



## Role of ICT for Youth Empowerment and Job Creation in Zaria, Kaduna State Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in empowering the youth and creating job opportunities most especially in Zaria Local Government of Kaduna state as a solution to unemployment in Nigeria. Data were generated through questionnaire. Findings show that the application of ICT for youth empowerment creates job opportunities. Thus, this paper recommended that youth should be personally committed to ICT education and making effective use of ICT for personal, community and national development.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval. Development is partly determined by the ability to establish a synergistic interaction between technological innovation and human values. The rapid rate at which ICTs have evolved since the mid-20th century, the convergence and pervasiveness of ICTs, give them a strong role in development and globalization (Nwagwu, 2006). The Economic Commission for Africa has indicated that the ability to access and use information is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for development. Unfortunately, many developing countries, especially in Nigeria, are still backward in ICT (Aduwa-Ogiegbean and Iyamu, 2005). ICT without doubt is a facilitator for job creation and tool for empowerment. It helps youth to expand their consciousness, increase capacity for empowerment and broaden their perspectives on the nature of technology and its everyday usefulness in life. Acquiring ICT knowledge and use of ICT tools increases access to a greater variety of information and improved quality of life. If young people know how to use ICT, they can tap into information and services that could empower them to create job for their selves.

Okummi and Okeagu (2015) asserted that youths are often the leading innovators in the use and spread of ICT. They adapt quickly and are adventurous for new knowledge and therefore if

provided with opportunities, they can translate it into livelihood ventures. This paper therefore assume that ICT presents wide ranging opportunities especially for developing societies like Nigeria to empower their youths, and that through effective ICT education policies, youth unemployment could be effectively reduced to tolerable level. Abbasi (2001) states that ICT represents a unique knowledge based social infrastructure.

The unemployment rate reported by the Nigerian Bureau of statistic (NBS). The country's unemployment rate stood at 18.8%, as Spectator Index had tweeted. It was the twelfth consecutive rise since the last quarter of 2014. Knowing that Nigeria experienced a slowdown in economic growth from 2014 and entered into a recession in 2016, only exiting it in the second quarter of 2017. Therefore there is need for more job to be created to help the youth go out of poverty, hunger and insecurity which is one of the major problem of Kaduna state.

### Aim of the Study

The main aim of this research is to examine the role of ICT in empowering youth in Zaria LGA. This paper also explore how ICT create job opportunities to youth in particular and Kaduna State in general.



### **Research Questions**

The following questions were proposed to guide the study:

1. What is the level of ICT knowledge among youths in Zaria?
2. To what level ICT empower the youth in Zaria?
3. Does ICT provides job opportunities?
4. What are the challenges facing youth empowerment?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Impact of Information and Communication Technology**

Technology has transformed the way younger generation communicate and access information. Two major assumptions underlie the role of ICT: the first is that the proliferation of these technologies is causing rapid transformations in all areas of life; the second is that ICT function to unify and standardize culture. It is on the basis of these assumptions that the term "information age and globalization" evolved (Adeoti 2004). Studies have shown that the ICT era have created various types of jobs from Chief Information Officer in big enterprises or government agencies to the computer shop operators since early 90's. Vendors of hand held phones and their accessories are common sight in every community. There are various types of ICT based businesses such as document processing centres, cybercafé, computer training centres, computer services and repairs, hand set services and repairs, internet, programming, cable and satellite TV installations, etc. with very little take off funds. They are common jobs to empower youth (Oladunjoye and Audu 2012; Olasanmi, Ayoola and Kareem 2012).

#### **Job Opportunities in ICT**

Job can be defined as an economic role for which an individual is paid. It can be acquired through proper training either in the schools, ICT centers, vocational schools, apprenticeship with a knowledgeable practitioners, or expression of talents. Oladunjoye and Audu (2014) states that in ICT, several areas have been identified over the years as a special means of providing services.

These include: Networking, Programming, Repairing and maintenance, Computer sales, Phone sales, Parts and accessory sales, Document processing and Phone calls, etc.

### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The study was carried out in Zaria metropolis, a local government in Kaduna State that has a population of 428,908 (167,931 males and 260,977 females), (NPC, 2006). Zaria is a major city in Kaduna State in northern Nigeria.

The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The study group within the area is the youth. Data for the study were obtained through questionnaire, the population size used for the survey is 2000 a total of 322 respondents were used as a sample size (Krejeie & Morgan, 1970). The questionnaire was both close-ended and open-ended. Close ended questions were structured on a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, undecided, strongly disagree and disagree. In close-ended questions, the respondents choose from a list of possible answers (Babbie, 2008). The questionnaire is divided into two sections; section A, focused on the socio-demographic data of the respondents and Section B focused on ICT education and/or use and youth entrepreneurship. In the final analysis, simple percentages and frequency distribution were use as the analytical tools.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Most of the respondents are male with a total of 200(62.11%) as shown in Table 1, while 122(37.89%) are female. Respondent use for the study were all youth, as they were within the ages of 18-35 years. Youths between ages 18-24 years (48.13%) constituted the highest respondents used for the study, 29.50% were aged 24- 29 years, and those aged 30-35 years were 22.36% only. The respondent educational level, most of the respondents were undergraduates with a total of 184(57.14%), 99(30.74%) were graduate, while 39(12.11%) had primary/secondary education. Majority are students with a total of 173(53.73%), 97(30.12%) are entrepreneurs, while 52(16.14%) are employed.



**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Measures	Frequency	%
Gender	male	200	62.11%
	female	122	37.89%
Age	18-24	155	48.13%
	25-29	95	29.50%
	30-35	72	22.36%
Educational level	primary/secondary	39	12.11%
	undergraduate	184	57.14%
	graduate	99	30.74%
Employment status	student	173	53.73%
	employed	52	16.14%
	entrepreneurs	97	30.12%

Source: Field Research (2019)

Table 2 shows respondents' level of ICT knowledge. Most of the respondents with a total of 141(43.79%) admitted that they had average knowledge of ICT, 96(29.81%) had a fair knowledge of ICT, 61(18.94%) had a perfect knowledge of the ICT, and only 24(7.45%) had no knowledge of ICT. A greater percentage of the youths have average to fair knowledge of ICT.

This indicates that the youths are receiving ICT education and training as well. Most schools have introduced ICT courses in their curriculum especially private schools. Though some of these courses may be theoretical in nature, they motivate students and youths to seek further knowledge in ICT and also utilize such knowledge for entrepreneurial advancement.

**Table 2:** Respondents' level of ICT knowledge

Knowledge of ICT	Perfect		Average		Fair		none	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	61	18.94	141	43.79	96	29.81	24	7.45

Source: Field Research (2019)

**Table 3:** Respondents' opinion on youth empowerment

Level of youth empowerment in ICT	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
ICT provides business opportunities to the youth.	234	72.67	88	27.33	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICT improves business efficiency	191	59.32	104	32.30	27	8.38	-	-	-	-
ICT Enhances capabilities, creativity and knowledge.	228	70.81	94	29.19	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICT help youth develops latent entrepreneurial talent.	197	61.18	115	35.71	10	3.11	-	-	-	-
ICT boost nation economy	74	22.98	212	65.84	36	11.18	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Research (2019)

Available data in Table 3 reveals that ICT empowered the youth through creating job opportunities (100%); improving business efficiency (91.62%); enhancing capabilities,

creativity and knowledge (100%); developing latent entrepreneurial skill (96.89%); and contributing to national economy (88.82%). Very few respondents were indecisive on some issues:

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improvement of business efficiency (8.38%), (3.11%), and contribution to national economy development of latent entrepreneurial talent (11.18%).

**Table 4:** Respondents' opinion on Jobs created by ICT.

Job opportunities created by ICT	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Youth are engaged in the sales of phones and network lines.	71	22.05	251	77.95	-	-	-	-	-	-
Youth are engaged in computer and cellular phone repairs	74	22.98	248	77.02	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICT tools such as computer, scanner, printer and accessories are used to design graphics etc.	92	28.57	220	68.32	10	3.11	-	-	-	-
Business Centres are other strategies for ICT empowerment.	14	4.35	300	93.17	8	2.48	-	-	-	-
Young people train other youths in Computer Training Centres.	148	45.96	174	54.04	-	-	-	-	-	-
Creating application and piloting the application e.g Web design and hosting.	67	20.81	239	74.22	16	4.97	-	-	-	-

Some of the Jobs created by ICT reveals that 22.05% and 77.95% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that youth are engaged in buying and selling of phones and network lines; 22.98% and 77.02% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that youth are engaged in cellular phone repairs; 45.96% and 54.04% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that youth are trained by their fellow youths; 28.57% and 68.32% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that ICT tools creates innovations, and only 3.11% were indecisive; 4.35% and 93.17% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that business centres are other means where youths are thought how to become empowered, but only 2.48% were indecisive; and 20.81% and 74.22% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that youth render services by creating application and piloting the application whereas 4.97% were indecisive

Most respondents agreed that ICT and youth empowerment creates job opportunities. ICT is generally appreciated as a driving force in the acceleration of entrepreneurship and innovation, making it easier to identify and develop good ideas, create and disseminate new products and services. The pervasive use of ICT, including

hardware, software, applications, and telecommunications, drives innovation in virtually every market sector. As stated by Danso, Affum and Hayfron-Acquah (2012) who affirmed that increasing access to information through the power of the internet infrastructure, and creation of several innovative tools and accessories, could create several opportunities which can be exploited by youths.

#### CONCLUSION

From the empirical evidence and feedback from the respondents, there is congruence of view that Information and Communication Technology is pivotal to the creation of job opportunities through youth empowerment. This study examined ICT and youth empowerment for job creation in Zaria metropolis, Kaduna State. Results show that application of ICT for youth empowerment as such creates job. Significant number of youths have difficulties in this aspect as a result of challenges which ICT and youth empowerment is facing this days, including Irregular power supply which hinders the use of ICT facilities, inadequate capital to purchase ICT tools to start business, inadequate entrepreneurial or vocational training



centres avoids youth from acquiring ICT knowledge and Poor motivation of the youth and constrained access to local and international market. Helping the youths to overcome these challenges will position them to contribute to the economy of the nation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the fore gone discussions, the paper recommended the followings:

- a. ICT infrastructures should be upgraded and the neglected ones replaced so as to encourage the use of ICT.
- b. The funding of ICT should be encouraged through public private partnership because government cannot do it along.
- c. Teaching of ICT should be included in the school curriculum of both primary and secondary schools so as to get the youth abreast of ICT application at early stage.
- d. Government should sponsor training and enlightenment of citizens in the area of ICT application.
- e. Individuals especially youths on their part, should be personally committed to ICT education and making effective use of ICT for personal and national development.

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