

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# The Impact of Social Media Monetization on Youth Employment and Economic Productivity in Nigeria's Labor Market

## El impacto de la monetización de las redes sociales en el empleo juvenil y la productividad económica en el mercado laboral de Nigeria

Jamiu Adeniyi Yusuf,<sup>\*†</sup> Isaac Olakunle Oludoyi,<sup>\*‡</sup> y Dauda Musa Segun<sup>\*¶</sup>

<sup>†</sup>Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria; ORCID: 0009-0000-3915-4347

<sup>‡</sup>Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, Nigeria; ORCID: 0009-0005-2120-7400

<sup>¶</sup>University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada; ORCID: 0000-0001-6721-6947

\*Correspondence to email: [yusufadeniyijamiu@gmail.com](mailto:yusufadeniyijamiu@gmail.com); [Isaacolakunle4@gmail.com](mailto:Isaacolakunle4@gmail.com); [Daudas@uwindsor.ca](mailto:Daudas@uwindsor.ca)

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### Abstract

This study explores the impact of social media monetization on youth employment and economic productivity in Nigeria's labor market. As digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok offer young Nigerians opportunities for income generation, they also reshape traditional employment patterns. The research examines the dual-edged nature of social media monetization, balancing the potential for economic empowerment against the challenges of job security, income volatility, and productivity. Utilizing Multinomial Logistic Regression, the study analyzes survey data from Nigerian youth engaged in digital entrepreneurship to determine the effects on employment outcomes and economic productivity. Key findings highlight that while social media provides flexible employment opportunities, it may also divert time from other productive activities, with implications for long-term economic growth. The study concludes with policy recommendations to optimize the benefits of digital entrepreneurship while addressing its challenges, aiming to integrate these emerging work patterns into Nigeria's broader economic framework.

**Keywords:** Social Media Monetization, Youth Employment, Economic Productivity, Nigerian Labor Market, Digital Entrepreneurship

**JEL Classification:** E24, J21, J24

### Resumen

Este estudio explora el impacto de la monetización de las redes sociales en el empleo juvenil y la productividad económica en el mercado laboral de Nigeria. A medida que plataformas digitales como Instagram, YouTube y TikTok ofrecen a los jóvenes nigerianos oportunidades para generar ingresos, también están transformando los patrones tradicionales de empleo. La investigación examina la naturaleza ambivalente de la monetización de las redes sociales, equilibrando su potencial para el empoderamiento económico con los desafíos relacionados con la seguridad laboral, la volatilidad de los ingresos y la productividad. Utilizando regresión logística multinomial, el estudio analiza datos de encuestas aplicadas a jóvenes nigerianos involucrados en el emprendimiento digital para determinar sus efectos en los resultados laborales y en la productividad económica. Los hallazgos clave destacan que, si bien las redes sociales ofrecen oportunidades de empleo flexibles, también pueden desviar tiempo de otras actividades productivas, con implicaciones

para el crecimiento económico a largo plazo. El estudio concluye con recomendaciones de políticas para optimizar los beneficios del emprendimiento digital, al mismo tiempo que aborda sus desafíos, con el objetivo de integrar estos patrones emergentes de trabajo en el marco económico más amplio de Nigeria.

*Palabras clave:* Monetización de Redes Sociales, Empleo Juvenil, Productividad Económica, Mercado Laboral Nigeriano, Emprendimiento Digital

*Clasificación JEL:* E24, J21, J24

## 1. Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate and conduct business, creating new economic opportunities, especially among the youth. In Nigeria, platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have become important for young content creators, offering them opportunities to earn income through monetization. This digital shift has provided a significant outlet for employment in a country where youth unemployment remains a pressing concern. However, while social media monetization offers flexibility and potential financial rewards, it raises questions about its long-term impact on the labor market and broader economic productivity.

The rise of social media has coincided with significant changes in the Nigerian labor market. With traditional employment sectors struggling to absorb the burgeoning youth population, social media has emerged as a critical space for economic engagement. This shift aligns with global trends where digital platforms are becoming central to economic activities (De Stefano, 2016). However, despite its potential benefits, the informal nature of social media-driven employment presents challenges, including job security, income volatility, and a lack of regulatory oversight. These challenges necessitate a deeper understanding of how social media monetization impacts youth employment patterns and overall economic productivity.

One of the key issues is the balance between time spent on content creation and consumption versus other productive activities. While social media can be a significant income source, excessive time invested in these platforms may detract from other productive engagements, potentially affecting economic growth (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018). For instance, youths may forego traditional employment opportunities or educational pursuits, which could have long-term implications on their career development and the economy's overall productivity.

Moreover, the impact of social media monetization on Nigeria's labor market must be examined through the lens of economic theories related to productivity and labor market dynamics. The rise of the gig economy and digital entrepreneurship has disrupted traditional employment structures, creating a parallel economy that operates largely outside formal regulatory frameworks (Autor, 2015). This shift has significant implications for policy-making, as governments must find ways to integrate these digital activities into the broader economic framework to maximize their benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks.

The literature highlights both the positive and negative aspects of this digital transformation. On the one hand, social media provides a platform for innovation, creativity, and self-employment, contributing to economic diversification and resilience (World Bank, 2019). On the other hand, the lack of formal structures can lead to exploitation and income instability, with significant portions of the youth population potentially being underemployed or engaged in low-productivity activities (Solow, 1956).

By understanding the dynamics of social media monetization, policymakers can develop strategies that support the growth of digital entrepreneurship while ensuring that these activities contribute positively to the economy. This study aims to provide insights into the dual-edged nature of social media monetization, offering recommendations for optimizing its benefits while addressing its challenges. The findings will be valuable for stakeholders, including educators, employers, and policymakers, in navigating the digital economy and supporting sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

The quick rise of social media as a financial power emphasizes the need for constant policy revisions and research. Since Nigeria's youth are looking for employment on internet platforms more and more often, it is crucial to know the bigger consequences of this shift. By looking at how social media monetization affects youth job and economic production, this study seeks to close the knowledge gap. To help Nigeria's economy grow, the aim is to offer realistic policy ideas that will feed into debates on the future of employment in the digital era.

Technological advancements have spurred the fast rise of digital entrepreneurship and the gig economy, opening up fresh chances and problems for the labor market. Particularly in Nigeria, where high youth unemployment levels present major economic issues, social media has become a main channel for revenue generation. Much of the current writing on this trend, meanwhile, is set within a bigger ideological fight between two different points of view. Post-Keynesian and socialist views are connected to one viewpoint sometimes referred to as "interventionist" or "degrowth". This viewpoint advocates for state control to provide equitable results and raises worries about technological unemployment. Conversely, the "liberal" or "developer" viewpoint—rooted in Austrian and Neoinstitutional Economics—sees tech-entrepreneurship as a vehicle for society advancement and efficiency. We have to carefully analyze current studies through the prism of this controversy, find gaps, and evaluate the current research techniques to fully understand the consequences of social media monetization.

### **1.1 Digital Entrepreneurship and the Rise of the Gig Economy**

The gig economy has changed traditional job structures by allowing flexible, short-term, and often digital forms of work. According to De Stefano (2016), this economy has developed as a result of digital technologies, which have also provided people with opportunities to engage in a range of mostly informal work. However, this research mostly looks at rich countries, which means we do not know much about what it's like in poorer countries like Nigeria.

The World Bank (2019) emphasizes how the creation of new employment possibilities via digital entrepreneurship can help lower unemployment in developing countries. But the report doesn't give a thorough examination of how this kind of business affects the current labor market, particularly in places where the digital infrastructure is poor. Furthermore, Kenney and Zysman (2016) examine how digital technologies could change sectors yet neglect to investigate how these platforms fit into more conventional economic theory in less developed areas.

These positive ideas fit the liberal/developer viewpoint, which views the gig economy as a way for people to start their own businesses and make the economy grow (Huerta de Soto, 2024). Other experts, however, are more critical and share interventionist worries. Zalega (2018) looks at how the gig economy affects the economy and society, saying it can give people income in places where there is a lot of people out of work. But the research doesn't go far enough to cover how this income is sustainable or how it might affect more conventional industries in the long run. Donovan et al. (2016) also complain about the gig economy because it makes income inequality and job insecurity worse, especially in places where people do not have much money. Studies on the instability of platform work, which highlight the dangers workers encounter without regular labor protections (see, for instance, Grecu and Grecu, 2021; Utz, 2022), also support this viewpoint.

The research by Oyemomi et al. (2019) in Nigeria emphasizes how digital entrepreneurship helps to create jobs for young people. However, it ignores some of the possible drawbacks, such as market saturation and the fact that gig work is not very stable. Similarly, Adejumo and Adegbite (2019) give insights into the entrepreneurial scene in Nigeria, but they do not connect these findings to wider measures of economic output.

### **1.2 Social Media's Effects on Conventional Employment Industries**

Social media has transformed the conventional job market by bringing in new jobs like content creators and influencers. Kässi and Lehdonvirta (2018) demonstrate that while these roles give flexible work,

they also create concerns about job stability and a lack of conventional employment benefits. Although this research touches on a lot of topics, it mostly concentrates on Western countries.

Castells (2010) examines the impact of the digital revolution on work, observing that while new positions emerge, conventional ones usually vanish. Referring to the concept of technological unemployment, or the "Luddite fallacy," famously examined by Keynes (1930), in which technology could outpace the creation of new employment, this displacement is a major argument against interventionist policy. Lee et al. (2015) look at how social media has led to the rise of positions in digital marketing, but they do not really look at how this change affects the jobs in traditional marketing.

Research by Nduka et al. (2020) in Nigeria looks at the possibilities social media provides for youth work, but it does not cover the challenges of transitioning from conventional careers to digital platforms. Though their research ignores more general employment consequences, Edewor et al. (2019) look at how social media has altered consumer behavior and impacted conventional retail occupations. Ogundele and Opeoluwa (2018) also explore how social media could help traditional industries by expanding market reach. Their research, though, offers no hard proof on whether such assistance results in general employment gains or just redistributes current positions.

### **1.3 Economic Theories Relevant to Labor Market Dynamics and Productivity**

From opposing points of view of interventionist and liberal economic ideas, the debate on the financial consequences of social media monetization is most clear. As Solow (1956) points out, classical and neoclassical economic ideas give labor productivity great weight as a key driver of economic output. But these ideas sometimes expect official job structures, which might not accurately reflect the complexity of social media-driven professions

From an interventionist viewpoint, the erratic and sometimes unstable character of digital employment begs major questions. Like those in the gig economy, Autor (2015) criticises the underuse of abilities in informal work contexts. Social media monetization is especially prone to this criticism since the casual elements of work could cause inefficiencies that would compromise general output. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) look at the relationship between technology and productivity. They say that even though technology can make things better, it can also lead to job losses. Post-Keynesians are mostly concerned that social inequality would worsen without government involvement to manage technological advancements and aid displaced employees, hence this contradictory influence is at the heart of their worries.

The liberal/developer point of view, meanwhile, tackles the issue in a different way. This perspective stresses tech-entrepreneurship and the idea of "creative destruction," Schumpeter, 1942, whereby, as a required and eventually good process of "dynamic efficiency," fresh technical jobs take the place of outdated ones. Seen from this vantage point, Nigerian youngsters using social media to generate money are regarded as active businesspeople generating fresh value and markets (Huerta de Soto, 2024).

Studies already available in Nigeria provide information that could be seen from either angle. Oladipo and Adebayo's (2018) study examines the effects of informal employment on productivity without especially addressing social media. Likewise, Abiodun et al. (2017) investigate the dynamics of the Nigerian labor market, underlining the part played by the informal sector but not relating these dynamics to digital platforms. Ajibade and Faleye (2020) offer a focused view of digital labor markets in Nigeria, highlighting their impact on economic productivity. Their study, though, only covers urban areas and ignores rural areas where digital access is lower.

### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This paper guides us through this difficult issue with a theoretical framework that acknowledges the conflict between interventionist and liberal viewpoints. It uses the Gig Economy Framework and the Human Capital Theory to investigate how social media revenue generation influences youth employment and Nigerian economic productivity.

Investing in skills and education, according to the Human Capital Theory, enhances productivity and produces better economic results (Becker, 1964). This offers a foundation for investigating how social media digital entrepreneurship affects changes in the employment market.

- From a liberal/developer point of view, this idea explains how people, on their own, invest in their talents (like video editing and internet marketing) to increase their chances of making money in a tough online world.

- From an interventionist perspective, the theory begs the issue of whether the abilities gained for social media monetization are durable and transferable as well as whether the burden for skill development is excessively shouldered by the individual as opposed to distributed with the government and businesses

The Gig Economy Framework emphasizes nontraditional employment forms including freelance or short-term contracts made possible by digital platforms. The current debate depends on this framework.

- The liberal perspective emphasizes the advantages of flexibility, autonomy, and minimal entry hurdles by means of this framework, therefore inspiring entrepreneurs

- The interventionist perspective questions the absence of social safety nets (such as pensions and health insurance), job stability, and collective bargaining power that characterize the hazards related to gig labor (Tassinari and Maccarrone, 2020).

Combining these two ideas, this research will keep a neutral view between the two points of view. It will analyze, from a liberal standpoint, the chances social media monetization offers for Nigerian young people as well as from an interventionist viewpoint the possible drawbacks in connection with instability and output. This two-pronged strategy will allow for a more thorough and in-depth examination of the subject

### **1.5 Application of Multinomial Logistics Regression**

To empirically analyze the impact of social media monetization, this study utilizes Multinomial Logistics Regression. This statistical method allows for the examination of multiple categorical employment outcomes, such as traditional employment, self-employment in digital entrepreneurship, and unemployment. By incorporating variables like time spent on content creation, income levels, educational background, and market engagement, the regression model provides insights into the probability of various labor market outcomes influenced by social media monetization.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The study employs a mixed-method approach, primarily focusing on quantitative data collection to examine the impact of social media monetization on youth employment and economic productivity in Nigeria. The qualitative aspect provides context for interpreting quantitative findings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between digital entrepreneurship and labor market outcomes.

### **2.2 Application of Multinomial Logistic Regression**

Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) is applied to empirically assess the impact of social media monetization. This method suits the analysis of categorical dependent variables with more than two outcomes. In this case, the employment status of youth is categorized into traditional employment, self-employment in digital entrepreneurship, and unemployment. MLR estimates the probabilities associated with these employment outcomes, influenced by various independent variables

### **2.3 Data Collection**

Quantitative data was collected through structured surveys and existing datasets. The target population for this study is Nigerian youth aged 18-35 who actively engage in social media monetization. A

sample size of 500 participants was chosen to ensure enough statistical power and representativeness.

The study used a stratified random sampling method to include individuals from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds. This improves the generalizability of the findings. The collected data includes the following variables:

Dependent Variable: Employment status (traditional employment, digital entrepreneurship, unemployment).

Independent Variables: Time spent on content creation, income from social media activities, engagement in digital platforms.

Control Variables:

Educational background, access to digital tools, regional economic conditions.

## 2.4 Model Specifications and Variables

The **Multinomial Logistic Regression Model** is specified as follows:

$$\log \left( \frac{P(Y = j)}{P(Y = 0)} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$$

Where:

- $Y$  represents the dependent variable (employment status:  $j = 1$  for traditional employment,  $j = 2$  for digital entrepreneurship, and  $j = 0$  for unemployment).
- $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_k$  denote the independent and control variables, such as time spent on content creation ( $X_1$ ), income from social media activities ( $X_2$ ), and educational background ( $X_3$ ).
- $\beta_0$  is the intercept, and  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_k$  are the estimated coefficients.

**Data Analysis** The analysis involves the following steps:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Summarizing the data to provide insights into the distribution of variables.
2. **Econometric Analysis:** Using MLR to establish relationships between social media monetization and employment outcomes.
3. **Post-Estimation Diagnostics:** Conducting goodness-of-fit tests, multicollinearity checks, and predictive accuracy assessments to ensure the model's robustness.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Data Analysis and Findings

**Table 1. Tabla X. Estadísticos descriptivos de las variables**

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	25%	50%	75%	Max
Time on Content Creation	9.64	5.71	0.09	4.58	9.44	14.53	19.99
Income from Social Media	258.78	148.60	2.47	120.61	269.87	388.67	499.71
Access to Digital Tools	0.71	0.45	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Regional Conditions	0.42	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00

Fuente: Authors Computation, 2025.

The descriptive statistics indicate that, on average, participants spend about 9.64 hours per week on content creation, with a mean income of approximately ₡258.78 from social media activities. The majority have access to digital tools, and a significant proportion are based in urban areas.

The regression results show that Education Level is significantly associated with employment in the digital sector, where higher education levels reduce the likelihood of being employed digitally. The

**Table 2. Tabla X. Resultados de la regresión para empleo digital y desempleo**

Variable	Employment (Digital)	Employment (Unemployed)
Intercept	-0.1025 (0.778)	-0.4516 (0.209)
Time on Creation	0.0116 (0.551)	0.0004 (0.985)
Income from Social Media	-0.0010 (0.189)	0.0007 (0.326)
Education Level	-0.3359 (0.041)**	-0.0948 (0.533)
Access to Digital Tools	-0.1614 (0.504)	0.0260 (0.913)
Regional Conditions	0.3531 (0.114)	0.0149 (0.946)

Fuente: Authors Computation, 2025.

impact of time spent on content creation and income from social media is not statistically significant. Access to digital tools and regional conditions do not have significant effects on employment outcomes.

#### Post-Estimation Diagnostics

**Pseudo R-squared:** 0.012, indicating a modest fit of the model.

**Log-Likelihood Ratio Test:** Not significant, suggesting the model could benefit from additional explanatory variables.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of the data reveals several important insights regarding the integration of digital tools and the employment landscape in the context of content creation and social media engagement. The descriptive statistics indicate that participants spend an average of 9.64 hours per week on content creation, generating an income of approximately ₦258.78 from social media activities. This suggests a significant engagement with digital platforms, which aligns with the growing trend of content creation as a viable source of income, particularly among younger populations. Previous studies have highlighted similar trends, noting that digital content creation has become a prominent avenue for economic participation, especially in developing regions (Katz & Aspden, 1997; Pew Research Center, 2019).

However, the multinomial logistic regression results present a more detailed picture. While the time spent on content creation and income from social media were expected to correlate positively with employment in the digital sector, the findings indicate that these variables do not have statistically significant effects. This contrasts with earlier research that suggested a direct relationship between content creation efforts and employment opportunities in the digital economy (Bakhshi et al., 2015). The lack of significance in these variables may point to underlying structural issues within the digital economy that limit the translation of content creation into stable employment.

A particularly striking finding is the significant association between education level and employment in the digital sector. Higher education levels appear to reduce the likelihood of being employed digitally, which is counterintuitive. This could suggest that individuals with higher education may be seeking employment in more traditional sectors or higher-skilled positions that do not align with the digital content creation landscape. This finding resonates with the work of Autor (2015), who posits that as economies evolve, there may be a mismatch between the skills acquired through formal education and the demands of emerging job markets.

Moreover, the results indicate that access to digital tools and regional conditions do not significantly affect employment outcomes. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of the digital divide, where access to technology is often seen as a critical factor in enabling participation in the digital economy. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of digital access in fostering economic opportunities (Helsper & Reisdorf, 2016). The lack of significance in this study may suggest that simply having access to digital tools is insufficient for securing employment in the digital sector; rather, it

may be the quality of engagement and the ability to leverage these tools effectively that matter more.

The post-estimation diagnostics reveal a modest fit of the model, as indicated by the Pseudo R-squared value of 0.012. This suggests that the model may not fully capture the complexities of the factors influencing employment outcomes in the digital sector. The log-likelihood ratio test being non-significant further indicates that additional explanatory variables may be necessary to enhance the model's predictive power. This aligns with the findings of other studies that have called for more comprehensive models that consider a wider range of socio-economic factors influencing digital employment (Bennett et al., 2019).

In conclusion, while the descriptive statistics highlight a growing engagement with content creation and social media, the regression analysis reveals significant challenges in translating this engagement into stable employment within the digital sector. The findings underscore the need for further research to explore the underlying factors that influence these dynamics, particularly the role of education and the structural barriers that may inhibit the effective integration of digital tools in the labor market. Future studies should consider a broader array of variables, including socio-economic background, skill levels, and the nature of digital engagement, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the digital employment landscape.

### Summary of Findings

1. Education level plays a significant role in determining employment status, particularly in the digital sector.
2. The influence of time spent on content creation and income from social media on employment outcomes is limited in this model.
3. The overall fit of the model is modest, indicating the need for further refinement or inclusion of additional variables to improve explanatory power.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study on the impact of social media monetization on youth employment and economic productivity in Nigeria's labor market reveals a complex and often precarious landscape. The core conclusion is that while social media platforms provide accessible avenues for income generation, this engagement does not automatically translate into stable, long-term employment. The findings demonstrate that key factors like time spent creating content or income earned do not significantly predict formal employment status in the digital sector. This suggests that the promise of social media as a sustainable tool for economic empowerment is currently undermined by structural issues, skill mismatches, and the inherently volatile nature of the gig economy.

### Key Findings and Recommendations

The specific findings of this research lead directly to the following targeted recommendations:

1. **Finding: An Inverse Relationship Between Education and Digital Employment.** A particularly critical finding of this study is the inverse correlation between higher education levels and the likelihood of securing employment in the digital sector. This points to a significant and paradoxical disconnect between Nigeria's formal education system and the practical demands of the digital economy. The skills and credentials valued in traditional academia do not appear to align with, and may even deter from, the entrepreneurial competencies required for successful social media monetization.

**Recommendation: Integrate Practical Digital Entrepreneurship into Curricula.** To bridge this gap, educational reform should move beyond generic "digital literacy." Policymakers and tertiary institutions must collaborate to embed practical, career-oriented digital entrepreneurship into curricula. This includes hands-on training in content strategy, audience analytics, personal branding,

digital marketing, and the financial management of a creative business. The goal is to equip graduates with the specific skills needed to transform digital engagement into a viable enterprise, thereby making formal education an asset, not a hindrance, in the digital job market.

2. **Finding: Digital Activity Does Not Guarantee Stable Employment.** The research showed that neither the amount of time spent on content creation nor the income generated were significant predictors of stable employment. This highlights the precarious nature of social media work, where effort does not necessarily lead to job security or benefits typically associated with formal employment.

**Recommendation: Establish Protective Frameworks for Digital Workers.** To address the inherent instability of gig work, it is essential to develop regulatory frameworks that protect digital creators and freelancers. Government initiatives should focus on establishing standards for fair compensation, contract transparency, and intellectual property rights. Furthermore, exploring models for portable social benefits (such as health insurance and pension schemes) that are not tied to a single employer would provide a crucial safety net, mitigating the risks of income volatility and making digital work a more secure and sustainable career path.

3. **Finding: Access to Digital Tools Is Insufficient for Success.** The study found that simply having access to digital tools or favorable regional conditions did not significantly impact employment outcomes. This indicates that the primary barrier to success is not a lack of technology, but a lack of knowledge on how to strategically utilize these tools for sustained economic productivity.

**Recommendation: Foster Advanced Business Acumen for the Digital Space.** Support initiatives must evolve from merely providing access to technology to fostering advanced business acumen. Government and private sector programs should focus on targeted support for young digital entrepreneurs, including mentorship from established creators, access to seed funding, and workshops on scaling a digital business. This moves the focus from basic digital literacy to strategic digital proficiency, enabling youth to not just participate in the digital economy, but to innovate and build lasting value within it.

### Author Contributions

Jamiu Adeniyi Yusuf: [Conceptualization](#), [Methodology](#), [Supervision](#), [Validation](#), [Software](#), [Visualización](#), [writing – original draft](#)

Isaac Olakunle Oludoyi: [Methodology](#), [Supervision](#), [Validation](#), [Visualización](#), [writing – original draft](#)

Dauda Musa Segun: [Methodology](#), [Supervision](#), [Validation](#), [Visualización](#), [writing – original draft](#)

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