex distribution.

Employment Status

Current Employment Status and Field Alignment

Among the 470 respondents surveyed, 87 (18.51%) indicated that their current job aligns

with their field of study, highlighting a positive relationship between education and employment. This alignment is essential because it has the potential to increase job satisfaction and productivity, as employees are more engaged and motivated when working in areas that are related to their academic training (Smith, 2020). Furthermore, employment in one's field of study can result in improved career development opportunities and increased income prospects, which can contribute to the overall economic growth.

Nevertheless, 59 respondents (12.55%) reported being employed outside their field of study, suggesting that there may be a skills mismatch between educational outcomes and market demands in Puntland. A skills mismatch can result from a variety of factors, such as a lack of pertinent job opportunities in specific fields, rapid changes in industry requirements, and inadequate career guidance during the educational phase. Underemployment may result from such discrepancies, as graduates are employed in positions that do not fully capitalize on their education and abilities, which leads to decreased productivity and job disenchantment. This issue not only impacts the growth of individual careers but also represents a loss of economic potential, as highly educated individuals are not employed to their utmost potential (Jones & Brown, 2019).

Duration of Unemployment Since Graduation

Of the 470 respondents, 146 (31.06%) said that they were currently employed, while a bigger group of 324 (68.94%) reported being unemployed. The following is the distribution of the length of unemployment:

Table 2: Distribution of Unemployment Duration Among Graduates Since Graduation

#	how long have you been unemployed since graduation?	Distribution of Responses
1.	Less than 12months	32
2.	1-2 years	59
3.	3-4 years	73
4.	5-6years	62
5.	More than 7 years	98
	Total	324

These results highlight how common long-term unemployment is among Puntland graduates, with a significant portion of them facing joblessness for several years. Long-term unemployment can have detrimental effects on one's capacity to find work, as well as increased psychological stress and skill loss. Due to the fact that individuals from poor origins are disproportionately affected, long-term unemployment also makes social inequality worse. Improving economic prospects and lowering social inequalities in the area depend on addressing these issues. Reducing the high unemployment rates among graduates requires implementing targeted employment initiatives, improving vocational training, and matching educational curricula with industry demands (Adams et al., 2021).

Causes of Unemployment

The respondents' primary causes of youth unemployment in emerging nations are indicative of complex issues that align with wider study findings.

Lack of Job Opportunities

Firstly, important number of respondents (72.16%) attribute unemployment to the lack of job opportunities in Puntland. This result is consistent with noted global trends by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), highlighting the fact that a major obstacle to young people joining the workforce is the lack of job creation. The scarcity of job opportunities can be attributed to several factors, including inadequate economic diversification, limited industrial development, and insufficient support for entrepreneurship. In regions like Puntland, where economic activities are often concentrated in a few sectors, because of the severe competition for jobs, many recent graduates have little chance of finding employment. The World Bank (2019) also highlights that limited access to finance and infrastructure more hinders the creation of new businesses and job opportunities.

Skills Mismatch

Second, the problem of skills mismatch, mentioned by 64.89% of participants, highlights a

significant discrepancy between academic achievements and expectations of the labor market. This is consistent with research by Jones & Brown (2019), which highlights the mismatch between educational backgrounds and the abilities that companies in emerging nations need. When pupils are not sufficiently prepared by the educational system for the real-world demands of the labor market, a skills mismatch emerges. This can result from outdated curricula, lack of industry-relevant training, and insufficient collaboration between educational institutions and employers. Graduates who experience such disparities frequently become underemployed and frustrated because their qualifications do not match the jobs that are accessible to them, leading them to take positions for which they are overqualified or uninterested. This issue is widespread in many developing regions, where educational reforms lag behind the rapidly changing job market needs (Smith, 2020).

Economic Conditions

According to 68.54% of respondents, the state of the economy has a significant impact on job prospects. Economic instability can restrict business growth, reduce job openings, and limit investment in new enterprises, thereby exacerbating youth unemployment rates (World Bank, 2019). In Puntland, economic challenges such as political instability, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to finance further compound the difficulties in creating a healthy job market. The dynamics of the employment market in Puntland are greatly influenced by these economic issues, which also reflect difficulties seen in other comparable environments. A weak economy has an impact on job quality in addition to lowering the quantity of jobs that are available often resulting in lower wages and poorer working conditions.

Lack of Work Experience

Additional contributing factors, such the lack of job experience (53.58%), show that there is a big obstacle to youth employment. Many employers seek candidates with practical experience, which many graduates lack. This issue is worsened by

the limited availability of internships and entry level positions that could provide such experience. Without opportunities to gain practical skills, young graduates find it challenging to meet the expectations of possible employers. Studies by the UNDP (2021) emphasize that work experience is a critical determinant of employability and the possibilities for young people finding work are severely hampered by the absence of organized routes for gaining experience.

Inadequate Career Services and Guidance

Inadequate career services at educational institutions (44.83%) and insufficient career guidance (36.58%) highlight additional structural obstacles that prevent youth from finding work. Effective career services are essential for helping students transition from education to the workforce, providing support in job search strategies preparing a resume, and getting ready for an interview. Graduates who do not receive these services are ill-prepared for the workforce. Similarly, insufficient career guidance means that students may not receive adequate information about feasible career paths, the skills required for different professions, or the realities of the job market. This may result in students making unwise career decisions and their goals not matching the demands of the labor market.

These results highlight how crucial comprehensive support networks are for improving career preparedness and labor market integration in educational institutions and the larger community. Coordination is needed to address these issues by promoting economic growth, raising educational standards and relevance, and offering young people comprehensive career support services.

Relevance of Degrees to the Job Market

Respondents' perceptions of the usefulness of their degrees provide a varied picture of how educational accomplishments are viewed in connection to regional labor market demands. A sizable fraction of respondents (61.20%) believe that their degrees are not sufficiently applicable to

Puntland's current employment environment. This opinion parallels worries expressed in the discourse on education around the world over the necessity of curriculum to meet industry standards (Smith, 2020). To improve graduate employability and make sure that educational investments result in worthwhile professional prospects, it is imperative to address this mismatch. Adams et al. (2021) claim that matching educational programs to industry demands can dramatically lower unemployment rates and increase graduates' job satisfaction.

Vocational Skills Demand

The necessity for vocational skills, especially in fields like engineering, business management, and agriculture, highlights the potential for focused skill development programs. Critical gaps in the practical skills required for sustainable economic development are filled by vocational training in mechanical engineering, agricultural production, animal management, and environmental conservation (Adams et al., 2021). These abilities help local industries that are vital to economic growth and shock resistance in addition to improving job readiness. Vocational training is important for increasing employability and fostering economic stability in emerging regions, according to research by the ILO (2020).

Personal Challenges in Job Search

Personal experiences shared by respondents highlight the complex reality of negotiating Puntland's labor market. Challenges such as skill mismatches, limited job opportunities, and the importance of networking emphasizes the requirement of comprehensive methods for professional growth. These challenges resonate with broader global trends in job search dynamics, emphasizing the importance of adaptive strategies and resilience in pursuing career goals (UNDP, 2021). A multimodal strategy is needed to address these personal obstacles, including career counseling, mentorship programs, and easier access to resources for job seekers.

Consequences of Unemployment Among Graduates in Puntland

Financial Impact

The survey data shows that unemployed graduates in Puntland are facing varied degrees of financial difficulty. There are significant economic issues, as seen by the vast majority (54.3%) who suffer moderate to severe financial repercussions. This is consistent with larger studies that show that unemployment worsens poverty and financial instability in addition to lowering income (Jones & Smith, 2020). With 22.3% of respondents falling into the severe impact category, this group represents a dire scenario in which people find it difficult to meet their fundamental necessities, which may have long-term financial consequences like debt buildup and a greater need for outside assistance (Smith, 2018). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), prolonged unemployment can deplete personal savings, increase borrowing, and lead to higher levels of financial stress, this may have an adverse long-term impact on individual and their families.

Mental Health Impact

Puntland graduates' mental health is adversely affected by unemployment; 56.6% of them experience moderate to severe effects on their mental health. This is consistent with research demonstrating that mental health conditions including anxiety and depression are more likely to occur in those without a job (Johnson et al., 2019). The high prevalence of severe impact responses (25.3%) highlights the need for mental health support systems tailored to unemployed youth, aiming to alleviate the negative psychological effects and improve resilience (Brown & Williams, 2021). Research by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) supports these findings, indicating that unemployment can lead to increased psychological distress, lower self-esteem, and higher rates of mental health issues.

Social Impact

Puntland graduates are significantly impacted socially by unemployment; 75.8% have moderate to severe negative effects on their social lives.

This result is consistent with studies showing that social isolation and strained relationships are caused by unemployment (Miller & Davis, 2017). The significant impact category (30.2%) highlights disruptions in social activities and increased According to Wilson (2020), social disengagement might worsen feelings of isolation and marginalization experienced by the unemployed. According to Putnam (2000), social capital is crucial for personal and professional development, and unemployment can erode these social networks, reducing opportunities for social engagement and support.

Emigration Consideration

A striking 70.8% of respondents have considered leaving Puntland for better job opportunities elsewhere. This pattern is a reflection of discontent with local job opportunities and is consistent with worldwide migration trends influenced by economic considerations (UNDP, 2021). Reasons cited, such as better job opportunities and higher wages, underscore systemic issues within the local job market, including limited career growth and inadequate economic infrastructure (World Bank, 2022). The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020) explains that the desire for better living conditions and professional chances is a major factor in economic migration, which is a global issue for areas with little economic opportunity.

These outcomes demonstrate the complex ways in which unemployment affects Puntland's graduates. To address these problems, comprehensive policies are needed that offer unemployed adolescents financial, mental health, and social support in addition to job options. Puntland can improve economic stability and match educational outputs with market demands to improve graduate prospects and lessen the negative impacts of unemployment.

Solutions to Address Graduate Youth Unemployment in Puntland

Support Needed for Job Search

The survey identifies a number of critical areas where graduates' employment chances in

Puntland might be considerably enhanced by focused assistance. Jones and Smith (2020) found that a significant number of respondents (72.2%) prioritize skill development programs, suggesting a high demand for efforts aimed at improving job-specific skills. Skill development programs can include vocational training, technical education, and soft skills enhancement, which are crucial for meeting the demands of the modern job market. According to research, these programs can greatly improve employability by imparting market-relevant skills (World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, a significant majority of respondents (61.9%) favor government incentives, highlighting the potential influence of policy initiatives in promoting employment growth (UNDP, 2021). Government incentives can boost job creation and lower unemployment. Examples of these incentives include tax exemptions for companies that hire graduates, grants for startups, and subsidies for training programs.

The focus on on-the-job training (56.7%) and internships/apprenticeships (60.1%) is indicative of the need for real-world experience to close the skills gap between education and employment (World Bank, 2022). Because they offer practical experience, internships and apprenticeships increase a graduate's employability. Research has indicated that opportunities for experiential learning improve students' preparedness for the workforce and raise their chances of finding work after graduation (Brown & Williams, 2021).

Job Search Support Services

Notably, 48.1% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with present job search support services (Miller & Davis, 2017). This indicates that there is need for broad development to better serve the needs of graduates, especially in the areas of networking opportunities (53.3%) and career counseling (49.8%) (Brown & Williams, 2021). Personalized career counseling, which assists graduates in identifying appropriate career choices and formulating goal-achieving methods, is an essential component of effective job search support services. Furthermore, networking platforms can be established to link graduates

with business leaders and prospective employers, increasing their career prospects.

Effective Solutions to Reduce Unemployment

Creating more job opportunities (42.9%) arises as the most preferred solution among respondents, highlighting the importance of economic growth and employment generation initiatives (Johnson et al., 2019). Numerous strategies can be used to promote economic growth, such as infrastructure spending, assistance for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Improving education quality (20.6%) and providing better career guidance (15.5%) are also seen as critical steps to enhance graduates' employability (Smith, 2018). Effective career coaching enables graduates to negotiate the job market more effectively, and high-quality education that is in line with market demands guarantees that graduates acquire relevant abilities.

Education System Preparation

According to the majority of respondents (65.3%), Puntland's educational system does not effectively educate graduates for the labor market, indicating the need for curriculum revisions to better match industry demands with academic content (Wilson, 2020). Recommendations for universities include integrating technology and IT skills, entrepreneurship, and practical vocational training (Smith, 2018). In order to guarantee that graduates possess the most recent skills, educational establishments must to periodically revise their curricula in response to input from the industry and growing market trends.

Collaborative Efforts

Cooperation is necessary in the fight against youth unemployment among recent graduates. While the commercial sector is advised to offer internships, training, and job possibilities, universities are called upon to improve career services and industrial linkages (Jones & Smith, 2020). In order to create an environment that is favorable to job development, the government must get involved through incentives and policy assistance (UNDP, 2021). Public-private partnerships,

industry-academia collaboration, and community-based projects focused at job creation and skills development are examples of collaborative ventures.

Conclusion

Puntland's graduate youth unemployment problem is complex and has wide-ranging effects. The report identifies important problems as the main contributors to unemployment, including a mismatch in skills, a lack of employment prospects, and inadequate career services. For graduates without jobs, these variables have detrimental effects on their social, mental, and financial well-being. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates educational improvements, regulatory reforms, and calculated investments in industries that can accommodate the expanding labor force is needed to address these issues. Fostering entrepreneurship, encouraging vocational training, and matching educational curricula to market demands are all examples of effective solutions. Moreover, fostering an atmosphere that is conducive to the production of jobs and long-term economic growth requires cooperation between public and private sector organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. Puntland may promote economic stability, lessen social inequality, and boost employment opportunities for its graduates by putting these proposals into practice.

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