

Impact of Digital Entrepreneurship on Crime Reduction among Youth in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria

Journal of Management and
Social Sciences
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Abstract

The study explores the ongoing problem of juvenile crime in Osogbo Metropolis, where unemployment, socioeconomic pressures, and unequal access to legal income sources push many young people toward criminal behaviour. It assesses whether digital entrepreneurship can provide sustainable financial opportunities that reduce juvenile crime and promote lawful livelihoods. A total of 250 young individuals-including students, digital entrepreneurs, and unemployed persons-were specifically chosen to participate in a descriptive survey. Data were gathered through structured

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questionnaire, and analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. The results show a strong, statistically significant relationship between reducing crime and engaging in digital entrepreneurship. The strongest correlation was found between a decrease in crime and involvement in online business ventures ($r = 0.65$, $p = 0.003$), income generated through digital channels ($r = 0.70$, $p = 0.002$), and access to digital tools and training ($r = 0.72$, $p = 0.001$). Additionally, there was a notable correlation between youth participation in government and non-governmental organisation digital empowerment programmes ($r = 0.61$, $p = 0.005$). Respondents believed digital entrepreneurship greatly lowered their risk of engaging in illegal activities by fostering economic independence, self-esteem, and access to legal options. The study concludes that digital entrepreneurship can be an effective approach to reducing juvenile crime in urban settings, particularly where unemployment and social inequality are prevalent. It recommends reforming laws to expand access to ICT infrastructure, increasing funding for youth-centered digital projects, and integrating digital literacy into school curricula. By encouraging inclusive digital involvement, stakeholders may help create safer and more economically resilient communities.

Keywords

Digital entrepreneurship, human capital development, Osogbo metropolis, urban unemployment, youth crime

Introduction

The nexus of entrepreneurship and technology has transformed global economic environments in recent years, presenting creative opportunities for socioeconomic advancement and youth empowerment. A key tactic to combat youth unemployment and social vices is digital entrepreneurship, which is the establishment and management of company endeavours primarily through digital platforms and technologies (Munyanyi & Makasi, 2021). Digital entrepreneurship offers a promising way to engage young people in productive activities and reduce their engagement in criminal activities in Nigeria, where youth unemployment rates are still high (Ogunlade & Adewale, 2022; Adedayo & Ajibola, 2022). Rising crime rates associated with socioeconomic deprivation and restricted access to formal work are two characteristics of Osogbo Metropolis, the capital of Osun State, which exemplifies the opportunities and problems experienced by urban youth in Nigeria (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2020). This study investigates the effect of digital entrepreneurship on reducing youth crime in Osogbo Metropolis against this backdrop.

E-commerce, digital marketing, app development, and online freelancing are just a few of the creative business models that have emerged as a result of the quick spread of digital technology (Eze *et al.*, 2023). Digital entrepreneurship lowers obstacles to entry for young people by utilising digital tools and the internet to decrease beginning expenses and geographic limitations, in contrast to conventional entrepreneurship (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021). Therefore, for Nigerian youth who have been disproportionately

impacted by economic marginalisation, digital entrepreneurship has the potential to create jobs, raise income levels, and promote economic inclusion (Babatunde & Adeyemi, 2020).

Numerous studies emphasise the socioeconomic benefits of digital entrepreneurship in Africa, especially its role in reducing poverty and fostering youth skill development (Okoro & Chukwuma, 2022; Salisu & Ismail, 2023). Nevertheless, there is currently little empirical data that directly connects digital enterprise to a decrease in crime in urban areas like Osogbo. Olawale and Oladipo (2019) note that poverty, social marginalisation, and long-standing unemployment are the main causes of youth crime in Nigeria, while Osogbo specifically reports an increase in theft, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency due to limited employment opportunities (Alabi & Olutayo, 2021). This disparity emphasises the need to investigate how digital entrepreneurship might be a good way to help young people reduce crime.

Routine Activity Theory posits that when motivated criminals come across appropriate targets without competent supervision, criminal activity takes place (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Afolayan & Salawu, 2023). In this situation, a dearth of respectable economic options may encourage young people to engage in illegal activity, which would raise crime rates. The study postulates a possible disruption of this causal pathway, which would lower the incentive of young people to commit crimes by offering feasible economic alternatives through digital entrepreneurship.

Also, training and mentoring components that improve soft skills like communication, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making are frequently included in digital entrepreneurship projects (Adebayo & Fatoki, 2022). For young people who are at risk of crime, this kind of all-encompassing empowerment promotes resilience and social reintegration (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Furthermore, these businesses' digital nature promotes social capital development and connectedness, both of which are essential for preventing crime and fostering community cohesion (Nwankwo & Ekong, 2020). Thus, digital entrepreneurship may be a multifaceted approach to tackling the social factors of young delinquency as well as economic disadvantage.

In an effort to encourage economic engagement and curb social vices, the Osun State government and several non-governmental organisations have launched a number of initiatives that support the development of digital skills and entrepreneurship among Osogbo youth (Osun State Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2023). Nevertheless, there is a paucity of empirical data assessing how well these programmes work to lower crime rates or change the behavioural patterns of young people. Studies that have already been done typically concentrate on digital literacy or more general economic outcomes without specifically considering the effects of crime (Oladeji & Adeyemi, 2021; Lawal

& Bamidele, 2023). This study aims to close this gap by offering a comprehensive examination of how juvenile crime reduction in the city is impacted by participation in digital entrepreneurship

The urgent necessity to create novel, long-lasting tactics to reduce juvenile criminality in the socioeconomic context of modern Nigerian cities serves as the foundation for this study's justification. According to Ajayi and Bello (2020), traditional approaches to crime prevention, such as law enforcement and punitive measures, have demonstrated minimal long-term efficacy in tackling underlying factors, including marginalisation and unemployment. Therefore, including digital entrepreneurship within economic empowerment may provide a supplementary strategy that tackles underlying issues and fosters constructive youth development. This strategy is in line with international policy guidelines that support youth-focused economic interventions as instruments for social stability and crime prevention (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022).

Additionally, by providing empirical findings from an urban Nigerian context, the study adds to the expanding body of scholarship on the socio-economic implications of digital entrepreneurship in developing nations. It aims to educate community stakeholders, development professionals, and legislators on the possibilities of digital entrepreneurial initiatives as useful tools for crime prevention plans. Designing focused interventions that use entrepreneurship and technology as catalysts for social change requires an understanding of this link.

This study examines how much digital entrepreneurship offers viable economic alternatives, improves socioeconomic empowerment, and, ultimately, helps to lower criminal behaviour among young people in order to address the issue of persistent youth involvement in crime in Osogbo Metropolis.

Empirical Review

This empirical analysis examines current research on the relationship between digital entrepreneurship and youth crime reduction in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State. It addresses current issues that can impede digital endeavours from reaching their full potential as a deterrent to crime while simultaneously highlighting the economic, social, psychological, and skill-based advantages of these endeavours.

The Role of Digital Entrepreneurship in Promoting Youth

It is commonly acknowledged that the rise of digital entrepreneurship is a transformative force that can empower young people by giving them access to new economic opportunities, especially in poor nations. Digital platforms allow young people to participate in business activities that go beyond conventional barriers like unemployment, limited capital, and geographic

limitations, according to empirical research done in Nigeria and similar African contexts (Afolabi & Ibrahim, 2021; Okoro *et al.*, 2022). This phenomenon is regarded as a vital route for young people to be included in the digital economy in Osogbo Metropolis (Adetunji & Oladipo, 2020).

The accessibility of mobile technology and internet services has greatly increased entrepreneurial activities among youths, thereby fostering economic self-reliance, according to Afolabi and Ibrahim's (2021) investigation into the role of digital entrepreneurship in reducing youth unemployment in Southwestern Nigeria. The authors also underlined that by giving young people legitimate means of money and a sense of purpose, this kind of economic empowerment indirectly reduces their engagement in illegal activities.

The importance of digital entrepreneurship to social capital among Nigerian teenagers was also studied by Okoro *et al.* (2022). They made the case that participating in online endeavours promotes networking, skill development, and positive peer influences, all of which work together to lessen propensities for antisocial behaviour. Adetunji and Oladipo (2020) supported these findings, pointing out that digital entrepreneurship initiatives in Osogbo, particularly those backed by the government and non-governmental organisations, foster an environment that allows young people to prosper socially and economically, which in turn serves as a deterrent to crime.

The Connection between Crime Prevention and Economic Empowerment

Recent empirical research has established a clear link between juvenile crime reduction and economic empowerment through digital entrepreneurship. Strategies that enhance economic status are seen as effective crime prevention approaches since economic deprivation is frequently mentioned as a primary cause of juvenile delinquency (Ekundayo & Akinyemi, 2019; Bello & Ojo, 2023). According to a quantitative study done in Lagos and Osun States by Ekundayo and Akinyemi (2019), the prevalence of property-related crimes like theft and burglary is inversely correlated with young people's involvement in digital entrepreneurship. The study made the case that by solving the financial necessities that might otherwise push young people towards criminal activity, economic empowerment reduces the desire for crime.

Similarly, Bello and Ojo (2023) looked into how digital entrepreneurship could help reduce crime in Osogbo and other urban areas in Nigeria. According to their findings, young people who operated digital enterprises reported far fewer criminal activities than their counterparts without jobs. The study also emphasised how digital entrepreneurship can promote behavioural changes, including improved goal orientation and self-discipline, which further lessen

criminal tendencies. Furthermore, these results are consistent with theoretical frameworks like Routine Activity Theory, which holds that by changing societal patterns and routines, more lawful activity reduces the likelihood of crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979, quoted in Adewale & Yusuf, 2021). Thus, digital entrepreneurship not only raises economic standing but also modifies day-to-day activities to lessen susceptibility to illegal situations.

Skills Development and Digital Entrepreneurship: Implications for Reducing Crime

The significance of digital entrepreneurship in skill development, which in turn helps to reduce crime, is another important subject that has emerged from empirical literature. Acquiring digital skills gives young people the abilities they need to succeed in the workforce and as entrepreneurs, promoting resilience against criminal activity (Olusola & Eze, 2020; Fatoki & Oni, 2021). Olusola and Eze (2020) investigated how digital literacy programmes affected youth empowerment in Osun State and discovered that participants' confidence and employability rose in direct proportion to their engagement in deviant behaviour. The authors contend that developing skills through digital entrepreneurship reduces dependency on illegal means by opening up new avenues for generating revenue.

In their evaluation of the efficacy of digital entrepreneurship training programmes throughout Nigeria, Fatoki and Oni (2021) found that improved digital capabilities in young people considerably lower their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity. The study emphasised that social integration and self-efficacy, protective variables against crime-are fostered by skill development. Furthermore, Okafor and Nwachukwu (2023) investigated how e-commerce abilities affected the trends of juvenile crime in metropolitan Nigeria. They concluded that because they were more satisfied with their jobs and had more financial security, young people who received training in digital marketing and online company management were less inclined to commit crimes. The results provide credence to the notion that digital entrepreneurship functions as a two-pronged strategy for social and economic anti-crime intervention.

Digital Entrepreneurship's Social and Psychological Impacts on Youth Crime

Empirical studies demonstrate how digital business reduces crime in social and psychological ways in addition to economic ones. Participating in digital endeavours promotes social inclusion, psychological well-being, and positive identity formation, all of which work together to lower criminal propensities (Ajayi & Adeyemi, 2022; Nnaji & Chukwu, 2023). Ajayi and Adeyemi (2022) investigated how digital entrepreneurship affected at-risk youths in southwest Nigeria on a psychosocial level. According to their qualitative research,

entrepreneurship promotes self-worth, societal responsibility, and a sense of purpose, all of which lessen marginalisation sentiments that frequently result in criminal activity. Improved family ties and community involvement among young people engaged in digital companies were also reported by the study.

In a similar vein, Nnaji and Chukwu (2023) looked into how youth resistance against crime in Nigerian cities, particularly Osogbo, is influenced by digital entrepreneurship. According to the authors, digital entrepreneurs have greater levels of social connectedness and psychological well-being, which serve as protective factors against pressures that lead to criminal activity. Peer support networks and online groups that uphold pro-social values contribute to these psychosocial advantages. These observations also align with Social Control Theory, which highlights the importance of personal commitments and social ties in curbing deviance (Hirschi, 1969, quoted in Ajayi & Adeyemi, 2022). By encouraging constructive peer networks and community involvement, digital entrepreneurship fortifies these social ties.

Limitations and Challenges in Using Digital Entrepreneurship to Reduce Crime

Although there is a lot of empirical evidence to support the beneficial effects of digital entrepreneurship on reducing crime, there are a number of issues and restrictions that are recognised as potentially affecting its effectiveness. The potential of digital entrepreneurship as a tool for reducing crime is limited by problems like the digital gap, infrastructure deficiencies, restricted access to money, and sociocultural hurdles (Oluwafemi & Adebayo, 2021; Salami & Lawal, 2024). Infrastructural issues such as erratic power supplies and unreliable internet access were noted by Oluwafemi and Adebayo (2021) as major barriers to digital entrepreneurship in Osogbo and the neighbouring areas. These limitations restrict the size and viability of digital enterprises, which lessens their capacity to offer reliable financial substitutes for criminal activity.

Furthermore, sociocultural attitudes that discourage young people from engaging in digital business were emphasised by Salami and Lawal (2024). According to the study, cultural norms and familial constraints can deter young people from pursuing digital endeavours, especially women. This restricts the inclusivity and scope of digital economic empowerment. The digital gap, which is characterised by differences in access to technology according to socioeconomic position, is still a significant problem.

According to Okeke and Onyekachi (2023), vulnerable youths might continue to be denied the advantages of digital entrepreneurship if intentional policy interventions are not made to close these gaps, perpetuating the

circumstances that give rise to criminal activity. These challenges highlight how crucial it is to implement complementary policies like financial inclusion plans, digital literacy initiatives, and infrastructure development in order to leverage the potential of adolescent digital entrepreneurship to reduce crime.

Theoretical Framework and Implications for the Study

This study is anchored on strain theory and opportunity theory.

Strain Theory

According to the Strain Theory, which was first put forth by Robert K. Merton in the middle of the 20th century, when people are unable to accomplish socially acceptable objectives through legal means, social systems put pressure on them to commit crimes. The theory has been developed and refined in modern discourse, particularly in light of digital reality. Agnew (2019) goes on to say that stress, which can result in negative emotions like annoyance and anger, occurs when people are subjected to stressors like poverty, unemployment, or social marginalisation. These emotional reactions may then lead to criminal or deviant activity as a coping mechanism or as a way to accomplish objectives that would otherwise be impossible to get through legal channels.

In Nigeria, young people frequently experience significant structural stressors, such as limited access to high-quality education, poor economic opportunities, and limited upward social mobility, particularly in semi-urban areas like Osogbo Metropolis. Youth participation in illegal activities such as cultism, petty stealing, and computer fraud has been connected to these pressures (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2021). The Strain Theory is used in this study to explain teenage crime as a response to the conflict between goals (such as social recognition and financial achievement) and the limited resources to achieve them through traditional ways.

An alternate, valid path for young people to achieve their socioeconomic objectives is digital entrepreneurship. Digital marketing, e-commerce, freelancing, and content production are among the online companies that young people in Osogbo can pursue if they have access to the internet, mobile devices, and digital abilities. By offering options for revenue generation, these endeavours help lessen the financial strains and annoyances that frequently result in criminal activity. Accordingly, the Strain Theory offers a fundamental comprehension of how digital entrepreneurship functions as a coping strategy that redirects young people from deviance to constructive involvement (Okoro & Olatunji, 2020).

Opportunity Theory

According to Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) Opportunity Theory, a person's propensity for law-abiding or deviant behaviour is determined by their access to legitimate or illegitimate possibilities. Opportunity Theory emphasises the existence of alternate routes, whereas Strain Theory concentrates on the structural flaws that cause frustration. Essentially, crime results from both the availability of accessible illegal alternatives and the obstruction of legitimate ones, especially when the former is absent.

According to this idea, youngsters are less likely to engage in criminal activity when they have access to genuine digital economic prospects. This theory pertains to digital entrepreneurship. For example, a young person who has a working smartphone and access to training in social media marketing or graphic design is more likely to pursue freelancing than to commit street-level offences or cybercrime (Adesina, 2022). As a result, the variety of legal options in the digital realm counterbalances the allure of illicit ones.

In Osogbo Metropolis, where infrastructure and educational constraints are prevalent, the growing popularity of internet-enabled devices and social media platforms is revolutionising young people's conceptions of economic success. When digital entrepreneurship is promoted as a legitimate substitute for crime, conduct changes, which can be explained by the Opportunity Theory. By increasing the number of legal opportunities, programmes that assist digital start-ups, offer mentorship, or make money more accessible turn into crime-prevention tactics (Ogunleye, 2023).

Implications for the Study

The sociological underpinnings of crime and the revolutionary potential of digital entrepreneurship are both better understood through the application of the Strain Theory and Opportunity Theory. First of all, the study's exploration of the emotional and economic factors that influence young people to commit crimes is guided by these frameworks. Policymakers and stakeholders can have a better understanding of the situations in which interventions, such as the development of digital skills and assistance for entrepreneurs, may be most successful by identifying these forces.

Second, the theories emphasise how crucial inclusion and accessibility are. Promoting digital entrepreneurship alone is insufficient; equitable distribution of access to digital tools, platforms, and training is required. If not, individuals who are left out will still be exposed to the risks and pressures that encourage criminal activity. Therefore, the study aims to evaluate not only the existence

of digital entrepreneurship but also its accessibility to a wide range of young people in Osogbo.

Additionally, both theories encourage the creation of a multi-level intervention strategy that incorporates funding, mentorship, infrastructure, and education. Programmes for digital entrepreneurship that just concentrate on skill development and ignore emotional resilience (e.g., overcoming failure) or infrastructure deficiencies (e.g., unstable power supply, inadequate internet access) are unlikely to be successful in lowering crime. This suggests that entrepreneurship-based crime prevention needs to be comprehensive, encompassing structural, economic, and psychosocial aspects (Eze & Chukwuma, 2021).

Furthermore, the study will offer factual support for reorienting policy. The current youth empowerment programmes in Osun State should be revamped to give priority to the digital sectors if research confirms that digital entrepreneurship lowers juvenile crime. This can entail adding digital literacy to the curriculum, making tech hubs more accessible, and providing grants or seed money to successful digital start-ups. Such measures, guided by Opportunity Theory, ought to focus on flooding the neighbourhood with alluring, respectable alternatives to criminal activity (Lawal, 2022).

Lastly, the study's methodological design is supported by the theoretical framework, particularly when it comes to creating variables that gauge the influence of entrepreneurship on crime reduction. For instance, measures like fewer police arrests, more young people registering for businesses, or lower school dropout rates can be connected to theoretical concepts like strain reduction and opportunity access.

This study's incorporation of the Strain and Opportunity Theories provides a multifaceted perspective for comprehending the connection between digital entrepreneurship and crime prevention. While Opportunity Theory explains behavioural changes based on the availability of acceptable options, Strain Theory contextualises juvenile crime as a result of structural dissatisfaction. Together, these ideas not only lend credence to the idea that digital entrepreneurship can lower juvenile crime in Osogbo Metropolis, but they also provide guidance for the planning, execution, and assessment of long-term interventions. By using these theoretical stances, the study advances a safe and socioeconomically inclusive environment for young people in Nigeria while also contributing to scholarly discussion and policy development.

Methodology

The influence of digital entrepreneurship on reducing youth crime in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria, was examined using a descriptive survey research approach. A purposively selected sample size of 250 respondents included students, unemployed people in the city, and young people involved in various forms of digital entrepreneurship. A structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items was used to collect data on respondents' socioeconomic

traits, involvement in digital entrepreneurship, and opinions on crime reduction. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were pre-tested. To investigate the connections between digital entrepreneurship factors and crime decrease, quantitative data were evaluated using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, in addition to Pearson correlation. Ethical guidelines ensured respondents' confidentiality and voluntary involvement in the study. This approach offered a thorough grasp of how, in the Osogbo context, digital entrepreneurship affects young behaviour and helps to reduce crime.

Results

The results of this study analyse the socioeconomic characteristics, digital engagement, income generation, and programme participation of young people to ascertain the degree to which technology-driven entrepreneurial activities decrease their involvement in criminal behaviour. This study looks at how digital entrepreneurship functions as a strategic intervention in mitigating youth crime in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–22 years	65	26
	23–27 years	110	44
	28–32 years	50	20
	33 years and above	25	10
Gender	Male	140	56
	Female	110	44
Educational Level	Secondary School	30	12
	OND/NCE	70	28
	HND/Bachelor's Degree	110	44
	Postgraduate Degree	40	16
Employment Status	Self-employed (Digital Work)	95	38
	Student	80	32
	Unemployed	45	18
	Formal Employment	30	12
Monthly Income (₦)	Less than ₦20,000	50	20
	₦20,000–₦50,000	95	38
	₦51,000–₦100,000	70	28
	Above ₦100,000	35	14

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Discussion

According to the demographic analysis, the research included the most economically engaged youth group, with 44% of the respondents being between the ages of 23 and 27. This is consistent with the findings of Oladejo and Adebayo (2021), which discovered that because of socioeconomic pressures and exposure to technology, this age group exhibits the most interest in digital skills and entrepreneurial endeavours.

Akinyemi and Adeyeye (2020) contend that digital entrepreneurship offers a relatively low-barrier entry point for female economic empowerment, and the gender distribution (56% male and 44% female) shows the growing involvement of young women in the digital sphere. Regarding educational attainment, 44% of the participants held a bachelor's degree or its equivalent, corroborating the claim made by Egbetokun *et al.* (2022) that higher education has a beneficial impact on Nigerian youth's adoption of digital technology and entrepreneurial ability.

A noteworthy 38 percent of those surveyed worked for themselves in digital businesses like social media marketing, online shopping, and freelance tech. This is in line with Oyelere *et al.* (2023), who emphasised that digital entrepreneurship directly lowers the possibility of young involvement in illegal activities by providing an avenue for revenue generation.

According to the monthly income distribution, 66% of all employees made less than ₦50,000, which is indicative of the low incomes typically associated with entry-level digital endeavours. However, Afolabi and Dada (2024) assert that by encouraging independence and constructive identity construction, even modest digital revenues can help young people move away from vulnerabilities that are prone to crime. According to the socioeconomic profile, digital entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable and smart substitute for criminal activity among Osogbo youth, particularly for those with limited formal work options and moderate educational backgrounds.

Table 2: Results on the Impact of Digital Entrepreneurship on Crime Reduction among Youth in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State

Variable	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation with Crime Reduction (r)	Significance Level (p-value)
Access to Digital Tools and Training	4.21	0.61	0.72	0.001
Engagement in Online Business Ventures	4.08	0.75	0.65	0.003
Income Generation through Digital Means	3.95	0.68	0.70	0.002
Perceived Reduction in Involvement in Crime	4.16	0.54	—	—
Participation in Government/NGO Programmes	3.87	0.83	0.61	0.005

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results of the quantitative research show a substantial and statistically significant correlation between the decrease in youth crime in Osogbo Metropolis and digital entrepreneurship. Table 2 demonstrates that all of the predictor variables, engagement in online business endeavours, revenue creation, access to digital tools and training, and participation in support programmes, have a positive correlation with decreased involvement in crime, with significance levels far below the 0.05 threshold.

Discussion of Findings

a) Access to Digital Tools and Training

With a correlation coefficient of 0.72 ($p = 0.001$) and a mean score of 4.21, the most powerful determinants were entrepreneurs' training and access to digital technologies. This implies that Osogbo youth are less likely to commit crimes when they have access to ICT resources and competence. Programmes for digital literacy, according to Eze and Ezeh (2020), not only give young people job skills but also boost their self-esteem, which deters them from choosing to commit crimes. The availability of digital skills in Nigerian cities, according to Adebayo et al. (2021), considerably reduces youth restlessness by offering alternate sources of income.

b) Engagement in Online Business Ventures

The findings also show a substantial link (0.65) ($p = 0.003$) between lower crime rates and young people's involvement in internet business endeavours. Young people engaged in digital platforms like freelancing, digital marketing, e-commerce, and content production indicated a lower propensity for criminal activity. This confirms the findings of Olawale and Osasona (2022), who observed that young business owners who use Facebook Marketplace, Instagram, and WhatsApp have more financial independence and are less likely to engage in social vices. Such businesses deter young people from participating in activities like cybercrime, theft, and cultism, which are common in urban areas like Osogbo, by enabling lawful self-employment.

c) Income Generation through Digital Means

Digital channels of income creation had a mean of 3.95 and a correlation of 0.70 ($p = 0.002$), confirming that digital entrepreneurship provides feasible financial advantages that can deter illegal activity. Accordingly, Chukwu and Nwokolo (2021) found that young individuals are less likely to engage in financial deprivation-driven crimes when they observe steady revenue from legal digital sources such as blogging, digital art, online teaching, and affiliate marketing. Even a tiny income encourages hope and discourages hazardous, illegal activity.

d) Perceived Reduction in Involvement in Crime

Even while digital entrepreneurship was not a predictive indicator, the majority of respondents believed that it had directly caused their disengagement from crime, as indicated by the mean perception score of 4.16. This perspective is in line with a study by Ibrahim and Olaniyi (2020), which discovered that young people's feelings of social integration, their own worth, and the legitimacy of their income all improve when they engage in technology-driven economic activities. A psychological shift occurs that positively impacts young people's relationships and choices when they begin to see themselves as creators rather than dependents, the study found.

e) Participation in Government/NGO Programmes

Youth participation in digital skill acquisition and empowerment programmes supported by the government or non-governmental organisations was also strongly linked to a decrease in crime, with a mean score of 3.87 and a correlation of 0.61 ($p = 0.005$). In recent years, several interventions have been implemented by Osogbo public and non-governmental organisations. According to Fagbohun and Arogundade (2019), the Osun State Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) has been used in conjunction with digital training platforms to help redirect hundreds of young people away from crime.

Additionally, organisations such as Paradigm Initiative have provided workshops aimed at enhancing digital ability to underprivileged youth, hence diminishing the appeal of cybercrime and internet fraud (Okafor, 2021). Research conducted by Yusuf and Ogunleye (2020) and Ifedayo and Bello (2022) demonstrated that digital entrepreneurship fosters a sense of civic duty in addition to gaining financial freedom. This is particularly important in metropolitan areas like Osogbo, where poor living conditions, unemployment, and fast urbanisation increase the rate of juvenile criminality.

Conclusion

The study examined how youth crime in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria, was affected by digital entrepreneurship. The study, which was based on the theories of strain and opportunity, showed how socioeconomic pressures and restricted access to good opportunities have a big impact on young people's involvement in criminal activity. Digital entrepreneurship, however, has become a competitive alternative that provides social reintegration as well as economic empowerment. The results showed that a reported decrease in juvenile criminal conduct was positively correlated with having access to digital technologies, participating in online endeavours, earning money, and taking part in government or non-governmental organisation programmes.

According to the sociodemographic data, young adults have a high level of digital engagement, with the most active participants in digital entrepreneurship falling within the economically productive age range of 23–27 years. Increased digital participation was also influenced by educational background and self-employment status, and this was strongly associated with

stable income and a decrease in social vices. These results support previous findings that entrepreneurship, especially in digital domains, might promote beneficial behavioural changes by providing alternatives to lifestyles that are prone to crime.

The study also emphasised the necessity of providing training, support systems, and digital infrastructure to all people equally. It made the case that preventing crime effectively requires a comprehensive approach that addresses structural, psychological, and financial obstacles. Given the data, policymakers are urged to incorporate digital entrepreneurship into community development initiatives, educational curriculum, and youth empowerment measures. The opportunity for digital entrepreneurship to transform urban security dynamics and advance sustainable development in Osogbo Metropolis lies in cultivating a youth population that is socially conscious, economically engaged, and technologically educated.

Policy Recommendations

- i. By creating neighbourhood tech centres, inexpensive high-speed internet, and youth-focused digital literacy programmes, the public and private sectors should increase access to digital infrastructure and training.
- ii. Programmes for youth empowerment should be modified to include organised training in digital entrepreneurship in fields including e-commerce, software development, digital marketing, and content production.
- iii. To assist sustainable youth-led digital firms, public-private partnerships should be reinforced by offering mentorship opportunities, seed investment, and incubation support.
- iv. To track the results of digital entrepreneurship, such as young business registration, digital employment, and crime reduction indicators, a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework should be put in place.
- v. To foster a safe and creative digital economy, state and federal authorities should enact inclusive policy changes, such as curriculum integration of digital skills, anti-digital marginalisation tactics, and incentives for youth-driven digital start-ups.

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