# ICT FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND JOB CREATION IN ZARIA, KADUNA STATE OF NIGERIA.

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***ABSTRACT***
*This study examine 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 shows that application of ICT for youth empowerment creates job opportunities. Thus this paper recommends that youth should be personally committed to ICT education and making effective use of ICT for personal and national development.*

## Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) 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 counties, 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 themselves.

Okummi and Okeagu (2015) assert 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. Abbasi (2001) states that ICT represents a unique knowledge based social infrastructure.

The unemployment rate of Nigeria as reported by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistic (NBS) (2018) 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. This paper therefore assumes that ICT presents wide range of 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.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this research is to examine the role of ICT in empowering youth in Zaria Local Government Area and explore how ICT creates job opportunities to youth.

**Research Questions**

The following questions are proposed to guide the study;

a. What is the level of ICT knowledge among youths in Zaria?
b. To what level ICT empower the youth in Zaria?
c. Does ICT provide job opportunities?
d. What are the challenges facing youth empowerment?

Impact of Information and Communication Technology in Creating Job

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 practitioner, 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. Technology has transformed the way younger generation communicate and access information. The two major assumptions underlie the role of ICT are the proliferation of technologies causing rapid transformations in all areas of life and 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 with very little take off funds. They are common jobs to empower youth (Oladunjoye and Audu 2012; Olasanmi, Ayoola and Kareem 2012).

## 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, 384 questionnaires were distributed and 322 youth respondent. The population sampling was based on Krejeie & Morgan, (1970) theory. 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 was 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 used 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 (2018)**

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**

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

**Source: Field Research (2018)**

**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 (2018)**

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: improvement of business efficiency (8.38%), development of latent entrepreneurial talent (3.11%), and contribution to national economy (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 use 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 | - | - | - | - |

**Source: Field Research (2018)**

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 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 (ICT) 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 shown 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.

## Recommendation

The application of ICT for youth empowerment is surely one of the ways to create job opportunities in Zaria Local Government Area. Based on the above analysis the author recommend the following.

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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