

INVESTIGATING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF NIGERIAN YOUTHS IN ZAMFARA STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

GADANGA Aliyu Tsafe, Ph.D

CHUKWUJI Charles Nwabueze

&

BELLO Jamilu

^{1,2&3}University Library, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria
¹alyiutsafe@fugusau.edu.ng, ²charleschukwuji@fugusau.edu.ng, ³Jamiluj055@gmail.com

Abstract

Youths need various kinds of information. They are vibrant and full of ideas but need to be sincerely and properly motivated as well as sufficiently guided to better their lives and by implication national development. The study investigated the information needs of Nigerian youths in Zamfara State towards contributing to national development. The descriptive survey design was used with a questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The population of the study consisted of youths in Zamfara State, Nigeria from fourteen local government areas. A purposive sampling technique was used to select three accessible Local Government Areas. The Krejcie and Morgan table for Determining Sample Size was used to select respondents (youths). The National Youth Policy 2019-2023 youth definition of 15-29 years was the framework used to determine the target respondents. A total of 1,144 questionnaires were administered using 8 trained Research Assistants. Out of the returned questionnaires, 1,122 were found usable, giving a total of 98%. The data collected was analyzed using Frequencies, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation (STD) and presented in tables. Mean score of 4.0 was accepted as being significant while below 4.0 was rejected. SPSS (version 20) was used for all computations. The study revealed that education information is the major information need of the Nigerian youths in Zamfara State. It is therefore concluded that information and knowledge are two important ingredients in preparing and empowering the youths for meaningful participation in national development.

Key Words: Information Need, Information utilization, Youth, Nigerian Youth, National Development

Introduction

The saying that youths are the leaders of tomorrow is not just an age-long one but a truism, given the fact of the developmental and transitory stages of life. In line with this, it is held that any nation that plays with its youths is toying with its future. Various regional and world bodies including countries have realized and accepted genuinely the truism in this age-long and popular sayings and have taken some positive steps towards making youths part of national issues and development. Buttressing the global recognition of these sayings, the United Nations, speaking on the substantive aim of the 2021 International Youth Day theme of “Transforming food systems: youth innovation for human and planetary health” says that it is aimed at letting the world know that it will only take the meaningful participation of the youth to achieve success for such a global effort (Dalaji 2021). This is laudable, however, while the western world is getting results, the same cannot be

said of developing countries like Nigeria considering the high rate of youth unemployment which is put at 33.3% (National Bureau of Statistics 2022) and Zamfara State youth unemployment stands at 41.73% (Sasu, 2022). Information and knowledge are important ingredients in preparing and empowering our youths for meaningful participation in national development. This comes both in formal and informal ways. This is in line with the position of Ngissah, (2017) that the foundation of every state is the education of its youth and that the youths of today are full of vibrant ideas but need to be sincerely and properly motivated as well as sufficiently guided by the government to promote their lives and by implication national development.

Nigeria's National Youth Policy, 2019-2023, defines youths as persons between the ages of 15 – 29 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019). This definition was given to implement the National Youth Policy whose aim is to enhance youth development and participation in sustainable development. This, of course, requires that relevant information should be available to meet various information needs of the youth ranging from education, skills acquisitions, how to access funds for capital, national values, peace and conflict resolutions amongst others. Beyond this, they should also be aware of the availability of the information as well as be able to access them with minimal difficulties.

Francis Bacon said that “information is power”. Despite this, there are still controversies surrounding the meaning of information because of its nature, hence, it is taken in different contexts since it affects every discipline. But the basic truth about information lies in its catalytic nature. It has the potential of transforming life. The definition of Owusu-Ansah in Anunobi and Udem (2014) captures the interest of this study. Owusu-Ansah defined information as factual data, ideas, and other knowledge emanating from any society that is identified as being of value sometimes gathered regularly, organized in some fashion, transmitted to others, and used in some meaningful way. This underscores the place of man's information need as one of the survival needs. According to Naumer and Fisher (2010), if people did not have information needs, then libraries and other information systems would cease to exist, and even basic interpersonal human communication would be altered.

Information is a product of society for society and comes with varying needs and values targeted at various segments of society. Hence, youth information need is different from that of the elderly or adult. In this manner, the youths need various kinds of information that will enable them better their lives and contribute positively to our national growth either in production or in service sectors of the economy. For example, information on education (from the importance of education to enrollment into schools), the youths need information on various skills needed to better their lives, information on how to source capital/funds to start their own business, information on various windows of business and job opportunities, on how to market their products both locally and internationally, the youth also needs information on the importance of peaceful coexistence, they need health information as it is said that health is wealth and a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. There is also a need for them to know about our national values and heritage, they need information on how to manage and grow their businesses among other information needs. Therefore, it is only with the right information that you can make an informed decision. The person that has the right information, at the right time and uses it well will always be ahead of the person that does not have it or do but did not use it. Olukemi (2006) affirms that information enriches the mind and if otherwise, the person becomes deformed. He concludes that information is an essential resource for survival whether as an individual or a nation.

National development is a very serious issue that no country plays with. It is a holistic effort of a country towards improving the welfare of its citizens and by implication the whole country. National development has quite some indices like economic growth, modernization, equitable distribution of income and national resources, citizens' political participation and socio-economic transformation, security, attainment of food security, high literacy rate, low mortality rate, employment rate etc (Umeji, Chukwuji, Ejezie & Nwosu, 2018). All these indices are achievable when the youth have access to their sources of information as well as utilize them. Regrettably, Njoku and Isigwe (2019) concluded that the development profile of Nigeria on a general note is still low when matched against all known development indicators. According to them, the government's poor youth mobilization strategies are a contributing factor to this low developmental stage. This failure could be a result of the government's poor facilitation of the information needs of the youths.

Background of the area of study

According to Wiki (2022), Zamfara State was one of the six new states created by the then Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha on October 1, 1996, with an area of 39,762 square kilometres. The State was carved out of the old Sokoto with its capital at Gusau. Zamfara has three Senatorial Zones with fourteen Local Government Areas. The State is a home to Hausa and Fulani with some other Nigerian tribes residing in it. Islam is the predominant religion. Zamfara State is bordered in the north by Niger Republic, to the south by Kaduna State, while Katsina is in the east, Sokoto and Niger States are its neighbours in the west. The State prides itself on farming. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) (2006), Zamfara has a total population of three million, two hundred and seventy-eight thousand, eight hundred and seventy-three (3,278,873) and a Youth population of eight hundred and fifty thousand, Three hundred and forty-nine (854,349). Zamfara State has a high youth unemployment rate of 41.73% (Sasu 2022). There are quite some youth organizations in the State, including religious, political, cultural and government-based organizations.

Problem Statement

It has been said that ignorance is a disease and that an idle mind is a devil's workshop. Information is therefore vital in enlightening the ignorant man and putting him on course for survival by engaging his mind and body productively. But the manner our youths roam the streets of this country, the way they engage in crisis, serve as political thugs and crowds rented for political rallies, the way and manner they abuse drugs causing them one mental problem or the other with the rate of mental deranged Nigerian youths, put, yet at an alarming rate of 85%, (Abubakar, 2018), the rate and sustenance of Boko Haram terrorism and banditry, kidnapping etc all seem to suggest that a large percentage of our youths, despite abundant information/knowledge that they can access and utilize for our national development are still not meaningfully engaged, this is worrisome. Many publications have been done on Nigerian youth and national development, for example, Bot and Mamman (2019) examined how libraries are influencing youth productivity and National Development in Nigeria, Odoh and Eme (2014) looked at the roles of the youth in national development (both are position papers), but little or no empirical study, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, has been done on the information needs and utilization of youths for national development, particularly in Zamfara State. This is the gap this study intends to bridge and provide a new body of knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the information needs of Nigerian youths in Zamfara State for national development.
2. To find out the utilization of this information by the youth in the State.
3. To find out the obstacles militating against the youths' utilization of this information in the State.

Research Questions

1. What are the information needs of Nigerian youths in Zamfara State for national development?
2. In what ways do Nigerian youths in the State utilize information for national development?
3. What are the obstacles militating against the youths' utilization of information in the State?

Literature Review

The concept of youth has defied acceptable definition, perhaps, for some factors like culture, perception, context etc. this is recognized by the Nigerian Youth Policy when it states that "youth are not a homogeneous group in terms of needs and circumstances." However, the following definitions are given:

1. United Nations define youths as the age range 15 to 24 years. This age bracket according to the Nigerian Youth Policy (2019) is largely considered too narrow for countries in Africa considering the continent's political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances.
2. The 2006 African Youth Charter defines youths as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years. If that of the UN above is considered too narrow, this can be said to be too wide, hence for this study, the definition of the Nigerian Youth Policy (2019) suffices.
3. Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development 2019 define youth as persons between the ages of 15 – 29 years. This was a review of the earlier (2009) age brackets of 18-35 years. The review according to the document is to reflect new realities and trends including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and new and emerging issues affecting the vast majority of young people in Nigeria. Also, the policy posited that the new "Not Too Young to Run" Law put 30 years as an age for one to contest the presidency of Nigeria, which implies a period of adulthood. This means that a youth cannot contest the president of Nigeria.

This is in line with the definition of Odoh and Eme (2014) who defined youth traditionally as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. This is therefore the age range in which one is expected to be preparing for adulthood, a period when they should lay a foundation for their future, hence they need vital information. They are in their active and enthusiastic period and therefore need access to various information to enable them to make the right decisions that will ensure and guarantee their well-being and by extension impact our national development. Nigerian youths are intelligent energetic and ready to learn. In line with this, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (2019) believe that the extent of youths' vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society has a positive correlation with the development of the country. They will become productive especially in small-scale industries and other skills thereby contributing to our Gross National Product and per capita income if availed with the right information and support. In the process of their growth, they will also employ others thereby bridging the unemployment gap, and improving citizens' per capita income as well as the national gross domestic product.

According to Ngissah (2017), National development is the ability of a nation to improve the lives of its citizens. This improvement may be in the area of material, like achieving an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country or society, such as achieving higher literacy rates

and availability of healthcare services. Information is a vital tool towards achieving these, In line with this, Olukemi (2006) posits that information is not only an essential resource for individual growth and survival but also for national development and survival. Similarly, Umeji, Chukwuji, Ejezie, and Nwosu (2018) argued that if information is key to national development, as evident in today's world of information society, where information is now a factor of production, then access to information should be without hindrance or at the least minimal hindrances. According to them bridging the gap between the information haves and have not's is the way out, even though this gap cannot be bridged, an appreciable impact is possible. The open access initiative was agreed on for this purpose, to help make information available and accessible to more people particularly in low-income countries like Nigeria.

National development is every citizen's affair with the government at the forefront of it by making relevant and investor-friendly policies, putting the necessary infrastructure in place, providing robust and affordable education opportunities for its teeming youth, encouraging and supporting small-scale enterprises, taking the issue of information and knowledge generation, availability, awareness, sources, access very seriously, through relevant and implementable national information policies. Interestingly, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance (2000) revealed that in the early 1960s Nigeria and Thailand had about the same per capita but in 1977, Thai's GNP per capita rose to USD2, 800 while Nigeria battles with just USD260. This enormous growth recorded by Thailand was attributed to her capacity to create, acquire and use knowledge/information. While same cannot be said of Nigeria even now. Corroborating this, Amadi (in Umeji, Chukwuji, Ejezie, Nwosu, 2018) argued that the fastest way to economic development in the modern world today is education and that it has become more important in this twenty-first century as the bulk of economic transactions are now based on information platform. The importance of information in the transformation of individuals and nations which cannot be overemphasized was captured in an age-long classical opinion on information, knowledge and education shared in an August 4, 1822 letter sent to W. T. Barry by James Madison, thus:

"A Popular Government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power of which knowledge gives" (Doyle, 2002).

Information Need for National Development

Information is a basic need of man because our decisions and behaviours in life are dependent on it. This is in line with the position of Songu (2014) that the need for information increases by the day, perhaps, because of man's desire to be in tune with what happens around him. Information needs vary according to categories; hence, youth information need is different from that of adult or the elderly. This corroborates the conclusion of Oyinloye, Tabawa and Aku (2016) that for a society to grow more efficiently in all aspects, developing countries must collect and provide access to adequate and up-to-date information on security, health, education, tourism, youth empowerment, gender equality, environment amongst others. In their study, Igwe and Onah (2013) surveyed the Information Environment of National Youth Service Corps Members in Kwara State, Nigeria and reveals the information needs of Corp members to be more on job opportunities/vacancies, business/ entrepreneurship opportunities and education and scholarship opportunities for postgraduate studies. These they said will enable them to be engaged immediately after the service. According to them only a few of their respondents said they need information about commercial agricultural ventures.

Utilization of Information

Information utilization is very important because it is only when information is utilized that the information need can be said to be met. The findings of Abba and Adamu (2019) on the utilization of information showed that government information agencies, community custodians, and sponsored programmes on television, radio, and public lectures have low levels of informedness and no utilization that will enable them to understand community security and socioeconomic development in Gwale Local Government area. Rightly they expressed surprise that even the supposed most reliable, authentic and verifiable information was not highly utilized. Their findings also revealed that friends, Internet (e-news) and Family members have a high level of informedness about the teeming youth and are therefore mostly used to understand community security and socioeconomic development. Internet having a high score is a validation of the global village phenomenon and youth ICT savvy.

Obstacles militating against youths' utilization of information

Several factors are likely to hamper youths' utilization of information. Abba and Adamu (2019) discovered Laziness and indolence as the major attitude hindering the youths in Gwale LGA from utilizing available information to meet their needs. In their study, Ugah (in Umeji, Chukwuji, Ejezie, Nwosu, 2018) identified lack of awareness; inaccessibility; information explosion; bibliographic obstacles: environment; poor infrastructure; declining budgets and rising costs; costs for users; staff attitude toward users; and crime as some challenges to accessing and of course utilization of information. Kura (2008) submits that there is a problem of lack of access by the youth to information as an empowering tool for participation in national development, that whatever information is available to youth is not communicated in a youth-friendly way. This is a pointer to the insincere efforts of the adults, especially the government to engage Nigerian youths productively, which may explain why the litany of empowerment programmes embarked on by successive Nigerian governments have not yielded results

Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey. The study area was Zamfara State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of youths in the fourteen Local Government Areas, namely; Anka, Bakura, Birnin Magaji, Bukkyum, Bungudu, Gumi, Gusau, Kaura Namoda, Maradun, Maru, Shinkafi, Talata Mafara, Tsafe, and Zurumi. A Purposive Sampling Technique was used to select three Local Government Areas of Bungudu, Gusau and Tsafe with 69,928, 104, 507 and 68,714 youth populations respectively, giving a total of 243,149 youths (NPC, 2006). The reason for the choice of these three Local Government Areas was because of accessibility, considering the high insecurity situation across the State. This choice, therefore, ensured a more effective, efficient and comprehensive study. The study adopted the demographic data of Gadanga, Chukwuji and Bello (2023) because the two studies have the same population and demographic indices. Krejcie and Morgan's Table for Determining Sample Size from a given population was used to select respondents (youths) from each of the three selected Local Government Areas. The National Youth Policy 2019-2023 youth age definition of 15-29 was the framework used to determine the target respondents. A structured questionnaire was employed as the instrument of data collection. From the Sample Size Table, Bungudu has 381, Tsafe 381 and Gusau has 382. For the distribution and collection of the research instrument, 8 Research Assistants were trained on the field. A pilot study was conducted using 50 questionnaires and was analysed using Cronbach Alpha to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability test yielded .937 which is considered good. Thereafter,

a total of 1,144 questionnaires were administered using the Research Assistants. The distribution and collection of the instrument took three months to be completed. Out of the distributed and returned questionnaires, 1,122 were found usable, giving a total of 98%. The data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, T-test Mean and Standard Deviation (STD) and results were presented in tables. Mean score of 4.0 was accepted as being significant while below 4.0 was rejected. SPSS (version 20) was used for all computations. The response mode used was, a 5 Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (DA) = 2, and then Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Results

Demographic data

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	677	60
2	Female	445	40
	Total	1122	100

Results from table 1 indicate that, out of the 1122 respondents, 677 representing 60% of the total respondents are male while 445 (40%) are female. The result shows that there are more male youths than female in Zamfara State.

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	15-17	120	10.6
2	18-20	230	20.8
3	21-23	232	20.6
4	24-26	237	21
5	27-29	303	27
	Total	1122	100

Table 2 above indicates the age distribution of the respondents. It shows that youths in the oldest age bracket of 27-29 years are more in number than those of other age brackets having 303 (27%), followed by 24-26 age bracket with 237 (21%) while the first and the youngest age bracket of 15-17 with 120 (10.6%) have the lowest frequency.

Table 3: Marital Status Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Married	429	38
2	Single	693	62
	Total	1122	100

Table 3 shows the result for the marital status of the respondents. The result shows that 429 (38%) are married while 693 (62%) are single. This shows that there are more single youths among the respondents.

Table 4: Educational Qualification Distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
1	I didn't go to school	68	6.1
2	Primary school dropout	24	2.1
3	Secondary school dropout	87	7.8
4	First School Leaving Certificate	32	2.9
5	Trade Test	21	1.9
6	WAEC/SSCE/NECO/NABTEB	245	21.8
7	Certificate	38	3.4
8	Diploma	34	3.0
9	National Diploma	178	15.9
10	National Certificate in Education	184	16.4
11	Higher National Diploma/ Degree	174	15.5
12	Post Graduate Diploma	10	.9
13	Masters	26	2.3
14	PhD	1	.1
	Total	1122	100

Table 4 presents data on the educational qualifications of the respondents. The respondents were asked to select their highest qualification. The result shows that majority of the respondents had only WAEC/SSCE/NECO/NABTEB with 245 (21.8%). This high number could be because the Zamfara State Government do pay the examination fee for the students, hence it is at no cost to them. Those with National Certificate on Education (NCE) 184 (16.4%), National Diploma (ND) 178 (15.9%) and Higher National Diploma (HND) & First Degree 174 (15.5%). Only one respondent has PhD 1 (.1%).

Research Question 1: What are the information needs of Nigerian youths in Zamfara State for national development?

Table 5: Mean Score of One Sample Statistics of information needs of Nigerian Youths in Zamfara State

S/N	Information Needs	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Information on Education (admission/scholarships etc)	4.40	.923	Accepted
2	Information on Skills Acquisition	4.26	.981	Accepted
3	Information on entrepreneurial skills	4.16	1.136	Accepted
4	Information on available Sources of capital	4.16	1.096	Accepted
5	Information on Business opportunities /windows	4.11	1.109	Accepted
6	Information on digital economy/ICT opportunities	4.22	1.066	Accepted
7	Information on Sporting competition	3.88	1.091	Rejected
8	Information on Conflict & peace matters	4.01	1.193	Accepted
9	Information on National values	4.03	1.161	Accepted
10	Information on Relevant Government Policies	4.07	1.123	Accepted
11	Information on Security intelligence	4.08	1.242	Accepted
12	Information on Job vacancies	4.04	1.197	Accepted
13	Information on Job CV/Interview	3.78	1.256	Rejected
14	Information on Political participation	3.83	1.170	Rejected
15	Health Information	4.18	1.035	Accepted
16	Information on opportunities in the Agricultural Sector	4.07	1.107	Accepted
17	Information on Climate Change	3.85	1.246	Rejected

The above table presents results that sought to identify the information needs of Nigerian youths for their engagement towards contributing to national development. Figures from the table indicate that Information on Education (admission/scholarships etc) has the highest mean score of 4.40, followed by Information on Skills acquisition with 4.26 and Information on digital economy/Write the acronym out in full opportunities with 4.22, Information on Health 4.18 while Information on Entrepreneurial Skills, as well as Information on how to acquire capital to start or recapitalize their small-scale businesses, has 4.16 respectively. The table also showed that Information on job Curriculum Vitae/interview scored the lowest mean of 3.78. The result surprisingly shows that the youths have a very low need for information on climate change, even as a topical issue that affects everyone.

Research Question 2: What are the ways Nigerian Youths Utilize Information for National Development?

Table 6: Mean score of One Sample Statistics of ways youths utilize information

S/N	Ways Information is Utilized	Mean	STD	Decision
1	By enrolling in School to acquire an education/upgrade myself.	4.30	.992	Accepted
2	Acquiring new knowledge from seminars, training from Motivational/inspirational talks/materials/training and putting same into practice.	4.17	.997	Accepted
3	By Visiting and Registering with Libraries/information centres.	3.96	1.116	Rejected
4	By Registering with Relevant Government ministries/agencies (Nigerian Directorate of Employment, Bank of Industry, CBN, NPower etc)	3.99	1.125	Rejected
5	Doing the necessary registrations/applications on the Internet/ social media, websites	4.06	1.055	Accepted
6	Putting into practice what I learned from Conference/workshops/seminars on peace and conflict matters as well as national values	4.09	1.047	Accepted

7	By enrolling in Skills acquisition centres to learn entrepreneurial skills	4.10	1.112	Accepted
8	Working with NGOs to reach the unreached	4.04	1.132	Accepted
9	Forming partnerships with Relatives and Friends to set up small-scale businesses	3.97	1.090	Accepted
10	Visiting Banks for loans/sponsorship	3.80	1.179	Rejected
11	Registering and Partnering with Associations like SMEDAN etc.	3.88	1.144	Rejected
12	Forming good health habits	4.06	1.078	Accepted
13	By engaging in positive and constructive Political activities	3.99	1.073	Rejected
14	By Engaging in Farming (crop production/ animal breeding	4.15	1.091	Accepted
15	Avoiding bad activities that could aid Climate Change promotion	4.05	1.195	Accepted

Table 6 above shows the result of how youths in Zamfara State use information for national development. The result indicates that Enrolling in School to acquire education and self-upgrade has the highest mean score of 4.30 and STD of .992, others are Acquiring new knowledge from seminars, training from Motivational/inspirational talks/materials/training and putting same into practice with 4.17, By Engaging in Farming (crop production/ animal breeding 4.15. The result also revealed that Visiting Banks for loans/sponsorship has the least mean score of 3.80, others with low mean scores are Registering and Partnering with Associations like Small and Medium Enterprises Development Association of Nigeri etc. 3.88, By Visiting and Registering with Libraries/information centres 3.96.

Research Question 3: What are the Obstacles militating against the youths' utilization of this information?

Table 7: Mean Score of One Sample Statistics of the obstacles militating against youths' utilization of information

S/N	Obstacles to Information Utilization	Mean	STD	Decision
1	High cost of education	4.19	1.103	Accepted

2	Incessant strikes in the education sector	4.17	1.044	Accepted
3	No workplace driven school curriculum	3.96	1.125	Rejected
4	Ministry staff's unwillingness to release information	3.84	1.196	Rejected
5	Bureaucratic bottleneck	3.85	1.152	Rejected
6	Bribery and Corruption	3.97	1.258	Rejected
7	The politicization of government empowerment programmes	4.08	1.105	Accepted
8	The problem of quota system instead of merit	4.11	1.120	Rejected
9	Secret recruitment exercises by government agencies and organizations	4.15	1.083	Accepted
10	Poor implementation of Youth related policies/directives	4.16	1.055	Accepted
11	High cost of Political/Electioneering Process	4.00	1.125	Accepted
12	The poor working relationship between the Youth and the Security Agencies	4.14	1.087	Accepted
13	Information illiteracy (inability to identify information needs, evaluate, assess, analyze, synthesise etc)	4.08	1.116	Accepted
14	Prevalence of outdated information	4.11	1.082	Accepted
15	Limited help from libraries/Information Centers	3.91	1.212	Rejected
16	Poor Reading Habit by the Youth	3.94	1.244	Rejected

17	Fake News	4.07	1.158	Accepted
18	Inadequate skill acquisition centres	4.06	1.130	Rejected
19	Inadequate support and follow-up after acquisition of skills	4.06	1.107	Accepted
20	Impracticable business ideas from motivational/inspirational talks and materials	3.92	1.243	Rejected
21	High inflation rate	4.05	1.117	Accepted
22	Stringent conditions for a bank loan (high-interest rate, C of O, high deposit amount etc)	4.03	1.182	Accepted
23	Lack of power/energy	4.07	1.185	Accepted
24	Lack of internet facilities	3.98	1.212	Rejected
25	High cost of data for internet connectivity	4.02	1.149	Accepted
26	Poor internet access (especially in rural areas)	4.07	1.181	Accepted
27	Poor health information	3.91	1.304	Rejected
28	Youths' Laziness to engage in active venture	4.01	1.191	Accepted
29	Climate Change Effect on Farming and other Activities	4.06	1.130	Accepted
30	Poor mentorship and coaching opportunities	4.03	1.184	Accepted
31	Shiftless (lacking ambition and energy)	3.90	1.283	

				Rejected
32	Gender insensitive	3.89	1.175	Rejected
33	Youth un-inclusiveness	3.90	1.988	Rejected

Nigerian youths were asked to identify obstacles that militate against their utilization of information and table 7 above presents the results of the findings. High cost of education has the highest mean score of 4.19 followed by Incessant strikes in the education sector, 4.17 Secret recruitment exercises by government agencies and organizations has 4.15 and Poor implementation of Youth related policies/directives, 4.16. Further findings indicate that Ministry staff's unwillingness to release information has the least mean score of 3.84, followed by Bureaucratic bottleneck 3.85, Shiftless (lacking ambition and energy) at 3.90 and Gender insensitive, at 3.89.

Discussion of Results

Research question one sought to identify the information needs of Nigerian youths for their engagement towards contributing to national development. The finding showed that Information on education (admission/scholarships etc) was top on the youth's information needs. This shows that the youths recognized that education can enlighten them and prepare them for meaningful livelihood thereby contributing to national development. This finding is in line with that of Oyinloye, Tabawa and Aku (2016) that for a society to grow more efficiently in all aspects, developing countries must collect and provide access to adequate and up-to-date information on health, education, and youth empowerment amongst others.

The finding of the second research question on the utilization of information by youths in Zamfara State reveals that enrolling in school to acquire education and self-upgrade has the highest mean score which validates their claim of information on education as their highest information need. It is a recognition of their acceptance of the importance of education in national development. Further findings reveal that the youths acquire new knowledge from seminars, training, motivational/inspirational talks/materials/training and also put them into practice. The findings also show that the youths engage in farming. This is an indication that the youths are not lazy but are taking advantage of the vast arable land in the State which has as its sobriquet, "farming is our pride" and a viable means of engagement. However, the finding is in contradiction with that of Igwe and Onah (2013) who reported sadly that it is just very few of their respondents utilized information on commercial agriculture.

The findings of the third research question on obstacles militating against the utilization of information by Nigerian youths in Zamfara State reveal that the High cost of education was the greatest obstacle they face. This is obvious because it is common knowledge that education is expensive. This explains why WAEC/SSCE/NECO/NABTEB has the highest percentage of 21.8 in the demographic data on educational qualification of the respondents since the government pays for their WAEC but could not go further because of the cost of pursuing higher education. This is not acceptable, giving the place of education in the development of both the individual and the nation. The further finding showed that incessant strikes in the education sector affect their decision of going to school. The strike has been instituted in the Nigerian educated system, particularly the higher education. Further findings showed that being shiftless (lacking ambition

and energy) is among the least obstacles faced by the youths in utilizing information for national development. This is true because Nigerian youths are ambitious, energetic and ready to survive, but rather, the government may not have been making sincere and genuine efforts to engage them productively, which may explain why the numerous empowerment programmes embarked on by successive Nigerian governments have not yielded positive results. This finding is in line with the findings of Abba and Adamu (2019) where Shiftless (lacking ambition and energy) is not a major obstacle to the youths' utilization of information in Gwale Local Government Area of Kano.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Government should declare a state of emergency on education and increase funding for education. This would reduce the cost of education and stop incessant strikes in the sector; thereby encouraging more youths to enrol in schools for their personal and national development.
2. Government should continue to introduce more youth-friendly policies and programmes, with a genuine and workable strategies to mobilize the youths to the point of establishment.
3. The government, particularly in Zamfara State should, as a matter of urgency, resuscitate their Bursary Programme to assist youths in furthering their education to higher levels after obtaining WAEC/NECO qualification.

Conclusion

From the outcome of the study, it is very clear that information on education (scholarship/admission etc) was the major information need of the youths in Zamfara State and by implication in Nigeria as a whole. Therefore, there is an urgent need for government at all levels to invest heavily on education opportunities to meet the yearnings of Nigerian youths. This is because information and knowledge have been described as the two important ingredients in preparing and empowering the youths for meaningful participation in national development. This would be in line with the saying that the foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

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