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# **JOB SEEKING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY EDUCATED YOUTHS IN NIGERIA**

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## **Abstract**

*The study examined job seeking strategies employed by educated youth in Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was used and data were collected through the administration of an instrument titled "Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths Questionnaire" (JSSEYQ). A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the respondents that participated in the study. At the first stage, a cluster of six geo-political zones was considered. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select five out of the six geopolitical zones based on population and location. Two states were randomly selected in each of the five geopolitical Zones and the capital cities of each of these states were purposively selected as well. This is because most job seekers often migrate to cities in search of employment. The snowball sampling procedure, which could be referred to as chain referral sampling, was used to select 400 respondents across the various states. Responses from the respondents were analyzed using percentages, means, frequency, t- test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The major findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of religion. However, a significant difference was found on the basis of gender, age, educational qualification and on whether they had ever visited a career-counsellor. The implication of this study for counseling, among others, is that counsellors should intensify efforts at organizing enlightenment programmes on strategies that enhances job seekers' ability to secure employment. It was also recommended that government should do more in terms of providing*

*employment for the youths. Job seekers should endeavor to regularly update their knowledge in their field of study so that they can always be relevant.*

**Key words:** Job, Strategies, Educated and Youth

### **Introduction**

Unemployment is a situation where people who fall within the ages of working population are unable to obtain a job. Unemployment is a condition of the labour market in which the supply of labour power is greater than the number of jobs available. Alao (1984) explained that occupation refers to the category of work under which a job can be placed, while a job is conceived as a definite piece of work carried out for a fixed price. Odekunle (2001) averred that lack of information about occupation or jobs are the major reasons why youths are unemployed, and that the most useful strategies for seeking employment are writing applications, seeking help from friends and teachers through gathering letters of recommendations. Job searching is not all about applying for jobs and attending interviews. Doyle (2014) stated that it is a complicated process especially in a competitive job market. A successful job seeker utilizes a variety of strategies in order to stand out as the best.

In searching for employable persons Rockwal (2014) asserted that employers are looking for skills that can be applied to many different situations, so they focus on wide array of skills among various applicants. The use of covering letter can be used to spell out specific skill areas. Searching for a job is a hard task and it should be treated like business. The United States Department of labour (2014) revealed that 80% of all positions are filled without employer advertising. In order to get employed, one needs to strategize, candidates are expected to have multiple search methods which may help them to find a position faster than people who use only one or two methods. Career

Services Network (2014) suggested that the internet should not be the only means for job hunting. Talking to people, asking questions and being able to quickly and easily describe oneself, are good job seeking strategies. Career service network programme, social media, networking, twitter and Facebook are also very important job seeking outlets.

Peterson (2014) highlighted some major innovative job strategy skills. These include: the use of social networking site to micro-target on people or companies who are likely to offer a job space, looking for opportunities to show your worth, and searching for the latest job. The best way to get a job is not just applying directly and writing perfect covering letters but getting out there in a way that people will be attracted by the skill one possesses. In the same vein, Odekunle (2001) emphasized that internal (personality, flexibility, academic ability) and external (labour unions, welfare, government, training programmers) factors are strong forces in securing employment. Rockwal (2014) explained that networking is the most effective strategy for job seekers, because of the few vacancies. It is important to take advantage of the network in order to secure an appropriate employment. Leveraging the net helps job seekers to be aware of open positions. Similarly, it also avails them the opportunity to post credentials directly into the hands of hiring managers. It was also pointed out that before sending resume to an employer, it is better to find out what job fits one's interest and personality. Bolarin (1986) asserted that career education exposes students to broad area of different jobs existing in a country and also help them to make meaningful future plan.

Unemployed youths are able-bodied and mentally sound citizens between the ages of 15 and 55 years, who are desirous to get employed but do not have full time paid employment, while educated youths are persons who have undergone formal schooling or training in an institution of learning, such as colleges of technology, colleges of education polytechnics and universities.

### **Statement of Problem**

Unemployment remains one of the most critical socio-economic problems facing Nigerian youths today. Universities and Polytechnics have continued to push out more than 15,000 graduates annually, while the available jobs remain inadequate for educated job seekers in Nigeria. In a recently advertised position Bakare (2014) reported that, out of the 120,000 applications that were received, only 25 appointable positions were available. It was further noted that Nigeria may not be able to meet her targets for the attainment of the MDG goal by 2015 as a result of the high unemployment rates.

Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.9% in 2011 from 21.10% in 2010. National Bureau of Statistics (2013) reported that 54% of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012. As a result of lack of employment, youths are prone to getting involved in different types of crimes. The security challenges in the country have discouraged various investors, and this has led to the high unemployment rates in the country. Graduates are employed as theft syndicates, armed robbers, kidnappers, militants and insurgent as a result of unemployment. World Bank (2014) pointed out that Nigeria unemployment rate was 22% while the youth unemployment rate was 38%.

Many researchers like Callaway (1990), Yakubu (2004) and Aboyeji (1995)

have worked on causes and problems of unemployment. None of these scholars to the best of this researcher's knowledge conducted a study that specifically focused on job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria. Owing to the gaps identified above, the research study investigated the various job seeking strategies employed by educated youth on the basis of gender, age, educational qualification, religion and professional guidance of career counsellors. The basic research question is: what job seeking strategies are mostly employed by educated youths in Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of age.
3. There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of educational qualification.
4. There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of religion.
5. There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of whether they have visited a career counsellor.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. A representative sample of the total population was used as basis to generalize the findings of the study. The total population of uneducated youths in Nigeria was 167 million (National Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Samples of 400 respondents were selected from the population, using the sample size determination table (Research Advisor, 2006). According to the table, a population of 167 million should have a sample size of 384 at 95% confidence interval and 5.0 margin error. This was the justification for the sample of the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the respondents that participated in the study. At the first stage, a cluster of six geo-political zones was considered. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select five out of the six geopolitical zones based on population and location. Two states were randomly selected in each of the five geopolitical zones and the capital cities of each of these states were purposively selected. This is because most job seekers often migrate to cities in search of employment. The snowball sampling procedure, which could be referred to as chain referral sampling was used to select 400 respondents across the various states earlier selected. The snowball technique is a sampling procedure that helps the researcher to identify an individual or a small group that meets the criteria for inclusion in the study for further selection. This individual or group identified others who equally have not been employed after graduation.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used in collecting the data for this study was titled "*Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths Questionnaire*

(JSSEYQ)". It consisted of 20 items designed to address the research questions. Section A contained the demographic data such as gender, age, educational qualification, religion and whether the respondents have visited a career counselor, while section B was designed to elicit information on job seeking strategies employed by educated youths. A Four-Point Likert type response format was adopted for use in Section B as follows; SA- Strongly Agree -4points; A- Agree- 3points; D- Disagree- 2points; and SD - Strongly Disagree - 1point.

### **Psychometric Properties of the Instrument**

**Validity:** In order to determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the draft of the questionnaire to some experts in relevant areas. The modification and comments made by these experts were considered in the final selection of items on the questionnaire.

**Reliability:** To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was adopted. The researchers administered the same instrument on twenty (20) respondents at an interval of four weeks. The two scores were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The reliability index of 0.73 was found. Therefore, the questionnaire is statistically said to be reliable for the study.

### **Results**

The result of the study was presented using frequency counts and simple percentage. The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the generated null-hypotheses. The respondents' personal demographic data were presented with the use of simple percentages as indicated in the tables that follows.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	228	57.0
Female	172	43.0
Total	400	100
Age		
Below 18 years	19	4.8
19- 21 years	51	12.8
22 years and above	330	82.5
Total	400	100
Educational Qualification		
HND	26	6.5
B.Ed/B.A/B.Sc	309	77.2
NCE/OND	46	11.5
Masters and above	19	4.8
Total	400	100
Religion		
Christianity	206	51.5
Islam	186	46.5
ATR	8	2.0
Total	400	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of gender. It indicates that 228 (57%) of the respondents were males, while 172 (43%) were females. This implied that there were more male respondents that participated in the study as compared to their female counterparts. 19 (4.8%) of the respondents were below 18 years, 51 (12.8%) were between the ages of 19 – 21 years, while 330 (82.5%) were 22 years and above. This implied that there were more respondents of the ages of 22 years and above that participated in the study as compared to those from other age groups. The table also indicated that 26 (6.5%) of the respondents have HND qualification, 309 (77.2%) were having B.Ed/B.A/B.Sc qualification, 46 (11.5%) were having NCE/OND, while 19 (4.8%) were having masters qualification and above. This implied that more respondents with B.Ed/B.A/B.Sc qualification participated more in the study as compared to their other counterparts. 206 (51.5%) of the respondents were Christians, 186 (46.5%) of the respondents were Muslims, while 8 (2%) of the respondents were worshippers of the African Traditional Religion. This implied that there were more respondents who were Christians that participated in the study

as compared to those who are worshippers of other religion.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by State**

Geo-Political Zones	State	Frequency	Percentage
North-Central	Kwara	40	10.0
	Kogi	40	10.0
South-West	Oyo	40	10.0
	Lagos	40	10.0
South-South	Delta	40	10.0
	Rivers	40	10.0
South-East	Anambra	40	10.0
	Ebonyi	40	10.0
North-West	Kaduna	40	10.0
	Kano	40	10.0
	Total	400	100.0

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of state. It indicates that there was an equal selection of 40 respondents representing (10%) from each of the states which are: Kwara, Kogi, Oyo, Lagos, Delta, Rivers, Anambra, Ebonyi, Kaduna and Kano respectively.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Visit to a Career Counsellor**

Visited a Career Counsellor	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	16.5
No	334	83.5
Total	400	100.0

Table 3 shows the distribution on whether **the respondents had ever visited a career counsellor**. It indicates that 66 (16.5%) of the respondents had visited a career counsellor at one time or the other, while 334 (83.5%) of the respondents had never visited a career counsellor. This implied that most of the respondents have not visited a career counsellor as compared to their counterparts.

**Table 4: Mean and Rank Order of Responses on Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria**

Item NO	As a youth, I seek for jobs by:	Mean	Ranking
1	browsing the web	3.48	1 <sup>st</sup>
20	writing application letters in response to newspaper adverts	3.38	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	parental connection	3.32	3 <sup>rd</sup>
18	adding more qualification	3.26	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Prayers	3.22	5 <sup>th</sup>
11	Networking	3.21	6 <sup>th</sup>
4	god-fatherism	3.07	7 <sup>th</sup>
19	migrating from rural areas to the cities	3.04	8 <sup>th</sup>
17	searching job hunting sites	2.96	9 <sup>th</sup>
12	tribal connections	2.94	10 <sup>th</sup>
2	announcement in churches and mosques	2.86	11 <sup>th</sup>
10	getting covering letters from those in authority	2.83	12 <sup>th</sup>
13	retraining in order for my qualification to match with the available job opportunities	2.82	13 <sup>th</sup>
15	job search from company to company	2.77	14 <sup>th</sup>
9	registering with federal/state agencies for employment	2.73	15 <sup>th</sup>
6	Bribery	2.61	16 <sup>th</sup>
16	depending on luck	2.60	17 <sup>th</sup>
14	employing the service of job hiring managers	2.56	18 <sup>th</sup>
7	Sycophancy	2.28	19 <sup>th</sup>
8	engaging in thugery thereby forcing the government to provide employment	2.06	20 <sup>th</sup>

Table 4 shows the mean and the ranking of the items responded to by the respondents. Item 1 ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with the mean score of 3.48. The item states, "As a youth, I seek for jobs by browsing the web". Item 20 ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with the mean score of 3.38, it states that "As a youth, I seek for jobs by writing application letters", while Item 3 ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> with the mean score of 3.32. It states that "As a youth, I seek for jobs through parental connection". Conversely item 8 was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> with a mean score of 2.06, it states that "As a youth, I seek for jobs by engaging in thugery thereby forcing the government to provide employment". Since eighteen out of the twenty items have mean scores that are above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be said that majority of the youths have high job seeking strategies.

### Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the results of the five (5) null hypotheses that were generated and tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical methods at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The t-test statistics were used to compare the mean score, standard deviations and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the respondents' opinion with a view to finding out if

*Job Seeking Strategies Employed By Educated Youths In Nigeria*

there was a significant difference. The results are presented in tables below:

**Hypothesis 1:** *There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on gender*

**Table 5: Mean Standard Deviation and t-value on the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	228	57.42	6.19	398	1.99*	1.96
Female	172	58.69	6.47			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value is 1.99 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical value, the hypothesis is not accepted. This means that there is a significant difference in the *job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on gender*.

**Hypotheses 2:** *There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on age.*

**Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Age**

Source	S.S	df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio
Between Groups	647.819	2	323.91	8.35*	3.00
Within Groups	15396.878	397	38.78		
Total	16044.697	399			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that the calculated F-ratio is 8.35 while the critical F-ratio is 3.00. Since the calculated F-ratio of 8.35 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 3.00, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the *job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on age*.

**Table 7: Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Age**

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Age
A	330	58.45	3	22 years and above
B	51	56.78	2	19 – 21 years
C	19	52.84	1	Below 18 years

Table 7 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA results on Table 6. Group 3 with a mean score of 58.45 significantly differed from Groups 2 and 1 with mean scores of 56.78 and 52.84, respectively. All the groups differed from one another but the significant difference noted was as a result of the mean score of Group 3.

**Hypotheses 3:** *There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on educational qualification.*

**Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Educational Qualification**

Source	S.S	df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio
Between Groups	396.325	3	132.10	3.34*	2.60
Within Groups	15648.372	396	39.51		
Total	16044.697	399			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 8 shows that the calculated F-ratio is 3.34 while the critical f-ratio is 2.60. Since the calculated F-ratio of 3.34 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 2.60, the hypothesis is hereby rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the *job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on educational qualification.*

**Table 9: Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Educational Qualification**

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Educational Qualification
A	19	58.68	4	Masters and above
A	26	58.42	1	HND
A	309	58.08	2	B.Ed/B.A/B.Sc
B	46	56.67	3	NCE/OND

Table 9 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA results on Table 8. Group 4 with a mean score of 58.68 slightly differed from Groups 1, and 2 with mean scores of 58.42 and 58.08, respectively, but significantly differed from Group 3 with a mean score of 56.67. All the groups differed from one another but the

significant difference noted was as a result of the mean score of Group 3.

**Hypotheses 4:** *There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria on the basis of religion*

**Table 10: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Religion**

Source	S.S	df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio
Between Groups	188.198	2	94.09	2.35	3.00
Within Groups	15856.499	397	39.94		
Total	16044.697	399			

Table 10 shows that the calculated F-ratio is 2.35 while the critical f-ratio is 3.00. Since the calculated F-ratio of 2.35 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the *job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on religion*.

**Hypothesis 5:** *There is no significant difference in the job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria based on having visited a career counsellor.*

**Table 11: Mean Standard Deviations and t-value on the Job Seeking Strategies Employed by Educated Youths in Nigeria Based on Having Visited A Career Counsellor**

Having Visited A Career Counsellor	N	Mean	Sd	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Yes	66	57.45	4.71	398	2.72*	1.96
No	334	58.07	6.61			

\*Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 11 shows that the calculated t-value is 2.72 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical value, the hypothesis is thus rejected.

## Discussion

There are several alternative ways of job seeking among the educated and unemployed youths in Nigeria. However, it is evident that the most common job seeking strategy employed by educated youths in Nigeria is browsing the web. This corroborates the findings of Peterson (2014) that one of the most innovative ways of searching for employment is through the use of social networking. The use of internet resources for job seeking has the advantage of versatility, timeliness, refinement, relevance and currency *vis-a-*

*viz* other means of seeking for employment. In the addition, the use of internet resources for job seeking provides a platform for accessing available vacancies both locally and internationally. With the deployment of broadband services for ICT and other purposes, access to internet resources has become more affordable and available to the resource-poor job seekers (Boogart, 2006).

Across gender divide, most of the respondents are divergent in their opinion on the job seeking strategies they employ. According to Barks (2006), male and female students are different in their style of searching for job on the web. This may be adduced to the socio-cultural background that dictates adoption of different approaches to issues of gender. Obayan (1994) opined that females are encouraged to be seen but not to be heard. On the other hand, Ajala (1991) asserted that since there is a high unemployment rate among the youths, most male and female educated youths employ several strategies when seeking for job.

The socio-economic role expected of women in the current *milieu* demands that women should be more proactive than their male counterparts in job seeking. Gender issues have occupied a front burner place in several local and international discourse, resulting in various countries establishing affirmatives for appointable positions based on gender. For example, in Nigeria, 33% of appointable positions are expected to be occupied by females through affirmative actions. The import of this affirmation connotes that the job seeking across gender divides will be different.

The age of the respondents influenced the job seeking approach employed. In other words, unemployed individuals of different age groups use different job seeking strategies. Doyle (2014) explained that most youth between the ages of 30 years and above experienced one

form of discrimination or the other in the process of searching for employment. The possibility of securing a job is inversely related to the person's age. This might be because the older a person is the less versatile and less attracted to the use of social media network to search for job. This is a form of digital divide between the young and the old. Doyle suggested that some strategies the older job seekers can employ to expedite a job search include showcasing their skill by effectively marketing the job seekers candidacy to the employer. Career Services Network (2014) stated that irrespective of age, youths use different methods and styles when searching for job.

A significant difference was found on the basis of the respondent's educational qualification. The higher the educational qualification of a person, the more likely it is for such an individual to have interacted on the use of vital tools (web browsing, trainings, educational tours, e.t.c) as requirement for graduation. Odekunle (1985) reported that job seekers with science background were different from those with humanities career orientation in their search for job. The researcher also confirmed that internal and external factors are strong forces to be reckoned with in Nigeria. The fact that jobs are so scarce compels the applicants to employ every means available in seeking for a job. Religion notwithstanding, respondents employs the same alternative means of job seeking. With the expectation of jobs that required religious trainings Yakubu (2004) maintained that *irrespective of religion of the job seeker, respondents use the same strategy to search for employment.*

The result of this study showed that many of the respondents had never visited a career counselor before; this reflected the extent to which the services of a career counsellor are needed in job seeking. Asonibare (1996) submitted that there is the

need for career counseling for youth seeking for employment. This can be provided by a trained, qualified counsellor. The counsellor can help the job seekers by giving necessary information on important strategies and skills used in seeking for employment.

### **Conclusion of the Findings**

The following are the major findings of this study:

1. *Job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria are majorly through browsing the web, writing of application letters in response to newspaper advert and parental connection.*
2. *Males employed job seeking strategies are different from their female's counterpart.*
3. *Different age groups employed different job seeking strategies.*
4. *Respondent's job seeking strategies was different on the basis of Educational Qualification.*
5. *Job seeking strategies employed by educated youths in Nigeria were similar on the basis of religion.*
6. *Respondents who visited counselling centres were different in their job seeking strategies.*

### **Recommendations**

From this study, it is therefore recommended that counselling services should be strengthened in schools and higher institutions of learning. Counsellors can help in organizing enlightenment programmes on various strategies that job seekers could employ in seeking for an employment. The government should be liberal and flexible in the provision of employment to the youths. Job seekers should endeavour to regularly update themselves in their field of study so that they can always be relevant. In the long run, government should encourage

curriculum development that encourages job creation rather than job seeking among Nigerian youths as a matter of policy.

The findings from this study exposed the need for career counsellor in schools and higher institutions of learning. It is obvious that youths need to be counselled if they aspire to fit in well in the job market. It is equally important that the government should, as a matter of urgency, employ qualified counsellors into the school system so as to help solve the ongoing mismatch between attitude and aptitude among our youths. Furthermore, since counselling can help to broaden the level of understanding of individuals which in turn promotes objectivity that can help youths to face reality in the job market, counsellors should also intensify efforts at organizing enlightenment programmes on strategies that enhance the job seekers for employment.

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