

ICT INFORMAL SECTOR JOBS AND SATISFACTION AMONG THE YOUTHS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

ONABAJO, B. Michaeland

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State

ADEWUSI, O. Adedeji

Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State

KALEJAIYE, O. Peter

Department of Sociology, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State

Abstract

The youths are the greatest assets of any nation. However in Nigeria, one of the vital socio-economic challenges in Nigeria is youth unemployment. In a quick reaction to this milieu, the informal sectors have been a veritable avenue to provide economic opportunities to the teeming youth. However, most past studies have focused on job satisfaction in the formal sector, while few have evaluated how informal sector jobs meets the entrepreneur needs, wants, or expectations – satisfaction, especially from the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) angle. Against this background, the study examined ICT Informal Sector Jobs and Satisfaction among the Youths in Osun State, Nigeria. Institutional theory was adopted to give theoretical explanation to issues of interest. Data was gathered among 168 youths who were purposively selected for the study through questionnaire administration. Findings revealed that engagement in ICT informal sector jobs have positively influence youth job satisfaction. The study concluded that, though ICT informal sector jobs play a positive role in youths job satisfaction, however, those who venture into sale of phones and its accessories were more satisfied than others. As a result of this, this study suggests that governmental organisations, non-governmental organisation and other concern bodies should encourage Nigerian youths, through the provision of funds, to venture into ICT informal sector jobs, especially sale of phones and sale of phone accessories as they increase youth wellbeing, enhance nature of work and gives a positive feeling towards their jobs.

Keywords: *Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Informal Sector, Job Satisfaction, Youths.*



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INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Development Policy (NYDP, 2001) asserted that the youths are not only a foundation, but pillars of a society; their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development of a nation. They are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, and active and the most productive phase of life as citizens as buttressed by child psychologists. The youth are also most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of socio-economic, emotion and other aspects (Anasi, 2010). Furthermore, the youths serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. From the foregoing, it may be safe to say that youths are the greatest asset of any nation. Therefore, special attention should be given to youth's in order to take advantage of opportunities for innovation, growth and economic prosperity.

However, one of the vital socio-economic challenges in Nigeria is youth unemployment. A contributor to this milieu is the porosity of the Nigerian labour market that undoubtedly of considerable concern to researchers and policy makers (Adewusi 2015; Bamidele, 2010; Fapohunda, 2012; Kalejaiye 2014; Okafor 2010, 2011). Specifically, it has been confirmed that employers now take advantage of the high level of unemployment (Oya, 2008). This can be linked to the obsession to maximise profits and reduce cost of labour by employers (Adewumi, 1997; Okafor, 2005 and Oya, 2008). In a quick reaction to the foregoing, the informal sectors have been seen as veritable avenue to provide employment opportunities for the populace who cannot procure fair wage employment in the formal sector (Garrido, Badshah and Coward, 2009).

The amplification of the informal sector in developed as well as developing countries has captured the attention of researchers, development/policy analysts, government officials, international agencies and other relevant policy makers (ILO, 2002). This is as a result of their benefit which includes amongst others, a vital source of employment and income for the poor, the seedbed of local entrepreneurship, and a potent instrument in the campaign to combat poverty and social exclusion and of course, economic growth and development which any country cannot toy with. In Africa, Nigeria is leading in informal sector activities due to its enormous population of about 172 million and decades of poor economic performance denoted by a high unemployment rate of 12.9% and soaring poverty incidence of up to 54% (CBN, 2012). It was against this background this study examines ICT informal sector jobs and satisfaction among youths in Ile-Ife, Osun state.

The emergence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has, to some extent, ameliorated certain socio-economic problems caused by the fast growing population in Nigeria. The belief that ICT provides opportunities to individuals for learning, skill acquisition or development, and job opportunities rely on the fact that there is access to diverse ICT tools. These tools provide limitless information on each aspect of human endeavour such as commerce, education, job and socio-political systems, thereby engaging people of the nation. There are

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myriads of ICT-based businesses which can be started with very little take off funds. Some of these include: the Internet, business centres, cybercafés, computer training centres, computer services and repairs, handset services and repairs, programming, cable and satellite TV installations. (Oladunjoye and Audu 2012; Olasanmi, Ayoola and Kareem, 2012).

Irrespective of the sector within which the Nigerian populace fetches their economic gains, the question of whether they are satisfied with their job is of paramount importance. This is because satisfaction is a stable evaluation of how the job meets the employee's needs, wants, or expectations (Fisher, 2003). In addition, previous studies such as Himes and Olmo (2002), Achimugu et al (2009), Olasanmi et al, (2012), Oladunjoye and Audu (2012), Ibrahim and Ahmad (2012), and Oye et al, (2013) establish that ICT has created many vocational opportunities such as networking, programming, repair and maintenance, phone sales, computer sales, accessory sales, document processing, and phone calls service. However, employment generated from ICT and its effect on job satisfaction has not been empirically investigated. It was against this background this study examines ICT informal jobs and satisfaction among the youths of Ile-Ife, Osun state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ICT and Informal Sector Jobs

ICT is extremely important in generating intensely diverging forces for the young labours in the world of work. It has transformed the finances of many sectors by decreasing the importance of scale, facilitating an increase in employment opportunities in small and medium scale enterprises (SME), and creating skilled employment opportunities through a series of ICT training initiatives (Morris, 2000).

Olaniyi (2009) argued that ICT's, specifically the mobile phone devices, had positive impact on the micro-enterprise of rural households. He further stressed that ICTs have impacted the economic, social relationship and an increase in negotiating financial power of different families. More so, it has equally improved the awareness of people about ICT's potential for trade. The efforts of the government, the telecommunication and banking industries have made tremendous impact on the society and have brought developmental benefits more to the rural areas and the unemployed youths both at the national and state level. This is because many of the youths are now entrepreneur and also employ shop assistants who they pay wages. Thus, ICT have in a way reduced social insecurity and youth unrest as a result of the youths being gainfully employed.

There are many types of jobs, requiring various types of education, skills and experience, in the ICT sector. The acquisition of training, skills, and experience sought by employers helps youths in getting jobs and assists in career advancement (Muritala, 2005). Some of the ICT informal sector jobs are:

1. **Mobile Phone Repairs and Computer Assembly:** Mobile phone repairs as well as computer maintenance and assembly continue to be important areas of job training and

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employment for youths in several regions around the world (ILO, 2012). In cities throughout the developing world, the ICT and electronics markets where mobile phones are sold and repaired serve as several people's first interactions with technology as well as a gigantic source of employment and entrepreneurship. There are numerous initiatives that offer youths skills training in device repairs, local employment opportunities, as well as business training for local micro enterprises.

2. **Computer Networking Specialists/Computer Systems Technologists:** They are specialists who plan, control, and troubleshoot Local and Wide Area Networks (LANS and WANS). They also help in solving users' problems.
3. **Computer Sales/Services:** These are sales representatives that sell a variety of goods and services, and provide mechanical support and repairs for the goods that are sold.
4. **Web Application Developers/Site Programmers:** They are responsible for creating web pages for the World Wide Web (WWW) and for internal networks. They are also responsible for the design, development, maintenance, and success of websites.
5. **Computer Programmers/Computer Analysts:** Those that involved in computer programming create, modify, and test the forms, scripts, and code that tell computers what to do. Computer analysts use knowledge, understanding and skills to solve computer problems and ensure that computer technology meets the specific needs of organizations, institutions and the society at large.

The bone of contention here is to identify the form of ICT informal sector jobs youths in Osun state, specifically in Ile-ife, engage in.

Information and Communication Technology, Informal Sectors and Job Satisfaction

Spector (1997) describes job satisfaction has a global emotional reaction that individuals has on his/her job. Job satisfaction has to do with a person's perception and evaluation of his/her job. This perception is influenced by the person's exceptional factors such as needs, values, career ladder and nature of work, among other things (Spector, 1997). Individuals evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors which they regard as being vital to them. Meanwhile, Leung's (2011) affirms that employees who were satisfied with their job tended to have a highly permeable limit at home and a highly flexible work atmosphere. On the contrary, people who experience low job satisfaction were faced with a high level of burnout.

Kacherki and Kannur (2011) assert that library professionals expressed low level of job satisfaction in ICT environment. That is, users find it difficult to locate the information important to their needs due to proliferation of electronic resources. More so, Mondal (2014) found out that working in ICT environment provides professionals higher level of job satisfaction. Bellary. Sadlapur and Naik (2015) studied the impact of ICT on job satisfaction among Library Professionals. The findings reveal that majority of the library professionals love to work with ICT in library field. This is because job satisfaction of the library professionals totally depends

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on the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the country. Thus, ICT plays a major role in the job satisfaction of library professionals.

Moreover, the increase in the use of ICT application in employment flows may likely changed the labour market. It is established in the literature that ICT users hold jobs of higher quality and earn higher wages than non-users. In addition, ICT is particularly used by educated workers, signifying that skill advantages play a vital role in explaining employment structure and wages (Bardolet, Velazco, and Sellens, 2010). Hence, it is still uncertain whether these observed best jobs or higher wages are a result of ICT skills (Borghans and Ter-Weel, 2005). What is clear is that the acceptance of ICT has been accompanied by an increase in intellectual demands, autonomy improvements, hierarchical control reductions, job quality increases, and better wages (Autor, Levy, and Murnane, 2003). However, Castells, (2004) asserts that the acceptance of ICT and knowledge streams workers feel happier at work.

Brinkley (2006) argued that, under the assumption that the quality of work employees influences their well-being, found that a good job skills match was positively associated with high levels of job and life satisfaction and good perceptions of the current job, and negatively associated with health interference with work. Workers who were not satisfied with their jobs were more likely to perceive their posts as a way to pay the bills rather than feeling trapped in their jobs. They found that knowledge work is a divisive force in today's economy: knowledge workers did report better overall health, more job role challenge, autonomy, social capital, job satisfaction, and less absence than other workers. Meanwhile, Rami (2016) discovered that women who engaged in informal sector jobs in India may discontinue their jobs. This is linked to the low income received by women in the informal sector.

From the foregoing, it is clear that almost all the aforementioned studies focused majorly on the job satisfaction of employees working in a technologically enabled environment. However, none of these studies have been able to examine the job satisfaction of those who actually engaged in ICT businesses, especially in the informal sector. This is the lacuna this study intended to bridge.

Theoretical Underpinning

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory focuses on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms, and beliefs, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour of human (Scott, 2004). Different components of institutional theory explain how these elements are created, diffused, adopted, and adapted over space and time; and how they fall into decline and disuse. Scott (1995) indicates that, in order to survive, organisations must conform to the rules and belief systems prevailing in the environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

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Relating this to the study at hand, organizations identified by Scott (1995) can be likened to the youths, while the rules and belief system prevailing in the environment depicts the realities given to them by the form of ICT informal jobs they venture into. These realities are the salient features of their jobs namely: wellbeing, nature of work, feeling towards work and prospect for business expansion. They are the institutional realities and principles held by and imposed on youths by the form of ICT informal sector jobs they venture into. Therefore, the form of ICT informal sector business ventured into by these youths will determine whether they will be satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design: This study was descriptive in nature. It adopted a cross-sectional research design. In addition to this, survey method is used for the study.

Study Area: The location for this study was Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Ile-Ife is an ancient town in Yoruba history, and it is regarded as the cradle of civilization. It is believed among Yorubas that the creation of the world started from Ile-Ife. Hence, it is popularly referred to as “Land of the Source”. Ile-Ife is surrounded by rural settlements where agriculture is the principal occupation. Other occupations in the town include trading, farming, artisans, civil and public service, self-employment, petrol filling station, and so on. More so, Ile-Ife is blessed with different markets such as New Market located at Sabo, where varieties of foodstuffs are sold, Mayfair market, known to be a place where goods such as mobile phones and accessories, computers and accessories are bought and sold. Another market is located at Obafemi Awolowo University Campus where various items of goods are bought and sold. Such goods include: stationaries, snacks, foodstuffs, mobile phones and accessories, computers and accessories, relaxation centres, among others.

Study population, Sample size and Sampling Technique

The population for the study was all the youths in Osun state. The population for this study comprised Nigerian youths who engaged in ICT business opportunities in the informal sector in Ile-Ife, Osun State. The sample comprises five (5) major ICT centres in Ile-Ife, which includes Mayfair, Aderemi, Urban day, Obafemi Awolowo University Student Union Building, and O.A.U Hall of Residence. The locations were selected because they have the largest ICT centres in Ile-Ife. As a result of the forgoing, non-probability sampling techniques, specifically purposive sampling technique was used to identify the needed respondent for this study.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis: The study made use of qualitative data. Questionnaires were used to elicit quantitative data. The questionnaire made use of variables identified by the literature as regards the informal jobs inherent in the ICT sector. In addition, the study adapted the scale of Spector (1997) on job satisfaction. According to him, measures of job satisfaction are promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, relationship with coworkers, nature of work, well-being and communication. However, this

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study dealt with youths who owned and controlled these ICT jobs in the in formal sector. Therefore, variables such as supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, coworkers and communication were not relevant for this study. However, theirs study adapted other variables such as Promotion (as prospect for business expansion), Operating conditions (as feeling towards the job), Nature of the job and well-being

The method of data analysis for this study involved descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics made use of frequency distribution and simple percentage to represent data obtained from the field work. However, inferential statistics made use of regression analysis to determine the cause and effect relationships between variables of interest. This was achieved through the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

Four academicians, specifically two sociologists and psychologist each examine the research instrument in order to determine its degree of validity. The suggestions made by these scholars were effected before the major field work. In addition, a pilot study of conducted among twenty (20) of the targeted respondent. The reliability of the responses following from the pilot study, especially the 21 – items measuring job satisfaction, as tested through Cronbach’s Alpha. Fortunately, the Cronbach’s Alpha stood at 76% as shown in the table below:

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.762	21

Source: SPSS Output, 2017.

The benchmark, which was adopted, was that of George and Mallery (2003) provides the following rules of thumb: “_ > .9 – Excellent, _ > .8 – Good, _ > .7 – Acceptable, _ > .6 – Questionable, _ > .5 – Poor and _ < .5 – Unacceptable” (p. 231). Therefore, all scales employed in this study were reliable. Therefore, the reliability level for the job satisfaction scale is “acceptable”.

Ethical Consideration: Ethical considerations such as anonymity, privacy, voluntariness and non-maleficence were adhered to during the course of the research work.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 2.0 revealed that those who were mostly surveyed are the males (58.9%) especially those who are in the age range of 25 – 29. Furthermore, most respondents were mostly single (53.6%) whose highest educational qualification is at the tertiary level (66.1%). Lastly, most of the surveyed youths earn less than ₦50,000 from their ICT informal sector jobs.

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Table 2: Socio-demographic Features of Respondents

Features	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Age	>25	28	16.7
	25-29	75	44.6
	30-34	38	22.6
	<34	27	16.1
	Total	168	100.0
Sex	Male	99	58.9
	Female	69	41.1
	Total	168	100.0
Marital Status	Single	90	53.6
	Married	76	45.2
	Separated	2	1.2
	Total	168	100.0
Highest Educational Qualification	Primary	2	1.2
	Secondary	54	32.1
	Tertiary	111	66.1
	None	1	.6
	Total	168	100.0
Average Monthly Income	> ₦50,000	99	58.9
	₦51,000-₦100,000	40	23.8
	₦101,000-₦150,000	14	8.3
	₦151,000-₦200,000	5	3.0
	< ₦200,000	10	6.0
	Total	168	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Table 3: ICT informal Sector Jobs Ventured into by Youths of the study area

ICT informal Sector Jobs	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Phone Sales	No	114	67.9
	Yes	54	32.1
	Total	168	100.0
Computer Sales	No	144	85.7
	Yes	24	14.3
	Total	168	100.0
Phone Repair	No	134	79.8
	Yes	34	20.2



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	Total	168	100.0
Computer Repair	No	134	79.8
	Yes	34	20.2
	Total	168	100.0
Sales of Recharge Cards	No	95	56.5
	Yes	73	43.5
	Total	168	100.0
Sales of Phone Accessories	No	126	75.0
	Yes	42	25.0
	Total	168	100.0
Sales of Computer Accessories	No	155	92.3
	Yes	13	7.7
	Total	168	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Table 3 shows that, among the surveyed youths, 32.1% dealt with phone sales only, while 14.3% and 20.2% dealt with computer sales and phone repair respectively. Also, 20.2%, 43.5% and 25.0% of the respondents ventured in to computer repair, sales of recharge cards and sales of phone accessories respectively. Lastly, 7.7% of the respondent ventured into sale of computer accessories. From the forgoing, it is right to say that majority of these youths focused majorly on the sale of recharge cards. This fell into the ICT informal jobs categorization of Muritala (2005). However, it was discovered that some of these respondents ventured into one or more ICT informal sector jobs. This was displayed on the table below

Table 4: Combinations of ICT Informal Sector Jobs

ICT Informal Sector Jobs	Frequency	Percent
Phone Sales	21	12.5
Computer Sales	2	1.2
Phone Repair	21	12.5
Computer Repair	5	3.0
Sales of Cards	46	27.4
Sale of Phone Accessories	8	4.8
Computer Accessories	1	.6
Sale of Recharge Cards and Phone Accessories	18	10.7
Sale of Computer and Computer Accessories	20	11.9
Sale of Phone and Phone Accessories	26	15.5
Total	168	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017.



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Furthermore, it was discovered that 12.5%, 1.2% and 12.5% of the respondents ventured in to phone sales, computer sales and phone repair only respectively. Also, it was discovered that most of the surveyed youth ventured into sale of recharge cards (27.4%) only, while 4.8% and 0.6% of the respondent ventured into sale of phone accessories, sale of computer accessories. However, 10.7% of the respondent dealt with both sale of recharge cards and phone accessories only. On the same vein, 11.9% ventured into sale of computer and its accessories while 15.5% of the respondent also sell phones and phone accessories.

Table 5: Relationship between ICT informal Sector Jobs and Job Satisfaction

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Well-Being		Nature of Work		Feeling towards Job		Expansion Prospects	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
(Constant)	2.709	.000	2.741	.000	3.141	.000	3.329	.000
Phone Sales	.251	.004	.051	.336	.013	.872	.037	.695
Computer Sales	.009	.954	.097	.308	.252	.033	.001	.994
Phone Repair	-.032	.760	.113	.033	.185	.052	-.042	.723
Computer Repair	.140	.269	.032	.685	.061	.619	.133	.349
Sales of Recharge Cards	.055	.588	.088	.161	-.011	.914	-.138	.224
Sales of Phone Accessories	.016	.850	.065	.217	.233	.005	.126	.188
Sales of Computer Accessories	.167	.303	-.090	.371	.154	.330	.191	.297

Source: SPSS Output, 2017.

Table 5 examines that relationship between ICT informal sector jobs and job satisfaction among the youths. It was revealed that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship $B=0.0251$, $p=0.004<0.05$) between phone sales and well-being. This implies that for every of those youth who venture into phone sales, there will be a 25% corresponding increase their general wellbeing ($B=0.113$, $p=0.033<0.05$). Also, there was a positive significant relationship between phone repair and nature of work. This suggests that as more and more youth ventures into phone repair, there will be an 11% corresponding enhancement in the nature of their work. Meanwhile, there was also a positive significant relationship between computer sales ($B=0.252$, $p=0.033$), phone repair ($B=0.185$, $p=0.052$), sale of phone accessories ($B=0.233$, $p=0.005<0.05$) and feeling towards job. This is to say that as more and more youth venture into computer sales, phone repair and sales of phone accessories, there will be a 25%, 16% and 23% positive increase in their feelings towards their ICT informal sector jobs. However, none of the ICT informal sector jobs had a significant relationship with business expansion prospects.

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Table 6: Direct Relationship between ICT informal sector Jobs and Job Satisfaction

ICT Informal Sector Jobs	Job Satisfaction	
	B	Sig.
(Constant)	2.904	.000
Phone Sales	.087	.042
Computer Sales	.111	.231
Phone Repair	.084	.184
Computer Repair	.076	.321
Sales of Recharge Cards	.030	.621
Sales of Phone Accessories	.107	.037
Sales of Computer Accessories	.068	.487

Source: SPSS Output, 2017.

Table 6 shows that there exists a positive significant relationship between phone sales ($B=0.87$, $p=0.042<0.05$), sales of phone accessories ($B=0.107$, $p=0.037<0.05$) and job satisfaction. By implication, as more and more youth ventures into sale of phones and its accessories, job satisfaction will be enhanced by 8% and 11% respectively. However, there was no significant relationship between computer sales, phone repair computer repair, sales of recharge cards, sales of computer accessories and job satisfaction. This corroborates the assumption of Institutional theory which argued that the form of ICT informal sector business ventured into by these youths will determine whether they will be satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs.

Table 7: ICT informal Sector Jobs and Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	Sig.
(Constant)	2.866	.000
ICT Jobs	.682	.001**

Source: SPSS Output, 2017.

Lastly, table 7 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between ICT informal sector jobs and Job satisfaction ($B=0.682$, $p=0.001<0.05$). This implies that for each of the youth who ventures into ICT informal sector Jobs, there exist the tendencies for increase in job satisfaction by 68.0%. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The informal sector is mainly a cash and indirect sector, and will remain like that for the foreseeable future. Few will move out of the sector to take up formal employment, and few businesses will grow to become formal. Although there is developing consensus that ICT plays an important role in economic development and the enhancement of business activities, it is evident from the results above that sales of mobile phones and computers (laptops and desktops), recharge cards, mobile phone accessories, computer accessories, mobile phone repairs, and

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computer repairs (laptops and desktops) are common among youths in the informal sector which have helped to reduce the rate of unemployment and present a way of creating wealth. However, it is evident from the above that those who ventured into phone sales and phone accessories sales are those who were satisfied with their jobs. In light of this, this paper recommends the following:

1. Youths should embrace the opportunities in ICT informal jobs because such jobs give a pleasurable state of mind, especially sales of phone and sales of phone accessories.
2. Workshops and seminars should be organized by relevant bodies to educate and upgrade the technical skills of youth in the area of ICT.
3. This study also suggests that governmental organisations, non-governmental organisation and other concern bodies should encourage the Nigerian youth, through the provision of funds, to venture into ICT informal sector jobs, especially sale of phones and sale of phone accessories as they increase youth wellbeing, enhance nature of work and gives a positive feeling towards their jobs.

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