

JOB SEARCH AMONG TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

There are lots of complaints from graduates about the several applications submitted to public organisations and companies with no favourable outcomes despite their engagement in job search. In order to improve smooth school to-work transitions, successful adjustment and ensure proper career counselling, it is important to understand the ensuing issues in job search process, the value of particular job-finding strategies and the degree of adjusting to life without a job. The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population for this study comprises unemployed youths in Ekiti State. Multi stage sampling was adopted to draw a sample of two hundred and fifty (250) respondents who served as sample for the survey. Life Adjustment during Job Search Scale (LAJSS) was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using frequency and percentage count. The result revealed that the methods of job search mostly adopted by Nigerian unemployed youth are directly through the employer and through the internet; the commonest methods used by employed graduates in getting jobs are through a friend, relative and directly through employer. In addition, it was found that the most effective and reliable methods Nigerian unemployed youth used in securing jobs are directly through a friend, relative and directly from an employer. It was equally revealed that inability to operate the internet to search for job vacancies, under qualification, postal hitches, over qualification and the employers perceived short of skills of job seekers constitute major challenges in searching for job; and majority of the unemployed youth still intend to seek for job despite the scarcity. Based on the findings the study concludes that contacting an employer directly, searching the internet, referral, contacting friends and relatives remain effective media of searching and securing job. It is therefore recommended that youths should focus on build their relationship and social skills as the ties of friends, relatives, and referrals can only be strengthened by their ability to initiate, grow and sustain a productive interaction with their social environment.

Keywords: Transition-aged youth; Job Search; Challenges; Unemployed youth, Employed youth.

Introduction

Education has always been regarded as a remedy to poverty and ignorance and its provision is a productive investment in manpower development. It remains the main source of human resources, when combined in the appropriate quality and quantity would be a plus to the development of a nation. Considering contributions to education, especially at the tertiary level, institutions such as countries, individuals, communities and corporations invest greatly in education to boost the level of educational attainment of its citizens. The desire of Nigeria citizens to acquire formal education has been on the increase. Over the years, the rate of students' enrollment and the number of tertiary institutions has been on the increase with different rates of change being experienced and

expansions occurring simultaneously. The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Professor Abubakar Rasheed, has disclosed that more than 2.1 million populations of students are currently studying in Nigerian Universities. The figure is a little higher than what it was in 2017, where the number was put at 1.7 million undergraduate students and 234 thousand postgraduate students (Idoko, 2021). As of 2021, universities in Nigeria had increased from 129 to 196 among- 98 public universities, 45 federal and 53 state private universities (Adeyeye, Ige & Aina, (2012); Idoko, 2021).

These expansions have been attributed to the assumption that more education is good for individuals not only in terms of economic outcomes like wages or employment, but also for a wide range of social outcomes like improved health, reduced crime and higher wellbeing. The increasing number of educational institution and turn-out of graduate have played a role in the increase of unemployment, because the available job positions cannot go around. Unemployment being a major crisis is bedeviling the wellbeing of graduates of tertiary institutions bringing about frustration, dejection and dependency on relatives and friends, who also have their own challenges to battle with. In Nigeria, it has become one of the most severe socioeconomic setbacks confronting the country (National Directorate for Employment). Labour market entry is a critical period in the life of young people as well as in the formation of full citizens (Benedicto, 2013). It is a phase which is often characterized by confusion. The International Labour Organization (ILO) states that “it is not easy to be young in the current job market,” alluding to the challenges young people face to obtain a job with decent conditions (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2013). Non-availability of jobs has led to the process of job search.

The demands of adjusting to life can be a strong indicator of fulfillment in life as regards personal development and accomplishment of life goals. Life may have its own demands and challenges, failure in meeting those demands and challenges may cause maladjustment. Searching for job is one of the challenges of life facing unemployed graduates. Therefore, it is important to guide graduates to achieve adjustment by helping them to identify and know which job finding method is more efficient so as to achieve their goals. The unimaginable influx of tertiary school graduates into the labour market has left a source of worry in minds of the elites in our society. The survival of graduates among the labour force, who most often are eager to get into the labour markets, leaves so much to be worried about. Adjusting to the new experiences of labour market may pose a threat to their cultural, social and psychological disposition.

Consequent upon collapsed infrastructural facilities, poor governance structure, massive corruption, and political instability coupled with the school curriculum not geared towards equipping graduates with skills required for self-employment, thousands of graduates are left with the options of roaming the streets in search of jobs that are relatively non-existent. There have been complaints from graduates about the several applications submitted to public organisations and companies with no favourable outcomes. This condition may cause them to engage in unwholesome activities such as abuse of drugs and kid-napping among others. It may even result to mental health challenges such as worry, depression and anxiety. In order to avert such circumstances and improve smooth school to-work transitions, successful adjustment and ensure proper career counselling, it is important to understand ensuing issues and challenges in job search process and the value of job-finding strategies. Therefore, this study examines the issues and challenges of searching for job.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. Which method(s) of searching for job is/are most adopted by unemployed youths in Ekiti State?
- ii. Which method(s) of securing job was/were most adopted by employed graduates as perceived by unemployed youth?
- iii. Which method(s) of searching for job is/are most effective or reliable in getting a job?
- iv. What are the challenges of job search as perceived by unemployed youths in Ekiti State?
- v. Do graduates intend to search for job despite job scarcity?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine job search, methods of job search and its challenges among transition-aged youth in Ekiti state. Specifically, this study intends to find out;

- i. The method(s) of searching for job which is/are most adopted by unemployed youths in Ekiti State.
- ii. the method(s) of searching for job which was/were most adopted by employed graduates perceived by unemployed youth.
- iii. the method(s) of searching for job is/are most effective or reliable in getting a job.
- iv. the challenges of job search as perceived by youths in Ekiti State.
- v. whether unemployed youths intend to search for job despite job scarcity.

Literature Review

Job search can be seen as a process of gathering information about available jobs. Job search is the process of identifying sources of job information and utilizing such job information for the purpose of finding suitable job opportunities. It is a dynamic self-regulated process during which job seekers need to stay motivated to secure a job (da Motta-Veiga & Gabriel, 2016). During job search, individuals collect information on the job and can influence the search outcome by putting more or less effort into job search and by choosing among several search methods. With the diffusion of new technologies, the variety of job search methods used by unemployed individuals has taken a new dimension. The process of searching for job has become more extensive due to the availability of new search technologies (van den Berg, & van der Klaauw, 2013).

In the quest to get employed, people could adopt various methods or strategies to get job-related information. Finding employment and the quality of employment always depend on job search quality, hinged upon the sources that job seekers use to acquire information about job vacancies, and the intensity of job search (Fernandez-Valera, Meseguer de Pedro, De Cuyper, Garcia-Izquierdo, & Soler-Sanchez, 2020). There are two major methods of searching for job, namely: formal and informal. The formal method involves search methods such as newspapers and employment agencies. van den Berg and van der Klaauw (2013) pointed that formal job search uses formal intermediaries that exist primarily for recruitment purposes including employment agencies, and recruitment

advertising and its success is hinged on labour-market conditions and the search effort exhibited by the individual.

The informal method which is also called local search method covers avenues such as information from friends and relatives or direct employer contact. The effectiveness of these methods is assumed to be influenced by conditions in the local labour market, but not by the amount of efforts applied by the job seekers. According to Yizhong, Lin, Baranchenko, Lau, Yukhanaev & Lu, (2017), informal job search does not rely on formal intermediaries and consists of contacting friends, relatives, or acquaintances; contacting current or former employees; re-hires; and walk-ins. The use of informal job search methods appears particularly effective in generating employment opportunities and those who obtained employment by approaching friends and relatives or employers directly were more likely to be in work one year later, relative to those who used other methods to obtain employment. For job seekers, informal search is less costly and may be most productive in generating acceptance job offers and reliable information about jobs.

It has been commonly argued that strong ties are more important in helping unemployed people find jobs because family and friends are generally more present in the lives of the unemployed than are other contacts (such as Cappellari & Tatsiramos, 2015; Ramia et al. 2020). Further studies on job searching also considered formal networks such as newspapers and magazine advertisements, public competition or direct contact, the internet, and employment service agencies (Ingold & Valizade 2017; Liechti 2019). Mussida & Zanin (2020) found that more than 80% of the unemployed considered the informal network, followed by public competitions or direct contact with firms (more than 70%), and the internet (about 60%).

Lema (2014) highlighted that many factors are responsible for the difficulties that youth experience in initial workforce entry. These include: a lack of information, networks and connections among youth, especially youth from families lacking significant social capital; a lack of skills relevant to the workplace; a lack of experience and credentials that address employers' risk in making hiring commitments and a lack of available jobs suited to entry-level skills.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is hinged on Theory of Planned Behavior. Job search theory attempts to describe the problems faced by unemployed individuals and to propose methods for making optional job search choices. Theory of Planned Behavior postulated by Ajzen's (2012) serves as a major theory in search behaviour. Van Hooft (2016) introduces the Theory of Planned Job Search Behavior as the result of integrating both motivational and self-regulatory perspectives on job search. This theoretical framework integrates the main mechanisms that are important in the job search process. On the one hand, as job search is a difficult and complex task, having and maintaining motivation is essential for securing continuous job search activities. On the other hand, as job search is not only difficult but also unpleasant, job seekers need self-regulation for ensuring task persistence and performance. These mechanisms can be described as the methods. These methods are functions of choices which depends on persistence and persistence is function of self-regulation. Van Hooft (2016) proposes Vallerand's Hierarchical Model of Motivation as a useful framework to extend the theory of planned job search behavior for analyzing which methods can be effective in helping people to

engage in job search. It emphasized job search intention as an important aspect of the model which reflects the strength of an individual's motivation to engage in job search. The intention to search for job is capable determining the search behaviors which could be formal or informal.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey since it is aimed at collecting data on job search and its challenges among transition-aged youth Ekiti State. The population of this study comprises transition-aged youth. This is a category of individuals who are between late adolescents and early adulthood and disposed to work or search for job for economic sustainability. A good number of this group has acquired skills and experience through formal education or skills acquisition which position them to search or look for job. Therefore, being an infinite population, a purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting 250 unemployed youths.

In order to elicit information from the respondents, the researchers administered adapted a research instrument termed Life Adjustment during Job Search Scale (LAJSS) from the works of (Baker & Siryek, 1984); (Commitment to goals) Smale & Fowlie, 2009; (Personal-emotional adjustment) Al-khatib, Awamleh, & Samawi (2012); (Adjustment to college scale, ATCS) adapted by Ali (2006). The LAJSS is a 43-item questionnaire. The questionnaire is of three sessions. Section A has eight items capturing personal data and methods of job search adopted by the researcher; Section B has 10 items on challenges of job search and responded thus Always, Sometimes and ever. The section C was adapted from the original scale which consisted of (36) items distributed on four domains: academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and commitment to achieve goals but was adapted to contain five domains: Social adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Commitment to goals and Peer Adjustment. The subscale of academic adjustment was removed because the respondents are no longer in school but are graduates, while other items were restructured to reflect the opinions of the respondents of this study. This section is answered thus: completely true, somehow true, completely untrue.

The researcher, after the data has been collected, would analyze the data using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages and mean). Research question 1, 2, 3, and 5 were answered using frequency counts and percentage while research question 4 was answered using mean and ranking order.

Results

Research Question 1: Which method(s) of searching for job is/are most adopted by unemployed youths in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing the methods of job search mostly adopted by unemployed youth

Methods of job search	Frequency	Percentage
Through a friend	21	8.1
Through a relative	37	14.2
Directly from the employer	73	28.1
Through a politician	6	2.3
Through a traditional/religious leader	37	14.2
Through internet	68	26.2
Through a social media	18	6.9
Total	260	100.0

Table 1 revealed the methods of job search that is mostly adopted by unemployed youths as 21 respondents representing 8.1% of the participants picked through a friend, while 37 respondents representing 14.2% picked through a relative, 73 respondents representing 28.1% picked directly from the employer, 6 people representing 2.3% picked through a politician, 37 respondents representing 14.2% picked through a traditional and religious leader, 68 respondents representing 26.2% picked internet while 18 respondents representing 6.9% picked through social media. This implies that the highest methods of job search mostly adopted by Nigerian unemployed youth are directly through the employer and through the internet as they are mostly picked by the respondents.

Research Question 2: Which method(s) of securing job was/were most adopted by employed graduates as perceived by unemployed youth?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics showing the methods graduates adopted in securing a job

Methods of securing job	Frequency	Percentage
Through a friend	54	20.8
Through a relative	45	17.3
Through someone they know or that know them	19	7.3
Directly from the employer	84	32.3
Through a politician	23	8.8
Through a traditional/religious leader	1	0.4
Through referral	34	13.1
Total	260	100.0

Table 2 revealed the methods of job search adopted by employed graduates in securing a job as perceived by unemployed youths. 84 (32.3%) considered directly from the employer, followed by 54 (20.8%) who considered through a friend, while 45 (17.3%) of the respondents considered through a relative, and 19 (7.3%) of the respondents considered through someone they know or that knows them, 23 (8.8%) considered through a politician. It was further shown that 34 respondents representing 13.1% picked through referral while only 1 person representing 0.4% considered through a traditional and religious leader. This connotes that the commonest methods which Nigerian employed graduates used in securing jobs are directly from the employer, through a friend, relative and referral as perceived by most of the respondents.

Research Question 3: Which method(s) of searching for job is/are most effective or reliable in getting a job?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics showing the effective/reliable methods of securing a job

Effective methods of securing job by friends	Frequency	Percentage
Through a friend	47	18.1
Through a relative	57	21.9
Directly from the employer	71	27.3
Through a politician	36	13.8
Through a traditional/religious leader	28	10.8
Through internet	12	4.6
Through social media	9	3.5
Total	260	100.0

Table 3 indicated the effective and reliable methods adopted by unemployed youths in securing a job as 47 respondents representing 18.1% of the participants picked through a friend, while 57 respondents representing 21.9% picked through a relative, 71 respondents representing 27.3% picked directly from the employer, 36 people representing 13.8% picked through a politician, 28 respondents representing 10.8% picked through a traditional and religious leader, 12 people representing 4.6% picked through internet while 9 respondents representing 3.5% picked through social media. This connotes that the most effective and reliable methods Nigerian unemployed youth used in securing jobs are directly through a friend, relative and directly from an employer as most of the respondents perceived.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges of job search as perceived by unemployed youths in Ekiti State?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics showing the challenges of job search as perceived by youths in Ekiti State

Job Search Challenges	Mean	Rank
Inability to operate the internet to search for job vacancies.	2.01	1 st
Under-qualification.	1.88	2 nd
Postal hitches.	1.88	2 nd
Over-qualification.	1.79	3 rd
Employers' perceived short of skills of job seekers.	1.77	4 th
Not having funds to travel to distant interview venues.	1.67	5 th
The problem of having no one to connect me.	1.61	6 th
Most vacancies have been hijacked by "big-wigs".	1.44	7 th
Most employers already have shortlisted names before advertising.	1.43	8 th
Few vacancies for many applicants.	1.28	9 th

Table 4 reveals some of the challenges of job search as perceived by unemployed youth. Inability to operate the internet to search for job vacancies with a mean score of 2.01 was ranked 1st, under qualification and Postal hitches with a mean score of 1.88 each were ranked 2nd. Over qualification with the mean score of 31.79 was ranked 3rd. Employers perceived short of skills of job seekers with a mean score of 1.77 was ranked 4th, not having funds to travel to distant interview venues with a mean score of 1.67 was ranked 5th, the problem of having no one to connect with mean score of 1.61 was ranked 6th. Most vacancies have been hijacked by wig-wigs with a mean score of 1.44 was ranked

7th, most employers already have shortlisted names before advertising with a mean score of 1.43 was ranked 8th, few vacancies for many applicants with mean score 1.28 was ranked 9th.

This result further revealed that five (5) items out of ten (10) had mean scores above the cut-off point (1.68). Therefore, it can be deduced that the challenges of job search as perceived by unemployed youth are inability to operate the internet to search for job vacancies, under qualification, Postal hitches, over qualification and the employers perceived short of skills of job seekers.

Research Question 5: Do graduates intend to search for job despite job scarcity?

Table 6: Descriptive statistics showing the intention of job seekers to search for job despite scarce job vacancies

Intention to search for job	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	153	58.8
No	107	41.2
Total	260	100.0

Table 6 revealed that 153 participants responded that they still intend to search for job despite scarce job vacancies while 107 participants responded that they did not intend to search for job. This implies that majority of the unemployed youth still intend to seek for job despite the scarcity in job vacancies. The percentage may be said not be significant.

Discussion

The analysis of research question one revealed that unemployed youth are most likely to search for job by contacting the employer directly and through the internet. These strategies are twice likely to be adopted compared to relatives and religious or traditional leaders, and thrice likely to be used compared to social media and friends. This finding showed that although unemployed youth engage in social media activities that do not guarantee that they engage with the intention of searching for job. This finding is similar to that of Mussida and Zanin (2020) who found that more than 80% of the unemployed considered the informal network, followed by public competitions or direct contact with firms (more than 70%), and the internet (about 60%). However, it contradicts that of Longhi and Taylor (2014) who found that the unemployed are twice as likely as employed seekers to use job centres, career offices and job clubs (34% compared with 14%).

Research question two was analysed and it was found that the commonest methods of securing a job by Nigerian employed graduates are directly from an employer, through a friend, relative and referral as perceived by most of the respondents. This finding may be explained by the argument that strong ties are more important in helping unemployed people as well as the unemployed find jobs because family and friends are generally more present in the lives of the unemployed than are other contacts (Cappellari & Tatsiramos, 2015; Fernandez-Valera, et al 2020); Ramia et al. 2020). However, this finding disagrees with that of Longhi and Taylor (2014) who found that the majority of employed job seekers (64%) use responding to advertisements as their main method of job search while between 8–10% of employed seekers approach employers directly and use friends and relatives but not clear about securing a job, and Zubair and Omotayo

(2018) whose study showed that corps members used both job sites and social media to search for job information.

The analysis of research question three revealed that the most effective and reliable methods Nigerian unemployed youth used in securing jobs are directly through a friend, relative and directly from an employer as perceived by most of the unemployed graduates. This finding agrees with that of Yizhong, et al (2017) who found that informal job search consists of contacting friends, relatives, or acquaintances; contacting current or former employees; re-hires; and walk-ins and also appears particularly effective in generating employment opportunities. These methods of job search are capable of being very effective considering the fact that they constitute a string of relationships.

Research question four was analysed and it was revealed that the challenges of job search as perceived by unemployed youth are inability to operate the internet to search for job vacancies, under qualification, Postal hitches, over qualification and the employers perceived short of skills of job seekers. A similar study by Tiwari, et al (2018) found that issues which are faced by job seekers while finding job through online portals include; many of the jobs not being real; the companies listed do not give their actual structure and environment where the industry is located; the portals do not take responsibility of the jobs listed on the portals whether they are genuine or not; Users have to travel to the place where industry is located several times before the final recruitment which waste their time and money and; some of the job portals ask for the money before the commencement of the job. This finding also earned support from the study of Moore (2019) which found that the three common frustrations experienced by the young people during their job-search: employers' expectations of relevant work experience in the young person's preferred occupation, being required to apply for jobs not aligned with their career aspirations, and the impact of personal factors on their ability to confidently present themselves to prospective employers.

Research question five was analyzed and it was found that majority of the unemployed youth still intend to seek for job despite the scarcity in job vacancies. This finding is contrary to the expectation that young people would still intend to look for job despite the hassles of searching and getting a job and non-availability of employment opportunities. This may be explained by the fact that some youths need the job to survive or earn a living before they look for a better employment. This finding is similar to that of Zubair and Omotayo (2018) who found that job search intensity was high, as majority of the corps members spent up to about ten hours in a day searching for job information on the Internet. This trend may be justified by the fact that individuals at one stage of their life or the other search for jobs due to one reason or the other. There are situations where fresh school leavers or university graduates seek for their first jobs, those who were once employed but disengaged also seek for job as well as gainfully employed individuals who desire better employments.

Conclusion

The complexities in the world of work have necessitated the need to come up effective job strategies, therefore job search is indispensable in the world of work. With respect to the findings, contacting the employer directly and through the internet is most likely to be used by unemployed youths for job search. The commonest methods of securing a job by Nigerian employed graduates are directly from an employer, through a friend, relative and

referral while the most effective and reliable methods Nigerian unemployed youth used in securing jobs are directly through a friend, relative and directly from an employer. Finally, job search is not ending anytime soon as young graduates still intend to search for job despite the scarcity in employment opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were raised;

1. The outcome of this study necessitates the need to enlighten our youths on the need to build their relationship and social skills. Because the ties of friends, relatives, and referrals can only be strengthened by their ability to initiate, grow and sustain a productive interaction with their social environment.
2. Youth also need to understand that getting a job directly from an employer requires that they identify and develop their innate potentials and acquire skills that would enhance their performance and suitability in the workplace. Because every employer desire to have an employee that would be able to drive growth and attain productivity with his or her initiative, creativity, motivation, grit, emotional intelligence and communication skills.
3. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should endeavour to incorporate the need for relationship building into their training and workshop for unemployed youths across the country.
4. Educational institution managers need to infuse and emphasize the need for skill acquisition and development into the curriculum and teaching and learning activities.
5. Parents have a role to play as well, in that they should encourage their children/wards to identify and build on areas of skill shortage in their personal growth and development to avert cases of lingering unemployment status.

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