
**‘CREATING YOUR OWN REALITY’:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFESTYLES, HOPES,
FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS OF
URBAN NIGERIAN YOUTH**

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INDEX

1	<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	4
2	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	6
2.1	OBJECTIVES	6
2.2	METHODS	7
3	<u>FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</u>	8
3.1	WHO IS A YOUNG PERSON?	8
3.2	TYPES OF NIGERIAN YOUTH	8
3.2.1	WHAT MUSIC KEEPS THEM TICKING?	9
3.2.2	DRESS	10
3.2.3	DRESS WESTERN, EAT AFRICAN	11
3.3	FEELINGS ABOUT WORK	13
3.3.1	DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORKPLACE	13
3.4	‘WHO HAS STOLEN MY UNDERWEAR’? THE SPECTRE OF UNEMPLOYMENT	15
3.5	HOW UNEMPLOYMENT AFFECTS YOUTH LIFESTYLE	16
3.5.1	POOR EATING AND DRESSING BEHAVIOUR	16
3.5.2	HEALTH IMPAIRING BEHAVIOURS	16
3.5.3	YOUTH RESTLESSNESS	17
3.5.4	UNDEREMPLOYMENT	18
3.5.5	JEALOUSY AND ENVY	18
3.5.6	HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE THE UNEMPLOYED	19
3.5.7	AN INFECTION CALLED ‘INFERIORITY COMPLEX’	19
3.5.8	THE DEVALUATION OF EDUCATION	20
3.5.9	MISUSE OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE BY THE UNEMPLOYED	20
3.5.10	FANTASY LIVING	20
3.5.11	CRIMINAL LIFESTYLE ASSOCIATED WITH UNEMPLOYMENT	20
3.5.12	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE	21
3.6	SOCIAL INTERACTIONS	21
3.6.1	SAME SEX INTERACTIONS	21
3.6.2	RELIGIOUS FRIENDS	22
3.6.3	WHAT DO YOUNG MEN THINK YOUNG WOMEN TALK ABOUT WHEN THEY MEET AND VICE VERSA?	23
3.6.4	MIXED SEX INTERACTIONS	23
3.6.5	PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS	24
3.6.6	INTERACTIONS WITH ADULTS	25
3.7	DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF YOUTHFUL LIFE	25
3.7.1	GODFATHERISM, SPONSORSHIP AND CONNECTION	25
3.7.2	DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUNG PERSONS	26
3.7.3	FEDERAL CHARACTER	26
3.7.4	THE POOR CONDUCT OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS	26
3.7.5	LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN UNIVERSITY ADMISSION PROCESS	26
3.7.6	HOW TO SURVIVE AS AN UNEMPLOYED YOUTH	27
3.7.7	THE COMPETITIVE NATURE OF NIGERIAN LIFE	27

3.7.8	PEER PRESSURE	28
3.7.9	MANY ARE IMPATIENT	28
3.7.10	DANGERS OF CULTISM	29
3.7.11	‘NO SUITORS: THE MEN ARE NOT COMING FORWARD’	29
3.8	OPTIMISTIC ASPECTS OF YOUTHFUL LIFE	30
3.8.1	THE DAWN OF THE COMPUTER ERA	30
3.8.2	THE INTRODUCTION OF PRE-DEGREE AND REMEDIAL COURSES	30
3.8.3	‘WITH GOD THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT’	30
3.8.4	RETIRING AGE	31
3.8.5	CURRENT TOUGHNESS HARDENS US UP A BETTER TOMORROW	31
3.8.6	WE’RE YOUNG, TIME IS STILL AHEAD	31
3.8.7	ACQUIRING GOOD EDUCATION	32
3.8.8	GOOD HOME, GOOD JOB, GOOD HUSBAND	33
3.9	SOURCES OF PESSIMISM	33
3.9.1	THE FEAR OF UNEMPLOYMENT	33
3.9.2	LACK OF INTEGRITY OF SOME TEACHERS AND LECTURERS	34
3.9.3	THE PROBLEM WITH NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES	35
3.9.4	THE ENDEMIC AND INTRACTABLE NATURE OF CORRUPTION	36
3.9.5	THE INFLUX OF IMPORTED PRODUCTS	36
3.9.6	NEPA AS SOURCE OF PESSIMISM	37
3.10	WHAT DO THEY THINK OF THE FUTURE?	37
3.11	WHAT DO YOUNG PERSONS ASPIRE TO BE?	38
3.11.1	RICH FAMILY BREADWINNERS	39
3.11.2	FABULOUSLY RICH PERSONS	40
3.12	THE PURCHASING POWER OF YOUNG PERSONS AND HOW THEY SPEND THEIR MONEY?	40
3.12.1	FOOD AND DRINK	42
3.12.2	MUSIC AND INTERNET SURFING AND GSM	42
3.12.3	CLOTHES	42
3.12.4	SCHOOL ITEMS	42
3.12.5	BUYING THINGS FOR A FUTURE HOME	43
3.13	YOUNG PERSONS ROLE MODELS OR INDIVIDUALS THEY HOLD IN HIGH ESTEEM	43
3.13.1	WHAT DO YOUNG PERSONS WANT TO SEE IN ROLE MODELS?	43
3.13.2	FAMILY	44
3.13.3	RELIGIOUS LEADERS	44
3.13.4	NIGERIAN LEADERS, STATESMEN AND OTHER NATIONAL FIGURES	44
3.13.5	EXTERNAL MUSICIANS AND POP STARS	45
3.13.6	MUSICIANS FOOTBALLERS AND POP STARS	45
3.13.7	EXTERNAL PERSONS	45
3.13.8	ACADEMICS/THEORISTS	46
3.13.9	FICTIONAL CHARACTERS	46
3.14	FAVOURITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES	46
4	CONCLUSIONS	48

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is based on information obtained from 24 focus groups in six geographically dispersed cities in Nigeria. Separate discussion groups were held for men and women separately. All participants were age 15-24, and were mainly students, unemployed school leavers, self employed persons and others under trade apprenticeship. Field work took place in October 2003.

The study sought out to understand the lifestyle, as well as the aspirations and hopes of young persons. The youth can be classified broadly into the high class (the hommies); and the low class (the Amakwu youth) with the latter forming the majority. Dressing was seen as very crucial in the construction of youth lifestyle. Dressing was seen as a means of communication, as a means of sending a message to others; with many stating that 'your mode of dressing announces who you are'. Many, particular females, concluded that they may not have time for persons whose dressing does not 'sell him' well. In terms of preference, most preferred western dressing for most situations for its smartness. In a sense, therefore, western dress is an essential characteristic of urban, educated, young persons. In terms of food, both young men and women prefer eating their ethnic food at home. However, whenever they went out to posh restaurants, or fast food facilities, women were known to eat something different, often western food, while the men insist on 'going traditional'. On the whole, women loved 'light food' to keep them in shape as many preferred slim bodies (Lekpa).

Young persons who work, the feeling of being employed was 'good' and self-fulfilling and most considered themselves lucky. In a country of ever increasing number of unemployed graduates, being employed gave a young person respect in the community. For many youngsters who work, the excitement of 'leaving home in the morning and coming back in the evening' was what made the heart beat. Many enjoyed the thrill of meeting other persons at the workplace, and for some others, an opportunity of putting on their best clothes to work since 'the way you dress to the office...earn you respect'. For many without jobs, the spectre of joblessness was humiliating. Many were at pains to point out how unemployed youth may often be wrongly accused by friends and family members of petty thieving of small household items

Youth lifestyle was found to be affected by the prevailing climate of pervasive youth unemployment. Eating and dressing behaviours were reported to be adversely affected. An important effect of unemployment is the loss of self-worth and a feeling of being inferior. Respondents reported that, in such desperate situation you only buy cheap things: cheap food, and second-hand clothing since 'you cannot buy designer' products. Some of the effects may be health impairing. Young women may engage in risky transactional sex for survival by trading sex for money, jobs, or other material gains. It was obvious that many knew the risks associated with such behaviours and dreaded the consequences. A participant noted: *you will find yourself having sickness... and all the men will run away from you. You know your life is finished.* For young men, unemployment can easily send young men into engaging in criminal behaviour. Youth idleness could easily degenerate from touting, to armed robbery.

There are several obstacles which young persons face. The most common was the phenomenon of 'godfatherism': and that without a 'sponsor' it is very difficult for a young person to succeed. Without 'connection' you would find it difficult to find a job, gain admission to university, or gain access to or support from government. A key segment of the 15-24 age

groups are those in school. A great many young persons are disappointed at the poor conduct of public examinations often leading to mass cancellation of results, lack of transparency in university admission process, poor quality of teaching in secondary schools and universities as well as pitiable teaching and learning facilities. For young persons who are self-employed, the influx of cheap imported products that stifle local initiatives was a sore point. The erratic supply of electricity was cited as a main problem for young hairdressers and tailors who relied on power.

While on the whole, young persons were pessimistic about their future; some identified some areas of hope. Some cite the dawn of the computer age, the increase in the number of pre-degree courses, government's new directive on retiring age, and the toughness of the average Nigeria as pointers of hope in the future when one considers a participant's view that: 'when you're young, time is still ahead'. For those with no university education, the topmost immediate ambition of most young persons is to enter university. People respond to the highly competitive entry conditions by either learn hard or cheat the system.

A major difference was observed regarding what young persons aspire to be. Unlike men who wanted to work in high-ranking money making positions, some women wanted to work in a government ministry, having an office with my own 'seat'. Young persons held some pop stars, statesmen and other personalities both Nigerian and foreign in high esteem. The list compiled by female participants was limited, compared to men. Women concentrated mainly on politicians and female artistes, unlike men who included academicians, theorists and even fictional characters. However, the persons most young persons admired most and wanted to imitate were not celebrities but ordinary family members: mothers, fathers, brothers or sometimes church members whose lives they have found challenging and worth emulating.

The group possess limited purchasing power given the key constituents: students, unemployed youth, undergoing training or apprenticeship. Women, on the whole, spent their monies on 'their bodies', mainly on clothes, shoes, perfumes, creams, and hair products. Students may also spend on CDs, and on items to decorate their rooms. Men do spend mainly on food and drinks for themselves and their girlfriends, and on cheap clothing. The initial and recurrent cost of owning a cell phone was also noted as a major source of spending. Men's relaxation activities included drinking. It is important to note that while men almost always wanted to relax with women, most of the women felt they could relax without the company of men'. Reading of novels as a means of relaxation was reported by women only.

On the whole, the evidence shows that irrespective of sex and city of residence, young persons have similar dreams and aspirations: to obtain higher education, secure a good job, be married and have children, and most importantly be financially secure.

2 INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis on 'lifestyle' in health-behaviour studies. The lifestyle construct has its root in anthropology, sociology, and clinical psychology, where it describes patterns of behaviour that endure and are based in some combination of cultural heritage, social relationships, geographic and socioeconomic circumstances, and personality. This is because health-related behaviour is seen increasingly not as isolated acts under the autonomous control of the individual, but rather as socially conditioned, culturally imbedded, economically constrained patterns of living. Green and Kreuter (1999)¹ define lifestyle as the *culturally, socially, economically, and environmentally conditioned complex of actions characteristic of an individual, group, or community as a pattern of habituated behaviour over time that is health related but not necessarily health directed*.

2.1 Objectives

This study explores the lifestyle of young persons 15-24 years, the target group for SFH's youth behaviour change interventions. The study investigates how young persons feel about their work (or lack thereof), aspects of life they find difficult and those that give them pleasure, their future aspirations and how optimistic or pessimistic they are. We also explored their challenges, and what they wanted to be in life. Finally the study provides some understanding of social interactions of young persons, their leisure activities, and the type of person they admired most.

The ultimate objective was to provide research information on the life-style and aspirations of young persons and written for internal use along the following lines:

- Since *Gold Circle* condoms are used mainly by young persons, the information will assist the current drive to re-position *Gold Circle* as a condom to create a positive and socio-culturally relevant brand that would strongly appeal to youths aged 20 - 24 years drawing from their life-styles.
- To provide detailed background information on young persons to enhance the development of characters and issues for radio drama, youth magazines, or youth TV soap operas being considered by SFH

¹ (Lawrence W Green and Marshall W Kreuter, 1999 Health Promotion Planning: An Educational and Ecological Approach Mayfield Publishing Company, Mountain View, California. p507

2.2 Methods

The data upon which this report is written were obtained using focus group discussion methodology. There was a total of twenty four focus groups in six Nigerian cities (Lagos, Ibadan, Aba, Port Harcourt, Makurdi and Kano). Four focus group discussions (two for males and two for females) were held per city. The fieldwork took place in October, 2003. All discussions were conducted using Pidgin English in combination with the appropriate local language. Discussions were tape recorded and later transcribed in full. The number of participants per group ranged between eight and ten persons, and were all aged between 15 and 24 years.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Who is a young person?

To be able to design interventions for the youth there was the need for the young persons themselves to offer their own definitions of youth. Among both male and female participants, there was no agreement on who a young person is in terms of age. The suggested ages ranged from 12 to 28 years with some extending it to 40 years. The bulk however felt a young person was between 18 and 26 years. Many, however, felt that while age was important, it was not the only factor that characterized a young person. Apart from age, many argued that youthfulness can be viewed from behavioural patterns: mode of dressing (short skirts and jeans) with heavy make up and communication. In the south west, young persons no longer wear *Iro* and *Buba*.

Marriage was suggested by some as another distinguishing factor. Men, on the whole, agreed that those who are married can hardly be described as young, and similarly, '*as long as you're not married, you're a youth*'. The female participants were, however, not so unanimous. They pointed out that many females married at so young an age that they can still be described as young or even children.

3.2 Types of Nigerian youth

Participants, both males and females, were quick to point out that Nigerian youth can be distinguished according to 'classes'. Completely excluded from the category of Nigerian youth are notably that people whose birth or early socialization period was outside the shores of Nigeria. Participants argued strongly that such persons upon their return irrespective of their citizenship cannot be regarded as a typical Nigerian youth. Participants distinguished two main types of youth which in this reports are called 'the hommies' (upper class); and the 'Amakwu' (low class) youth. The hommies are from very rich homes. They were perceived as having rosy lives and were described as 'having good things for themselves'. This group is of two categories: those who were born abroad or have spent or do spend time overseas. It was the contention of many that this last group should not be described as Nigerian youth at all. The entire group was thought as 'not wanting to associate with others' not so wealthy because their behaviours were different from others. A male participant in Ibadan described the class divide: '*They may be riding in cars and spending their parents' money while the other youth who came from a poor home will just manage*'. Even in the universities they can be distinguished.

The 'Amakwu' youth are in the majority. They were described as coming from the working (or jobless) homes but mainly with parents from farming background. These are those from poor backgrounds, from rural areas (e.g. *Amakwu* village) where parents are likely to be farmers. They are always 'financially down'. Their education may be stunted or truncated and with that their ambitions because of poverty. They were described as 'facing education or businesses on their own without any support'. According to participants whereas youth of both groups may have the same aspiration of going to school that is further their education

the former's ambition is truncated because he or she does not have the financial means of actualizing such dreams.

It was obvious that participants perceived only two extreme ends: rich and the poor with no description of any in the middle, arguing that in Nigeria, a young person is either a 'hommy' or an 'Amakwu' youth. They insisted however, that, a typical Nigerian youth is certainly likely to be an 'Amakwu' youth. In Lagos, a male participant described the typical Nigerian youth: 'A youth who doesn't have good educational background, who doesn't have a house to live in, homeless, no food, nothing. In fact a typical Nigerian youth is living in abject poverty, he is on the street roaming about, no food, nothing. This is what a typical Nigerian youth looks like'. A participant from Port Harcourt collaborated thus:

A Nigerian youth is that person who is born into this part of the world.... He is born into a society where from the onset he learns that he has to survive; in a bid to survive he goes through life in a harsh way.

3.2.1 What music keeps them ticking?

It was agreed particularly among the discussion groups in Lagos that while some young persons still love 'African' music, the youth of today are not as interested in the traditional 'highlife' or *apala* music as they are for 'hip-hop, rap, R&B, Reggae and blues. The popularity of western music was expressed in all male and female focus groups in all cities. In Kano, however, some participants mentioned that Reggae was enjoyed mainly by those 'who smoke Indian hemp'. The popular musical idols mentioned included 50 Cents, and R. Kelly for both men and women, and Mariah Carey, Boyz to Men and Celine Dion for women. In terms of distinction, some participants suggested that males enjoyed Rap while females liked Blues. A few participants pointed out that music was associated with social class with youth from rich homes more likely to love rap music while those from poor homes may be more at home with *juju*, and *fuji*. This was so, they explained, because their 'chicks' were also more likely to enjoy similar brand of music. The majority were of the view however that the average Nigerian youth preferred foreign music. A participant in Port Harcourt summed up:

Talk of the American Stars, like 50 Cents, Michael Jackson, Puff Daddy. We tend to know their bio-data, know everything about them more than our own indigenous stars. Some are even ashamed to identify themselves with their cultural music. So if you ask me I will say that an average Nigerian youth is more interested in music that comes from overseas.

A few participants, mainly men, insisted that they loved only the native music.

Young persons who said they were Christians preferred gospel music because of its perceived transforming nature. A male participant in Lagos explained: '*if you listen to the wording, you appreciate it, it gets to your brain, it stays there, it goes down to your heart, you meditate on it, that's what I believe*'. Such participants described other types of music as 'worldly' and most of the time, profane.

3.2.2 Dress

Dressing is an essential distinguishing characteristic of youth lifestyle. This is even more so among Nigerians who are considered to be among the best-dressed people on earth. A participant from Makurdi aptly stated: *Right now what is important as a young man of this age is what he wears*. It was emphasized by both males and females that dressing was a means of communication; *your mode of dressing announces who you are*. A participant noted that one does not merely dress to cover his or her body but ‘you dress to send out a message to people out there’. Many female participants agreed that they judged boys by what they wore. Sometimes they ‘size men up’ and conclude by their mode of dressing that they wore weaklings who needed not waste their time with them. An Aba female participant summed it up: *‘your appearance shows what you are’*.

Most participants agreed that they dressed to be part of a group and have the feeling of belonging as noted by a male from Kano: ‘youths don’t normally dress with their own mentality or absorption; they dress according to what they see’. The impact of peer pressure on dressing was clearly demonstrated. In terms of dressing many in Ibadan were of the view that one has ‘to flow with the world’, and that as a young person you need to be contemporary in your dressing. Many of the young women stated that said they liked wearing jeans. Others mentioned by women included spaghetti, tiny hand, body hug; see through; hipsters; crop top, and other modes of what a participant described as ‘skimpy things’. A few were at pains to see the traditional Nigerian dressing give way to ‘part dresses and costumes’ all in the name of modernization.

Most respondents (male and female) showed their preference for western dressing over traditional ones. The reasons included convenience and fashion. Many participants felt that western dressing was more convenient and more comfortable than the traditional ones given the climatic conditions: A Lagos participant explained: *‘when you put on agabda or native it will cover your hand and leg, but when you put on singlet you will feel free and comfortable’* (Ikeja, Lagos, male). In Ibadan a male participant explained: *‘As for me I like shirts and jeans, it allows me to be free when moving and be smart when I’m working’*. Another stated in a rather aesthetic manner:

I like jeans and T-shirts, I love wearing T-shirts a lot, because it enables me to express myself well. For young women, wearing trousers was particularly as it makes one to move about easily.

Many argued that wearing trousers was for dual purpose: it makes you smart; it also enables you to ‘climb motor bikes’. For example you dress ‘casual but sexy’ when you are on campus or not going anywhere. The young women argued that the underlying feature in all their dressing was to look young or even younger. A participant in Port Harcourt explained: *Everybody wants to look like a baby. Nobody wants to look old’* but when going to church they preferred skirts ‘with big hats’ to make one look smart.

Western dressing also identifies the traditionalists from the modernists. Some felt that a young man may be thought of as having an ‘inferiority complex’ if he went about putting on *buba* and *sokoto*. In Kano, some believed that in terms of dressing, young persons who have attended school dress mainly western, while those who have never attended school ‘go traditional’. It was clarified however that they wanted to be formal at certain functions mainly

parties and church services. However, a few disagreed insisting that proper native dresses (the full piece) such as *agbada* and *fila* make you look 'corporate'. In Kano, in particular, participants were of the view that a typical Hausa youth wears *babban-riga* *Cafian* or *Tazarche*. Young men in Kano prefer to dress without wearing a cap. For men, the wearing of footballers T shirts is also popular, particularly in Kano but the love for jeans was everywhere for both men and women. Many young men had preference for baggy jeans.

The dressing was summarized thus by a participant in Port Harcourt:

Most Nigerian youth as in males like going in jeans, T shirts and trainers to match. For girls they are mostly in these short jeans they call dirty colour jeans, and these tiny sleeveless shirt they call spaghetti.

Another finding was that many young persons sometimes do not match their dressing with the occasion. It was clarified that the mode of dressing depended on the situation. Some participants were of the view that some young people 'over dress' putting on 'hommies' even when it was hot. Others explained at length that people often intentionally overdress in order to have 'doors open' for them given that in Nigeria people often look at your dress: *'If you put on a suit to a place, they will try to listen to you; they will give you your respect'*.

It must be noted that women in particular dress differently when they are on their own, e.g. in universities from when they are with parents; that youths may dress 'normal' and decently when at home where parents and other family members are around, but may do differently while they are away from home. This was particularly highlighted in Aba and Port Harcourt.

3.2.3 Dress western, eat African

Youth may also be characterized by the food they love to eat. The findings showed that for men, while many preferred western dress it was not so with western food. Perhaps there was no area where the male youth expressed their 'Africaness' as in the area of food. 'Well I'm an African', a male participant in Ibadan reminded the group, and 'so I like eating African food ...like *eba* first thing in the morning'. A male participant of Edo state origin resident in Lagos did not hide his preference: *'Personally I'm crazy about pounded yam.... When you say pounded yam, I'm from Edo State. We eat pounded yam a lot. I'm crazy about that'*. Some participants were furious that nowadays where ever you go people want to force you to eat rice. 'I'm from Kwara State', a Lagos male participant proudly declared his origin *'so I like amala. Everywhere you go if they want to serve you they'll ask you, "will you eat rice"? It's not what is available; it's what you crave for we're talking about'*. In Kano, *tuwon shinkafa* was the traditional food mentioned.

Many of the men referred to western food as 'white' food, light in substance, and citing rice as an example they considered them all as junk food. 'I like African food' was a universal chorus'. In Lagos, the young men mentioned their delicacies as *amala*, *eba* with bitter leaf. A handful of participants felt African food to be 'too heavy'. In Ibadan a participant who was a sportsman explained: *'I like light food like rice. I'm a sportsman, so it will enable me to perform'*. One such person stated his menu: *'I love taking egg and bread in the morning, eba in the afternoon, then in the evening let's say tea'*. A few enjoyed fried rice. Beans were also mentioned as a very popular food.

It must be mentioned that, for the men some of them still preferred local food even when they visited posh restaurants or fast food joints. Some were of the view that even when they visit fast food restaurants such as Tantalizers, they still preferred 'to go local' by eating *amala*, *eba*, *enwedu*, *egusi* and assorted meat. A few however questioned, given the cost, the wisdom of going to such places to eat local food: 'if you want to eat *eba* you can buy some cups of *gari* and make *eba* in your house instead of going to Tantalizers to eat *eba*; it is very expensive'.

On the whole, food and dress in Nigeria take on a federal character with specific regions and communities noted for what they eat and what they wear.

In terms of food, women differ from men, as many of them appeared to love western food. Many female participants at all sites stated their liking for 'light foods' often from fast food shop including fried rice, spaghetti, as well as snacks. Favourite ice creams were 'Supreme' ice cream (Strawberry flavour). It was pointed out that unlike males who often stuck to specific types of food, females wanted to eat different things, especially when they are eating out: 'while males often want to go for what they are familiar with at home, females want new things'. In Port Harcourt, a participant put it plainly: *guys eat eba and females eat rice and cake*. In Makurdi, as in most sites, it was explained that light food enables women to 'keep their shapes'. It was clear that most of the women were conscious of their shape, and therefore wanted to be on light food so that those who are fat 'can loose weight'. Those who said they were in good shape and were 'Lekpas' (slim) wanted to remain so while others aspired to be so. Many women wondered why they should eat garri at restaurants since 'they were brought up with garri'.

Many of the women may even use food as an exhibit of social class; the more the variation, the higher the social class. That is why many will eat local food at home, when they are at parties, they may 'just want to impress our friends going for foreign foods'.

A closer look shows that many of the young men, despite their preference for western food, can only eat such foods infrequently because of the cost. They eat these 'delicacies' mostly when they are out with friends or occasionally give themselves a special treat at home. Thus, it is important to distinguish between what youth eat when they are at home and what they eat when they are out. Many mentioned that at home or in halls of residence (for students) they eat normal food. A participant in Aba explained:

On a normal day most of us...eat eba, garri, rice, normal average meals. Some days we can afford to buy fast food and all that. Otherwise we eat normal rice, yam and all that. If you come to higher institutions you can see people, they make soup, they make eba, they make all those things. So being youth mostly have to do with appearance. We like to appear very up-to date and all that, but when it comes to food you see most of us at fast food joints but it's not every day because we can't really afford to go there every-day. We eat normal Nigerian or African food, though we may have craving for foreign food (Aba).

It was noted that among female participants, there was no shared understanding of 'light food'. While some restricted it to fruits, spaghetti, noodles etc., others included rice, beans and even pounded yam. The latter group considered light in terms of 'quantity' rather than

food type. Again, a handful of women despised light food insisting that they enjoyed eating heavy food. One stated: 'as for me I cannot eat rice and say that I have eaten food'.

3.3 Feelings about work

With the exception of one or two participants who 'preferred to be at home and watch television all day', nearly all consider work essential. Those who were working described themselves lucky. It is interesting to note that, money was not the only reason why some participants worked. A male participant in Ibadan noted: *even if you are being paid a penny, you will love leaving home and coming back in the evening*. Another respondent in Ibadan confirmed how being employed enhances self-esteem, and prevents people from perceiving you as a nonentity. For the few who were working, the feeling for being employed was 'good'. For some, work makes one self-fulfilled. For some self-satisfaction arising from the job was described as thrilling, and the joy of waking up in the morning knowing that you would be going to work was overwhelming particularly for young girls, even if adults may find it revolting. In Aba a participant described in great detail the satisfaction he gets from his work as a waiter in fast food facility; the respect that is given him in the community even though he works in a fast food joint/facility.

I was enjoying it very much; you stay in an AC environment. Then at the end of the day when you go out people will start hearing the smell of your body. If you enter into a bus with somebody, the person will start looking at you, thinking that you went there to eat. People, when you go out in the morning and come back in the evening, your respect is still there; people will respect you well.... People started to respect me. They will start asking me how work is. So really is a very good experience. I would like to advise everybody to have that experience (Aba).

The thrill of getting on the job experience is crucial for many of the young persons who have worked before. They prefer working in an environment where there are other young persons as this facilitates 'gisting, different types of gisting'. Such places make the workplace very enticing that 'the next day self I go say make dem do quick, I dey go work because I like go work because most of them are young'.

In Lagos, for example, many young persons including those not working aspired to working in a serene office environment. Many get a buzz from such jobs. For many young males and females, the excitement of 'leaving home in the morning and coming back in the evening is the thing' that makes the heart beat. It also gives some of them the opportunity to put on their best clothes since 'the way you dress to the office...earn you prestige'.

3.3.1 Dignity and respect at workplace

Both employed and unemployed participants mentioned three things that they considered essential at the work place: the salary (especially where cost of traveling to and from work is high) and how good they care for the staff and the level of stress associated with it. Stressful job was singled out as the one 'to run away from'. The view was particularly forceful in Lagos. Another is a boss who shouts at you, runs you down 'and even insults not only you but

your parents'. Bullying and intimidation at the workplace was of grave concern to young persons as illustrated by the following two case studies from Makurdi:

As for me I will stress on two points. What a typical Nigerian youth wouldn't want to be done to him is his work is this shouting on him unnecessarily and at the end of the month not paying him on time' (Makurdi).

We the typical Nigerian youth we hate tongue lashing us. What I mean by tongue lashing is the kind of abuse that they give to us. Sometimes when we are working seriously in the sun and you see some people they will be talking to us the way we don't like it. Then at the end of the day they will not pay us (Makurdi).

Many felt this shouting is even worse when you are new on the job and the old hands are not willing to mentor the new employees, as such experiences 'kill the spirit' in you.

We are all youths when you have a (new) place of work like that; you went in there you have to ask and when your colleagues direct you, it's all theory... how to start we need an old staff there to direct you. We don't like that system of shouting.

The fear, for many young men and women, was working in a place where the boss 'will not even pay your salary' or delay it for months. Two cases from Makurdi and Kano are presented below:

There are things that we don't like about our work especially when you come into money aspects. That is when at the end of the month the money that they are supposed to pay we the youths are not paid; and also the delaying (of salary) we don't like that..

Mostly workers do not like delay in payment of their entitlements whatsoever. ... For example, when a worker is expecting his salary to be paid on may be say 25th of each month, may be he has borrowed money from different people with an agreement that he is going to pay on the 25th

Many male participants, particularly in Lagos, mentioned that many people were working in areas where they were not interested. They mentioned, for example, that many in Nigeria are in trading but this is not of choice. A male participant in Lagos cried out: '*we don't want to trade, we would like to go to school, but the economy is not good*'.

Women, on the whole, showed their preference for 'stress free' jobs. Many women than men cherished dignity and respect at workplace. Women spoke unkindly against ill treatment by bosses. But by far the most detestable was sexual harassment. Some women in Aba narrated their experiences of sexual harassment at the work place by male bosses. A participant in Aba mentioned of a friend who has resigned from a dream job as a result of a 'man's behaviour'. Many women also complained bitterly of being subjected to constant embarrassment and humiliation at workplace by male colleagues, often in the form of office banter. Some even mentioned of being humiliated or intimidated by the wives of their bosses who often wrongly accuse them of having affairs with their husbands.

3.4 ‘Who has stolen my underwear?’ The spectre of unemployment

The increase in the number of well-educated young persons without a corresponding increase in the number jobs, has led to a high level of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Many of the respondents were not employed. Respondents who were not unemployed or those who have ever faced long periods of unemployment were asked to describe how and what they felt being unemployed. Some described how they ‘scroll through the pages of Guardian every Tuesday’ for job vacancies. For many without jobs, the spectre of joblessness was humiliating. Many respondents narrated instances where they have been wrongly accused by friends and family members of petty thieving of small household items apparently because they were unemployed and therefore could be the likely perpetrators. A Lagosian provided a picture:

If someone does not have a job, you won't be comfortable. It is a pride for you in our area to wake up in the morning and you said you're going to the office. People will respect you. But if you don't have a job, if anything gets lost in the house, they will first ask you because they know that you don't have anywhere to go. But if you leave home by 7:30 am, nobody will come and ask you about a lost underwear. They will give you that respect.

Young males and females poured out how they felt about being unemployed: ‘I feel very very bad’ ‘it’s like the whole world is coming against you’; ‘like a lifeless somebody’; ‘feel cheated’; ‘embarrassed; alienated; ‘feel inferior; feeling of disappointment; ‘low status; segregated; marginalized; very angry’; ‘hot tempered’; ‘idle mind and evil-minded, you can steal, you can kill’. ‘Other people look down on you, they think you’re not serious’. A female participant in Aba described it as a ‘curse and the worst thing to happen to you’. In Kano, a female participant described unemployment as ‘hazardous’. For some the inability to send younger ones to the hospital when they are sick is perhaps one of the most distressing aspects of joblessness. In Ibadan, a participant said being unemployed made you feel ‘downcast’ but was quickly corrected by another participant who wanted a superlative (unconcerned about his grammar) to describe the situation: *Not only downcast, downcasted*. He continued as follows:

It affects us very very much adversely, your thinking is different, you start thinking like a criminal, like an animal, sometimes you fell like dying, you can go into alcoholism and smoking. A lot of us that are smoking marijuana are not smoking because of anything; it is because we don't have jobs, because we're bored'.

Being unemployed was described in several undignified forms. In Ibadan, as elsewhere, several participants spoke passionately about the plight of the jobless.

I will say you're out of place. How on earth will you wake up in the morning finding it difficult to have let's say fifty naira in your pocket. Definitely one will feel bad throughout that day, that person will not be himself or herself

There is no sense of belonging; you feel frustrated... younger ones expect you to do more, but without a job you'll not be able to do anything.... There is no sense of belonging and one will be frustrated. And you see, if not by God's grace, someone can go astray.

Some felt that without jobs they had become a failure: a burden to society, a disgrace to themselves, a nuisance to the family and a parasite to other benefactors. They felt abandoned, betrayed and left on their own. Some asked why this should be allowed to happen. A participant from Makurdi poured his feeling:

We feel frustrated. We feel as if the world has forsaken us; as if there is no way to redeem our image in society. We feel we are left alone. We feel there's something at the top but we cannot get there because we're idle and we don't have job (Makurdi).

3.5 How unemployment affects youth lifestyle

Participants listed several negative consequences of youth unemployment and how this affects their lifestyle.

3.5.1 Poor eating and dressing behaviour

Many participants mentioned substandard eating and dressing behaviour as a major consequence of unemployment. The following participant in Kano could not hide his frustration: 'if you don't eat well or dress well, then you cannot think well; that's the answer to your question of how I feel about being unemployed'. Unemployed people were reported to be inferior in everything and inferior in what they wear. People are not able to buy new clothes but instead resort to second hand clothes- *okirika*.

3.5.2 Health impairing behaviours

Some participants mentioned that joblessness of young adults can even affect the health of their parents because they think too much and also work too much in order to keep the family. Others claimed that there has been an increase in the number of mad men in major cities as a result of mental problems arising from prolonged state of unemployment. A participant in Port Harcourt concluded as follows:

Most of the mad men you see on the street today, most of them are educated. Out of frustration one can go into doping in order to calm your system. Even hard drugs will make you feel so high in the name of calming you down and eventually leads to madness.

Even if the linkage between unemployment and madness may be tenuous, it was clear that unemployment often led to depression, mood swings and withdrawal. A female participant in Aba described an unemployed relative: *Most at time she's very very sad. She does not interact with others. She can't put on what others are wearing. When her (employed) friends come to visit her it leaves her with sadness.*

Women participants in all the cities agreed that prolonged unemployment in women pushes some into 'prostitution' out of frustration. Some mentioned that sometimes some girls reach

the tipping point as a result of constant nagging from their parents at home because they are unemployed:

May be your parent is frustrating you in the house. May be when they give you food in the house they would say hundred things about the food they will give you.... They would force you into prostitution, as you're frustrated in the house. You'll like to displease yourself and please them.

Others however end up in 'prostitution' because they want to get money to compete with their friends as shown from Aba.

It drives you into prostitution because whereby you can't, you see your friend buying latest things and you can't afford it. You must do some funny things to get that money. (Aba).

Others claimed 'fornication', transactional sex or sexual exchange or even 'prostitution' may be that young women may want to support the younger ones at home:

Like my younger ones, when they are going back to school I will like to give them something; so in a situation I don't have anything to give them and they are going, I feel sad. I stay indoors when I don't have money. Sometimes it will lead to person doing what the person doesn't really want (Aba).

A related health danger of unemployment, particularly for young women, is the constant temptation to exchange sex for jobs: 'We females, if we go to look for jobs, the men how they behave now. If you don't submit yourself, they can't give you job.' Some women drew attention of the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted infections resulting from such sexual encounters. Many of the women, therefore, dreaded the consequences of 'jumping from one man to another'. The result they argued may be that 'you will find yourself having sickness... and all the men will run away from you. You know your life is finished.' A participant in Makurdi pointed out 'that is why AIDS is rampant'.

Even though the study and the entire questioning route avoided the mention of HIV, reproductive health or condoms, a participant in Makurdi used condom as an illustration to put across the effect of joblessness and with it the lack of money and its impact on personal health. He was of the view that unemployment may compel one to engage in unsafe sex because there is no money to buy condoms.

If you're you do not have money to maintain yourself even you don't have money to buy condom to use, put on, put your girlfriend. So with that it will lead you after making love to your...girlfriend may be....she might have this thing, sickness, then from there you contract.

3.5.3 Youth restlessness

In Kano and Lagos, some linked joblessness with youth restlessness, agitation and rioting with the slightest provocation. Boredom and frustration make them roam the streets with some becoming 'touts with nothing to do'. These are the people who often cause trouble. A participant in Kano explained:

My own view is that when there is no job...may be rumour will be spreading, rumour mongering; would be spreading widely. So that a small thing, the youths will imbibe social vices in mind; you know when like say riots has started, they start looting, stealing, burning things and what have you, because that thing of joblessness...and they are looking for a slight chance to target something so that it will be worst to the society.

3.5.4 Underemployment

Another major outcome is underemployment or dissatisfied employees. A male participant explained:

You're forced to do what you don't want to do. May be you can go into conductor (become a bus conductor); just imagine after graduating they will be paying you N5,000. You know it is not everybody that can rob or steal; imagine.

3.5.5 Jealousy and envy

Unemployment may lead to jealousy, envy and rivalry against the employed. A participant from Kano, with nods of approval from other participants explained as follows:

You will always be thinking negative, because if you have a friend that may be he came from a rich family; he has everything. You finish school together with him, may be he now got a fine job. Sometimes you will be envious of what he is getting. Because of that, may be you will try may be to attack him or to do something that will harm him, so that may be you will seize what he get, to take away his belonging.

A similar view was shared in Aba:

When one is unemployed and you see may be your fellow graduate, you know, working, riding an official car, with a GSM and with a personal driver. You'll feel quite jealous because you know that you may be more intelligent than the person but why is he...prospering more than you? You may be tempted to do one or two things against the person (Aba).

Some argued that unemployed persons may even be at loggerheads with their employed siblings since they may have more say and influence during extended family meetings.

To me joblessness is a problem because even in your own family, you will feel segregated...even your junior brother who is working can be called for family meeting while you will be segregated.

Jealousy and envy was even more prevalent among female participants. Most of the female participants described themselves as 'jealous type' wanting to get what their friends have got. Consequently, feelings of jealousy and envy of the employed by the unemployed was found be even more pervasive among women. As with male, females who are jobless become jealous of their 'mates' who are employed, especially if they were in well-paid jobs. Two friends often drift apart if when one gets a job and the other remains unemployed. The following female participants from Aba, and Makurdi were typical:

It makes you jealous. You may see your mate that is working, that has a very nice job. She has a nice car and everything. You'll just be feeling jealous. Any little thing the person does pisses you off because you're jealous, because you're not doing anything; you'll just be envying her.

Most at times when you don't have a job, and you see some other people that have jobs, sometimes envy comes in. Jealousy; sometimes you feel those people have everything going for them.

3.5.6 How people perceive the unemployed

Another issue of concern among some unemployed, especially women, was the wrong impression people often had about them. It was the view of some of the unemployed participants that they felt upset at the way people who are unemployed in the community being are stared at when they walk the street. *It is very bad for a lady to be roaming about because the way and the eye that people use to look at ladies that do not work roaming about is not good.*

Some participants offered the reason. People often thought that if one puts on nice and expensive clothes when you are unemployed, there is sometimes the perception that such women 'sleep around' exchanging sex for money or other material gains. A participant in Kano explained:

Since you don't have anything doing people would be even insulting you once you wear something that is expensive.... They would be thinking that may be you're going out with men, may be following them from place to place. So having a job is very important.

3.5.7 An infection called 'inferiority complex'

Some participants likened joblessness with infection, which if untreated, develops into something bigger in the form of inferiority complex arising from the gradual loss of self-worth and self-confidence. It may culminate in one's inability to speak out in the presence of others. A male participant in Aba explained:

Unemployment... is number one infection. You start developing what we call, 'inferiority complex': that is where your mates are you cannot be there simply because you don't have...you cannot have a voice because you don't have what it takes to speak out.

Like men, unemployed women too also expressed tremendous feeling of low self-esteem. An Aba participant confirmed: *'you may be having inferiority complex. When you see others, the way they dress, you won't want to mingle with them, you'll be staying on your own'.*

Some female participants in Ibadan were of the view that with prolonged unemployment 'you will become weaker and weaker even in your brain'. In effect you tend to lose all that you have learnt and would need some training before you can perform. In Port Harcourt a female participant noted how unemployment can even affect the way one communicates: *sometimes when you meet people who are working you feel inferior to communicate.*

3.5.8 The devaluation of education

Some jobless graduates sometimes question the purpose of going to university, especially if those who have not been seem to be doing well.

Ok, you're a graduate, you've gone through school and you've graduated. May be you're on the street and you saw a friend of yours who came out of the same secondary school. The person decided to learn a trade or something like that.... The person now has something he's doing on his own while you call yourself a graduate. Looking at the person, you feel bad within yourself and sometimes you feel like committing suicide

3.5.9 Misuse of technical knowledge by the unemployed

Many believed that highly trained professionals who remain jobless may be tempted to misuse such knowledge to the detriment of the society. Some mentioned that those who have studied mechanical engineering might know how easily to start a car without a key. Similarly someone trained as an electrical engineer 'will know how to remove something from a transformer'.

3.5.10 Fantasy living

Some participants mentioned that sometimes to keep the going they kept on imagining things, sometimes thinking that they were working. In effect, day dreaming becomes part of the life of the jobless persons as shown by the following participant:

You...put yourself in the position of those that have (jobs). If I had a job, If I had a job; you will feel like shit; you'll feel very bad.

3.5.11 Criminal lifestyle associated with unemployment

Many of the young persons attributed the high rate of crime, robbery and general insecurity to youth joblessness. Some claimed that one would find situation in 'politics where you find a graduate performing the role of a thug, so are hired assassins'. The following participants from Ibadan, Makurdi and Kano respectively spoke for many:

You see, when there is no job after leaving school, that's why we have a lot of armed robbers. For example, if while I'm in school I belonged to a cult group and I have my gun; if after finishing from school I wait for one and a half years without getting a job, what do you think I will do? I'll just get some of my friends and tell them: "men, let's find something to do". We will just get to the express (highway) and take whatever we like.

When we're jobless it makes us feel very bad and lead us into doing some dirty things...like stealing, keilling, armed robbery you know raping other girls and other things because an idle mind is a devil's workshop.

Now for instance in our community, there is one boy that I heard that...he wanted money but he asked his friend where they are going to get the money....He said he knew a place where cattle were very plenty there. ...Let it be in the night then we can go and steal one (Kano).

It must be pointed out that majority of respondents condemned thuggery and other violent criminal activities and argued that being unemployed did not warrant involvement in criminality, advising others to do any work that comes their way.

3.5.12 The relationship between unemployment and marriage

Unemployment is a two-edged sword cutting with both edges. It can lead to 'convenient' marriage and at the same time keep women unmarried or unmarriageable. Some female participants mentioned that some women rush into marriages to cushion off the harsh financial problems associated with unemployment, when they are not yet ready. Some of the women in Aba mentioned that unemployment compels some women to marry when then they are not supposed to. They mentioned that such a marriage sometimes becomes an entrapment, as women graduates are kept at home as housewives. They described such marriage as enslavement because 'if you need N1 you go and ask him'. Similarly women who are unemployed may be unable to attract good suitors as husbands.

3.6 Social interactions

Young persons are often characterized by a wide network of interweaving social interactions. Such occasions include school settings, parties, funerals, weddings, club houses etc. The study sought to explore the key types of such interactions and the issues they discuss when young persons are together.

3.6.1 Same sex interactions

Participants emphasized that interactions even with friends and what they discussed depended upon the type of friend. A participant from Port Harcourt explained further:

I had three friends when I was in school. If I want to listen to educational discussion there is this one I go to...; if I want to talk about girls, there's this one Anything he says it's girls, there is nothing. Then this other one anytime you go to his house it's how to make money.

In academic environment, conversations during mixed group interactions may centre on academic gossips. They may talk about who had best grades in class assignments and examinations. However, males may accuse the females of lying with lecturers in order to obtain better grades.

The females agreed that when they meet the discussion is mostly about men, about boy-friends, what they have done or left undone or unable to do. A participant in Aba stated:

Girls discuss about men, we girls discuss about men, like this guy did this, this guy did that, my guy bought some things for me. (Aba).

While women may discuss men, it was clarified that when there are serious matters to discuss, men issues are put aside. For example, what when a group of friends was seeking admission to universities, whenever they met they discuss the problems involved and 'how JAMB is frustrating' them. It must be noted that sometimes the discussions are on vital issues that will enable women achieve their future dreams. They discuss the type of man you want as a life long partner Sometimes advice is offered to friends on what they should or should not do, especially if the girl is 'not of age'.

In Kano, if they are all female students or seeking admission, they usually discussed about education. Of course as elsewhere, they also discuss 'private life' mainly on boyfriends. Some of the female participants, however, cautioned about telling all 'your secrets' to your friend. They may be associating with you only 'to do eye service'. She may be jealous about your friend and may even advise you to ditch him. Consequently some preferred to share their intimate feelings and issues with their sisters. Some also admitted ever discussing how to seduce men by the way we walk, 'how we do take our steps'. However, some pointed out, it was not only about men. They also talk about new fads and fashions, including hairstyle and dressing.

In most cases when young men are together they like discussing the opposite sex (chicks and babes). It was pointed out that most often when young men meet, the 'only thing we *gist* about is chicks'. In Makurdi some participants mentioned the details of such conversations. They included the techniques of how to make passes to girls, and condom use: *As young men when we meet outside you know we talk about how may be how I make love to my girlfriend, whether I use condom or not...* Others said their discussions centred on something else: around the daily struggle in life and 'how to make it in life'. Included in such discussions is the ways and means of travelling outside Nigeria. The other topics for discussion included education, clothes and lifestyle, sports (mainly football), family situation and current affairs including government and politics. On the whole the two things they often 'gist' about are women and money: *Let's face reality, we talk about babes and money*. Some also discussed dressing, but women were always on top. It must be noted that men also talk about their dream marriages, their ideal woman as a wife, marrying a career woman. In Aba a participant summed up the key topics discussed: 'girls, money and fame'.

3.6.2 Religious friends

When the friends are 'born-again' people 'then it is different' they 'talk about Christianity'. 'They discuss their faith, how fellowship is going': May be it is a gathering of Christian youths; what they will be discussing is about God; what they did in church; how they met at the fellowship. You know, things about God, things related to spiritual life. Christians among them were quick to point out that when Christians met they did not necessarily talk about men, clothing etc, they discussed about God. A participant wondered why, when young women meet they talk about all things, but the 'last thing you'll hear is about church', unless it is purely a group of Christian girls.

3.6.3 What do young men think young women talk about when they meet and vice versa?

The male groups felt that young women whenever they met talked about boys, boyfriends and relationships. There was a consensus at most sites, particularly in Aba, that women when they meet there was nothing apart from gossip. They were of the view that ‘women hate one another’ so there was always jealousy. Many of the male participants felt that with a few exceptions, wherever girls meet, they only discussed boys. A Port Harcourt male stated: *A gathering of girls there’s nothing else they will discuss than boyfriend, the latest hairdo; the latest dressing in town. But if it’s the reasonable ones education.* Another participant from Makurdi confirmed thus: *Some girls like discussing about how their boyfriends take out to shopping like to Mr. Biggs. They like discussing what they had and you know all the services that was carried out there.*

In Kano, the young men were of the view that young women when they meet talked about dresses, and issues relating mostly to their appearances. They also discussed and talked about Hausa films (Nigerian movies).

In my own view, most young females, if they get together, they usually talk about the type of dress, a new film, here in Kano. I’m giving an example of Kano because I’m living in Kano. Here in Kano most of our ladies, they talk about Hausa films, drama.... Whenever you saw them or they are discussing, they talk about a new dress, a new shoe, new hair tie (Kano).

In the same way, men think that wherever they meet women talk about men, so do women think that men talk about women whenever they meet. ‘Men will be discussing about babes, and babes will be discussing about men’. According to the women you always perceive that men are talking about them when they walk pass. *In fact they will be looking at your direction and say ‘you see this girl is kini ko kini ko (this or that).* The women felt that the most embarrassing aspect, according to the women (in Ibadan) is that some of the men boast having had sex with the girl passing by when they in fact it is not true. is that some me

3.6.4 Mixed sex interactions

The male groups, particularly from Lagos, stated that young men become quite reticent when girls are around, not wanting to show their true colours. Young men during such occasions want to be ‘perfect’. A participant agreed thus:

I’ll like to conceal certain things. I wouldn’t want to divulge what’s on my mind... certain behaviours I wouldn’t like to bring out, especially when you’re having two or three of them around’. According to the participants, boasting is the norm when ‘guys are with girls’.

For instance, you may not have up to twenty naira in your pocket, you’ll be boasting of one thousand.

In Aba, it was confirmed that during the presence of women you must be seen as ‘polished’. Concealment of your true character is the norm.

You must pretend to look like you know a polished guy, you don't come out your real self. When you want to speak English you want to make it sound ...very Western; you speak slangs and things like that (Aba).

Even in the same group in Aba, there was an opinion that faking was wrong and the advice was that young men should be what they are. This group felt that faking was the purview of the inexperienced, those who are 'small boys' - the normal thing is to be straightforward.

I will say that thing is very wrong; just be yourself because when you try to like fake yourself and the girl notices it, that is the greatest fuck-up! You just smashed everything.

A few of the males insisted that they preferred to have platonic girlfriends in their day to day interactions as they learn more from girls than their male friends, as shown by the following male participant from Port Harcourt:

Me generally, it's only recently that I started palling with boys. I prefer girlfriends, not lovers, because I learn most things from girls.... Even in school I don't sit with boys. (PH).

The women's views were not fundamentally different from the men. It was mentioned that when the persons are of mixed gender, they discuss social life, education, music, and then politics. Others, particularly in Kano, mentioned that male (non-sexual) friends are often very helpful when you share your thoughts with them as they will offer advice from the male perspective.

As with males, some females also mentioned that they do not show their true colours when they are with men or in a mixed group. A participant in Ibadan mentioned how she always tries to comport herself.

I will try and behave myself and think of what I could get from them. I will also not like to useless myself before them.

In Ibadan, female participants said that sometimes when they are with men, they go as far as changing their intonation and speaking 'as if you are still a kid, you'. This is all to impress the opposite sex: *they just talk about things that will make them blow; but when they are separate, there's nothing to write home about.*

Issues of equality also surfaced with some females (in Ibadan) mentioning that since men are prone to shutting off females in mixed group interactions by assuming that women do not have much to say, they always try to be 'big girls' by showing that women are equally important.

3.6.5 Parent-child interactions

Some female participants, especially in Kano, were at pains to mention that parents do not tell them much about what to expect in life and how to manage pressures, especially when they enter educational institutions. A participant in Kano explained:

Your parents will not call you to tell you such kind of things which in school you will see with your won eyes; and you are the one that would decide to choose good or bad.

3.6.6 Interactions with adults

While young persons often felt comfortable interacting mainly with their peers, there was evidence that some in addition thought interacting with older, mature and experienced adults was illuminating. Adults, it was mentioned, share their experiences and this can widen many a young person's horizon. Some of the women in Kano felt that sometimes their challenges were so enormous that they would need counselling especially from *'people that are higher than us.... May be they suffered a lot during their own time'*. Some Christians mentioned that they sometimes discussed personal issues with their pastors.

3.7 **Difficult Aspects of youthful life**

Difficulties which young persons go through may affect how they adopt or adapt new behaviours as coping mechanisms. The focus group discussions explored what participants felt were the most difficult aspects of youthful life. Many of the participants, especially, women felt these were trying times for Nigerian youth. They are compelled to 'juggle time, space, and resources'.

3.7.1 Godfatherism, sponsorship and connection

Many of the young persons believed that it was difficult to get a good start in the country if you had nobody to speak for you or hold your hand. They thought that it was difficult to succeed if you did not have a 'sponsor'. Some described the system as a 'circle' others called it 'family'. A participant in Ibadan explained:

The main problem in Nigeria is what I call godfatherism. If you have someone up there it becomes easy for you to get a job. The issue of godfatherism, you can't just enter into any office, they will ask you "Who is your father and where are this young civilian coming from?"

Similar views were expressed in Kano where participants complained that few young persons in Nigeria could make it unless they are 'sponsored':

Like now if you don't know somebody and nobody knows you; let's take an example, may be you want to get a job in a place; the person would ask you, 'whom do you know? where do you live? Who are you? Where do you come from? Which family do you come from? What did you bring for me? Without any of these, you won't get a job; and government know about it.

Similar views were expressed in Aba:

When you were in school, you were brighter than this guy; everybody knew it; you were topping your class but then just because this guy got connection; just because of his dad. And you, you're a material, you're

something but then the society doesn't appreciate you because you don't have anybody to speak on your behalf. So you don't get a job like that;...it hurts. You now see someone you wrote test for will splash water on you and say sorry and drive his own way.... (Aba)

3.7.2 Discrimination against young persons

Many of the young persons, particularly females, were of the view that sometimes they are discriminated against, as employers look for persons with experience and skills. They wondered where they will obtain the skills and experience unless they are offered jobs in the first place.

3.7.3 Federal character

Some participants felt that their ambitions and aspirations are being stalled because of 'federal character' resulting in the use of quota systems in determining most things in the country. A related problem cited was tribalism. Participants in Port Harcourt complained thus:

This quota system; I see it as very big problem. Mediocres are taken while the best brains are left behind simply because of your state of origin.

Ethnicity is also a barrier. Once your tribesman is in control he puts you in whether you are the best or not.

Ethnicity has eaten so deep into our society. Even among groups it is there. Among the Igbos it there; they divide themselves into their villages. It is inhibiting employment. Let there be unity in diversity.

3.7.4 The poor conduct of public examinations

In a country where obtaining tertiary education may be a key way of social mobility, participants were concerned about the conduct of public examinations. The difficulties associated with the registration and writing of public examinations including the difficulty in getting examination application forms, unwarranted cancellation of results for an entire examination centre which affects innocent candidates, and the delay in release of results all together lead to frustration and dejection among young persons. A participant in Port Harcourt explained:

For me I will say as a student, I hate when I write exams, most time, the one I wrote JAMB last year the centre was seized. For that week I was not myself. I was angry with everybody in the house. Even this last one again, the following JAMB I wrote they said my name was omitted.... You write exams, at the end they will tell you one thing, one thing there. They will cancel the exams; it pains a lot.

3.7.5 Lack of transparency in university admission process

Another difficult aspect highlighted in Kano was the cumbersome admission process. It takes days for people to get 'their papers' signed by academic directors. As with the males, many females in Kano were also worried about the corrupt and protracted nature of the admission process in Nigerian universities. They lamented that sometimes if you do not have

money, you do not get admitted. You either need money or have got to have a ‘sponsor’ ‘advisor’ or somebody who can assist you. They spoke unkindly of professors and heads of departments who frustrate them even if they have all their admissions papers intact.

3.7.6 How to survive as an unemployed youth

The widespread nature of unemployment has been described earlier. Some participants offered ‘survival tips’. Many of the young persons agreed that sometimes you just have to engage in any menial job in order to survive. In such instance respondents hinted that pride was no longer an issue, the issue is survival. A participant in Port Harcourt described his experience:

Well mostly now this is December period. Thank God, if you look round they are building houses around. Me I don't look at your face because you're not feeding me. Any job I do, you see, now boys are carrying blocks, carrying sand...that is hustling. Wednesday morn, go to Oil Market (in Port Harcourt) see students, my own classmates, I use to see them, pushing barrow for people, collecting money.

Similar views were shared in Kano:

...so don't down at home and say I don't have a job. You have to work hard, do even manual labour work, do it and earn your living, in order to satisfy your needs (Kano).

This was also confirmed in Makurdi where a participant mentioning construction industry and a major employer, while admitting that the pay and conditions may be below ‘government’ work.

There are so many jobs which are not relevant (comparable) to what may be the government pays.... There are some jobs like building; when you go to where they are building a house and serve them there; then you get something to maintain yourself (Makurdi).

For me if I don't pass through stress I don't believe I'm making it. (Port Harcourt)

3.7.7 The competitive nature of Nigerian life

Participants alluded to the aggressive competitive nature of life and lifestyle in, even among the youth. Everywhere people want to outdo others in every sphere of life.

May be they are using Jetta (car) and may be by next year they may want to drop that Jetta and change to Mercedes Benz because other youths there are using Mercedes Benz; so they do any kind of work for them to do or they beat that guy that is using that Mercedes Benz (PH).

Education...we value. We want to go to the highest level...if I have masters I will be boasting of myself than may be degree holder. Can be boasting of myself that I'm more superior to my mates.

In terms of challenges, we came out of secondary school with some friends.... After some time you now heard that he is in university, it's a challenge. You'll like to be, you'll want to join him. You now go in for forms you make sure that you pass. (Aba).

The competitive nature of young persons is strong in women as in men, even if what they compete for may be different. Many are challenged by people of their age who appear to be making it in life (Ibadan).

The major reason why you see them as challenge is because you see others, others of your age are married, some of them are in school, some of them are graduates, some of them are working.... So you want to be like them; that is why it is a challenge.

3.7.8 Peer pressure

For some women, the strength and ability to stay free from examination malpractices as well as other 'immoral' activities is a difficult aspect of life. This is due to the fact that anti-social behaviour has become very common making it hard to resist peer pressure to give in. In Aba, a female participant saw this as a challenge:

...see them as challenges like exam malpractices. Now you see people cheating in an exam and you hear somebody telling you that you shouldn't cheat in exams. It's really a bit challenge...it's a challenge trying to abstain from what others do (Aba).

Another area, particularly for women, is keeping a clean moral character. A participant in Kano explained:

Like two girl friends; may be the other one has bought her own GSM and you, you don't even know the means she bought the GSM. You want to get it by all means. So it can lead you to go and do what you don't want to do.

3.7.9 Many are impatient

It was also mentioned by some that a major youth problem is that they want to be rich quick. Unlike previous generation where people waited until it reached their turn, youngsters of nowadays want to be in the fast lane.

You'll see a youth of say 16 years seeing a man of 50 driving a car. He will tell you that he wants to drive tomorrow without thinking that you need to pass through some stress.... The aspiration of our youth is that they aim high; not that it's not good, but it has its limit.... You may have to do nasty things to get that thing.

Many warned that young persons need to be patient. They need to listen and learn from the experiences of adults to understand what some of them went through before reaching where they are today. In Aba, a participant stated it poetically:

Don't be in a rush to get that which you want, just take time, be patient. Little prayers and hard work, that is what you desire, might really come to you.

Some women mentioned 'impatient' friends nicknamed 'run babes' who travel to Abuja and engage in transactional sex and return to campus with money.

They (the run babes) will leave, they will come back to school, may be with N2,000 that their parents give them. Immediately they keep their bags they will just enter night bus or flight to Abuja. Then they will meet these Ministers, they will give them enough cash, even our ... I won't call somebody's name shea. They will load them with enough cash. They will now come back to school... (Aba).

Many felt that one major aspect of Nigerian youth life is impatience and wrong advice; and these are what 'bring people down'. An example was cited of young women who succumb to the request for sex before jobs are offered and how sometimes this ruins their lives.

3.7.10 Dangers of cultism

Danger of cultism and how to steer clear of involvement particularly for students was a major issue. Many remarked that the temptation to be a member of such secret societies is very strong, as shown by a male participant in Makurdi:

To me I feel we face temptation.... If you can't overcome these temptations you can't be somebody tomorrow. Like you're schooling in the university...this cultism of a thing that is happening. So one of your colleagues happens to be one among...and may be you just discuss something of that nature and you happen to fall to that; you may not complete your course in the university.... Following some friends can lead you to some secret societies...secret cults. This will lead you not to achieve your goals.

Some females in Aba mentioned the terror associated with cultism in higher educational institutions. They were worried about the 'fracas' caused by 'cult guys'. There appears to be the fact that some people are becoming used to and are gradually being conditioned to the activities of cults on campus, thinking that they're part of the 'normal' campus life. The following participant in Aba, who may be a cult fan or at least sees cultism as harmless fun describe a typical stampede and gun totting arising from cult activities:

I like that when I'm running. I like the stampede. I like it when they don't kill people. Most times it makes people to be lively; once in while you run. You hear gunshots, you run for your life. Once in a while, when they don't kill people, I use to enjoy it.

3.7.11 'No suitors: the men are not coming forward'

For women, another issue was finding a 'good husband'. A participant pointed out: Marriage, that's for a Nigerian girl. Every Nigerian girl has marriage as a challenge. *In Makurdi a participant spoke for many she mentioned the difficulty of finding a suitor.* Like marriage, sometimes we will reach on the adult stage where we are supposed to get married and give birth to younger ones. When we are not having men that will come for our marriage, we will be disappointed. Looking for them here and there, we can't get them, it is a challenge. *Finding a marriageable man as a suitor is even more difficult if a woman remains unemployed.*

Some of the women in Aba, the futures of some young girls were often blighted as a result of 'forced marriage' arranged by their parents or parents insisting that the women marry from their villages.

May be a person come from a very wretched family and may be the parents...don't have money to feed themselves. Then one guy just walks up and says he wants to marry their daughter...and starts buying things for the mother or father. By the time you know it they will start pushing her; there is nothing she can do than to marry him and before you know it, divorce (Aba).

3.8 Optimistic Aspects of youthful life

On the whole, most participants said they had very little hope.

3.8.1 The dawn of the computer era

Computers and the technology round it bring hope to youngsters. Those who have access to computers found computers to be very interesting and some participants including females, visited internet cafes regularly to surf the internet. A male participant mentioned:

I spend almost every hour on the computer. It makes me feel joyful when I'm on computer browsing. I like my work because of the new technology. It advances everyday.

3.8.2 The introduction of pre-degree and remedial courses

Many young persons aspire to go to universities, but a great number are unable to do so because of inadequate grades. For some participants, the increase in the pre-degree and remedial courses throughout the country was seen as a good sign for many young persons. This has enabled young persons who cannot get direct admission to degree courses eventually study even sciences in the university. A male participant explained:

When we graduated from 'O' Level some of them (classmates) entered the university that same year. Now some of them are in Year Two. This year, I've taken two exams, no good result yet, so now I've made up my mind that come next year...I'm not going to be at home; I'll also be in school, either doing 'remedial' or anything because I've made it my own challenge now.

3.8.3 'With God the future is bright'

Those with strong religious beliefs appeared to be the most hopeful. Women participants appeared to be more religious than males. They held the view that all you need 'is to be connected with God' as that will be the solution of all problems. Some women mentioned that they were hopeful about life because of their reliance on God. They mentioned that you must pray to God 'for help' in all situations. In Ibadan a participant stated:

Like me, I do go to church, then I fast whenever I want to write exams. Again I go to church. Again I pray and I fast.

In Makurdi, some participants were of the view that prayers were answers to all problems. *Pray and ask God to solve the problems for us and I believe if you truly pray, He will answer prayers.* Another participant mentioned:

With the background I was exposed to, because I so much believe in God, that's the way my father brought me up : "boy, come what may, whatever you will be in life, it's just by God's grace and God's power. It really helps me to cope with the situation.

While many others believed in the efficacy of prayers they were quick to point out that prayer must be backed up with personal action and determination to get what one is praying about. A participant in Makurdi queried the 'prayer only approach' and suggested 'prayers with action':

Like she was talking about prayers. For example, some people will lock themselves in a room and be praying for a job. How can you lock yourself in a room and be praying for a job without going out and be looking for one. You can pray and also be struggling to look for a job.

3.8.4 Retiring age

Some female participants felt that there will be hope if government insisted that people should retire at the age of 60, as this will enable 'young ones to be recruited'.

3.8.5 Current toughness hardens us up a better tomorrow

Some believed that the present difficult life makes young persons tough, and this makes them hopeful. A few thought that the stressful life for people in Nigeria, especially for young persons, made one grow tough. Many believed what you need in Nigeria is determination. The challenge of life in Nigeria was seen as similar to the challenges you face in a gym as one needs to undergo strenuous exercise in order for the body to get any benefit.

In one of our training pitch they say 'no pain, no gain'. I believe that's a challenge. If you don't do those press ups very well.... The challenge is for you to do the press up very well. The pains you're passing through, you'll get the gain and that's a challenge. I also believe that if I'm not passing through challenges in my life I'm not getting the true thing (PH).

3.8.6 We're young, time is still ahead

Although very obvious, it is important to mention that the fact that young persons believed that they still had time ahead of them, makes some of them feel hopeful. Irrespective of their work situations, particularly for those with no good education, they still believe things will change with time. A male participant stated: 'actually the stage we're in now, we can't really

boast of a good job, because any job you're doing at this age range is not what you want to do, you just have to do it'.

Given their youthfulness, their aims and aspirations may be delayed but they will be reached eventually.

I won't feel bad if I graduate without getting a job because I believe my destiny can only be delayed it cannot be stopped and I believe one day with my degree I can go anywhere and get a job, so I won't really feel bad.

3.8.7 Acquiring good education

Education was mentioned mainly, they explained, because it potentially makes the individual a respectable person in the society, and secondly it enables one to attain 'some positions in future to become something' as mentioned by a participant from Makurdi.

The most challenging aspect of a young man is education; he will aspire to become something in future. You know with education you can talk anywhere. So seeing your fellow colleagues going to school and you sitting idle; you want to be like them, even exceed his own level; so you prefer the challenge of education than any other one.

From almost all participants, acquiring good education was something to which many Nigerian youths aspired. For those who were still in secondary school, the thought of passing their exams and entering university was their main aspiration. Some felt that one needed 'extra coaching' by independent teachers before you can pass your exams. Many consider the admission process to the university very challenging. Even more anxious to enter university were those who had completed secondary school but had spent some more years to improve their grades. It was more pressing when his or her peers had already entered university. The following cases typify the extent of young person's aspiration to further their education:

To me, I feel the challenges I face are based on the educational aspect.... May be my friend here is in 100 level (first year in university); right now I'm yet to; I feel that challenge (Makurdi).

We face barriers as in when they are trying to seek admission into university. They will be depriving you of admission, as in someone scoring 200 and something in JAMB and the cut-off point is say 200 and someone is having above that. Without having any background ...they won't offer him admission (Makurdi)

That's why people keep on sitting for JAMB and WAEC. Buying, keeping on buying forms, yes I'm coping, because I have faith that I'll go to university. I'll keep on buying forms, one day will be one day I go jam my luck!

Well I believe if you have money, you have most things... Like I know a girl, we finished together in the year 2000, and immediately we finished she gained admission into Babcock University. She is going to be graduating next year and I'm still struggling with my admission. If you have money you can really achieve what you want to achieve.

For some the challenge is how they can one day ‘wear that NYSC uniform’ which signifies the completion of some form of higher education. Consequently, inability to enter university, particularly, for financial reasons was seen as a major personal calamity to some participants.

Education was considered just as essential to women as it is to men even if for different reasons. In Kano, this was underscored even more firmly. Two cases from Kano are presented here:

When you get married to a man and it happen that you are not educated, your husband can easily go and bring an educated lady.... She will show you that se is more than you; she is better than you. She is educated and can even be allowed to go out and work, while you will be at home. You'll be the one to take care of the babies, sweep the house and everything.... Since she is working she gets something doing; you don't have anything doing, you just remain at home...doing nothing. You'll be thinking and that thinking can cause you sickness, like hypertension.

May be those that have two wives. May be one did not go to school; you go and marry someone that is well educated. In the morning all will get up to go to work.... they just would be treating you as a house girl... And she will have the guts to be saying all sorts of rubbish she likes because you did not go to school. That thing will be paining you. Even if you tell your husband, he would say, after all you're the one that cause it yourself since you refused to go to school, so you don't have qualification.

3.8.8 Good home, good job, good husband

Asked what young females considered to be very important, a great many participants, especially in Kano, mentioned marriage. For some women participants a cherished ambition is to get married and ‘live in a man’s house’. This demands, according to some women, as a wife ‘you need to know how to cook well’. Having ‘a good husband’ was therefore vital to some participants in Kano. Many believed that if you’re married, people respect you more, especially if you are also educated. Similarly in Ibadan, for many women their ‘*dream is to have a happy home, marrying the right person... the right man.*’ Three things summarize most of the hopes and aspirations of the women: good home, good job, and a good husband.

3.9 Sources of Pessimism

Participants mentioned a catalogue of issues which potentially could prevent them from reaching their life-long goals and aspirations.

3.9.1 The fear of unemployment

Some participants felt that unemployment is the worst thing to have happened to Nigeria. The fear of it has resulted in many women refusing to further their education. For some of the women, unemployment forces some to do certain things they don’t like by trying ‘to entice the man in power to give you the job’. Others felt that was a degrading thing to do since ‘you can’t just go and sell yourself just because you want to get a job.

It is important to note that some young persons, especially those still in universities, agreed that there is a graduate and there is a graduate, and that some graduates should never be employed in the first place since they bought their way through the university. A participant in Port Harcourt lamented:

One thing about youths not getting jobs, how sure are we that these graduates have what it takes to work? Some give lecturers money for good grades.... It's not everybody out there that has to work, so when we're talking about graduates let's specify them.

3.9.2 Lack of integrity of some teachers and lecturers

In nearly all discussion groups, lecturers in universities and teachers in secondary schools were not generally painted in any good picture. In universities, young persons were concerned about bribery for marks in the form of cash regarding male students and the amorous relationships between female students and lecturers aimed at passing exams.

In school you find out that most people they don't read, they don't even come to the exam hall but at the end you see their names among one of the top because...they back at the end and see the lecturer (PH)

They don't write (the exams) and if they don't write, it means they will go and see the lecturer either by money and if it's a girl and the lecturer is a man, they will pay in kind.(PH)

Some of the secondary school participants mentioned the apparent unpreparedness of some teachers when they attend classes and their high level of impatience. Some teachers were accused of not being conversant with their disciplines.

We would like those who are teaching us to be so comprehensive that whenever we ask questions they go straight to the point by telling us the right, the right question we have asked (Makurdi).

As a student when you sit down to learn when your teacher comes in not that the teacher will be ...beating about in the bush (Makurdi)

As with males particularly from Makurdi, female participants in Kano had a lot to say about poor teachers in primary and secondary schools. They mentioned that some teachers, who may have fake credentials, are unable or unwilling to teach.

Like in secondary and primary schools, the teachers we have; most of them don't know anything. ... Once you know somebody...you can even borrow credentials, then you go and start teaching..... You will find that the teacher does not teach.... Instead of them to teach in English, they will teach in Hausa.

Another confirmed in Kano:

Even as from being from the primary school, a youth cannot get adequate or sufficient education since from primary school, because there are no good teachers and adequate teachers who can teach people to get

a good ground of education right from primary. Well if you take a primary school, there are no adequate teachers, and they don't know what they are teaching perfectly in order to get a good education (Kano).

In Port Harcourt, some students citing examples were very unhappy about some of their lecturers who 'don't even know what they are teaching'. They wondered how one can learn from such teachers.

Sexual harassment in educational institutions was a major issue among some women. Many females detested the 'intimidation' of lectures to have sex with female students. Women, particularly in Aba, spoke passionately:

Most of them come after you some times. You know the lecturers, they see you and they want to go out with you somehow; and if you refuse they will be marking you down (Aba).

Talking about lecturers; some like asking students to be their friends, and when they don't agree, they say they would fail them in exams. I don't like that.

Intimidation may not only be from lecturers but also from cult members. A female student, who may refuse the sexual advances of a cult member, may be intimidated not only by that member but the entire group as typified by this case from Aba:

Like cultism, may be a guy will be coming after you, if you refuse...since the person is a cult guy or something, he will like to intimidate you, to force you to go out with him (Aba).

Similar fears were expressed in Kano. Instances were made of lecturers who asked female students to see them immediately they finish writing his paper.

Others felt the blame should not be on the lecturers. It was surprising to hear that some of the women blamed their fellow women for indecent dressing which 'seduces the lecturers' and thus causing them to 'harass them. A participant in Aba stated: *If you don't bring your product to market, nobody will buy it*'.

While many of the participants agreed that corruption on campuses is the fault of three parties: lecturers who intimidate women and threaten them with failure until they offer them sex; students who seduce lectures by offering sex (or money) for exams, and parents who sometimes specifically provide money to their children to 'settle' when their children complain that they find certain course difficult.

3.9.3 The problem with Nigerian universities

Another 'challenge' mentioned is the uncertain nature of the duration of an academic programme in a typical Nigerian university given the incessant closures arising from strikes, insecurity and other related bottlenecks. Also related is the overall poor teaching and learning environment in most universities. The result is that the individual is unsure of when you are likely to achieve your goal or aspiration in life, and unsure whether the skills one acquires will be enough to achieve your career objective.

You as a person cannot programme yourself. You cannot say that you're getting admission and you're graduating at the end of four years, five years, end of six years. This is due to the abrupt disruption of academic calendar through strikes.

Poor teaching and learning facilities were also mentioned, the most notable being the lack of computers and ill-equipped labs for sciences and engineering students. They felt that most of the education was based on theory with little or no practical application. A student in Port Harcourt lamented: *In the university... you're reading Computer and don't even see a system for a day ... a week. The system you people have it will take a month before you touch the system.*

3.9.4 The endemic and intractable nature of corruption

The pervasive nature of corruption was cited as a major reason for pessimism. Instances were cited in educational institutions, in politics, and in several other avenues where corruption has ruined the system.

The prevailing economic conditions make many of the young persons pessimistic. A student who could perceive only of a bleak future concluded: 'As for me, o when I finish from university and two years I don't have a job, God knows I'll do something'. For some being unemployed undermines 'a man's pride, your ego is down'. Others even held on conspiracy theories, suggesting that political leaders are deliberating stymieing the plans of young persons to get higher education so that they (the political elite) can maintain their positions.

Government is our greatest challenge... You cannot cope with a snake in your own house.... Our plan is to leave the country. They don't want us to be educated, because they don't want any rivals (male, Lagos).

While a majority blames the system, a few point accusing fingers at their parents who wanted them to study certain subjects or undertake courses they were not interested in.

3.9.5 The influx of imported products

Participants who were mainly traders, small businessmen and artisans mentioned the flooding of the local market with cheap imported products. For many traders and technicians, the issue of fake and imitation products makes their future uncertain. The practice stifles local manufacturing and initiatives by young persons who want to set up small-scale industries, and undermines job creation. The following two cases from Ibadan and Kano illustrate the underlying cause of pessimism.

If I'm self-employed now and I'm producing chalk, people won't come and buy their chalk from me, they prefer imported chalk; this is the problem.

One of the reasons that led to unemployment ...is the inability of the production sector....It means that everything that we buy in this country we import from Western countries.

3.9.6 NEPA as source of pessimism

For many artisans and other self-employed participants, the inconsistent nature of power supply was a major source of pessimism for themselves and their career aspirations. Many were of the view that consistent power supply would certainly transform the lives of many young persons who depend on NEPA for power to run their businesses. These include tailors and seamstresses, hairdressers. Those who use generators complained that with the recent increase in fuel prices, they were unsure how their businesses would survive. A participant in Ibadan shared his views:

Me, I would have loved it if NEPA can give us light 24 hours because I don't have money to buy generator. Every time my customers bring work to my office I have to wait for NEPA people to bring light and at times it causes some problems between me and my customers.

Many, especially graduates, aspired to work in oil companies. Some felt they should not earn less than N100,000, as shown by this participant:

I grew up in Port Harcourt. I don't think after my education I will be happy earning N200,000 a month... I want more than that because I have the pedigree (male, Lagos).

Like me..., I want to be a manager... If I enter a bank after collecting money I will still sit down and start looking up at them; I just imagine myself; sometimes they will say "Ah oh boy won't you go"?... Just imagining myself; putting on tie... (PH)

The greatest challenge for most is 'how to get into university and after that get a good job'. Others felt that education per se in the form of passing 'WAEC, GCE, or going to university was not the challenge, but the challenge is 'how to get money'. A few spoke derogatively about education suggesting that you buy any qualification you like if you have money:

Whether you go university or not ... we're talking about money. Money is the challenge. If you have money there is no challenge. If you have money you can call someone to write GCE for you... they will even bring the WAEC paper to your house.

3.10 What do they think of the future?

People's future dreams may often affect how they behave in the present in order to attain the dream future. Furthering one's education was a major future aspiration of most participants not in university.

For many there is no future for them. Consequently after school, some think the best thing is to travel out of the country, or 'sit down and map out how I'm going to get my own money (by cheating the system).

We have the money, resources, we have everything. ...We have money even more than some European countries, but we don't know how to manage the money. Every time I wake up in the morning, I'm not happy with this country. All my own dream, all my plan is to travel out'.

Some students aspired to travel outside for further education apparently because 'you will be valued more than those that did their course in Nigeria'.

Young women want to be comfortable, not thinking of the massive wealth men aspire to.

Our comfort, you know, as a young lady you'll want to be comfortable. You want to take care of your parents. You want to live in a nice house, buy nice car. You'll always want to look good. You go to banks you see ladies that dress cute, you always want to be like them (Aba).

Young persons aspire to professional jobs, mainly jobs with titles so that 'when you call their names it will Doctor this, and Engineer that, that is what most of them want now'.

Others felt travelling out was not a solution. They wondered who is/are going 'to make' the country if everybody travelled out.

3.11 What do young persons aspire to be?

Many of the graduates aspired to work in the oil industry, where working conditions are among the best in Nigeria. 'In Shell,' an unemployed graduate emphasized, 'I will be earning N250,000 a month, because I'm worth it'.

In terms of jobs, both young males and females listed accountants, medical doctors, and engineers; careers in marketing, advertising, banking, politics, the bar and the bench. Careers in oil companies were, perhaps, the most sought after. As a related point some wanted to be geologists. There were some lone participants who wanted to be a pilot and a governor of Osun State and a president, finance minister.

The forces –police and the military- also were mentioned, as was university lectureship. For a few the only job in the country is politics since 'people know there is money in politics'. Many wanted to be political leaders to impact on people's lives and also to make money. A participant mentioned: *Because of the way things are today, be you doctor, engineer, everybody is aspiring to be a politician because that is where the money is.*

Despite the popularity of 'business' as a profession, very few participants wanted to be businessmen. Those who desired to be businessmen including exporting and importing cited the advantage of being independent, especially since one does 'not have to wait for salary at the end of the month'.

Unlike men who wanted to work in high-ranking money making positions, some women wanted to work in a government ministry, having an office with my own 'seat'. Many of the

females just wanted to be working in a comfortable office and ‘just have a car’. Others strove to be Managers as shown by the following participant from Aba.

When I did my IT at Lever Brothers, I used to see one young (female) Manager. In fact I started aspiring to be like that or even more than her. Because I like everything she does. In the morning when she is coming to work they will carry her to Lever brothers. In fact everything about her I just like because she is a Manager.

For some women, their hopes and aspirations were to be independent, even if they ‘do not have a car’. An Aba participant mentioned:

Even if I don't have a car, I have my own cash, go out buy what ever I want to buy, take care of other people. No guy, no man on earth will ever do anything to me because of money. I'll be on top of the world; heads high. I'll come out in the morning; wear my suit, dress gorgeous. I will take anything I want to take; go to Mr. Biggs.

For some women participants, their main aspirations were hairdressing and related professions. Participants who had only SSCE education aspired to be secretaries, primary school teachers, and nurses. Some who were students or recently graduated, wanted to be newscasters, journalists, and businesswomen.

Others wanted to be actresses. Others wanted caring professions including working in hospitals. There were a few who wanted careers in the core professions as lawyers, doctors, accountants, pharmacists, and bankers. Ladies who worked in banks were particularly admired, apparently because of their smart dressing. A lady in Port Harcourt: *When I see ladies working in banks, I sit down and admire them.* One each wanted an agriculturalist, a civil servant, a writer, a Miss Nigeria, a Chief Justice, a model, a lecturer, a clinical psychologist, and a statistician.

Irrespective of job or professions, participants had in mind what they wanted to be or how they wanted to be seen or remembered for. Their views are classified below. It must be noted that the categorizations are not mutually exclusive.

3.11.1 Rich family breadwinners

Nearly all participants, including men, valued the importance of marriage and children. Another important thing some wanted in life was a ‘good wife’. A participant remarked: *‘Yes! I've seen so many broken marriages... If there's anything I pray for after all those things it is a good wife’.*

The men aspired to be breadwinners for the family. Participants also emphasized the need to care for younger members of the family. The love for younger family member as well as parents, especially the mother, and the need to care for them was almost universal among participants. On the whole, people aspire to be rich with a good job and married with few children. Many of the participants aspired not to have more than three children even if they become stupendously rich.

3.11.2 Fabulously rich persons

A few men, however, wanted to be ‘trillionaires’. Their ambition is to get ‘cool cash’ without corresponding hard work. They were dreaming of the time they too may be able to ‘eat some of the national money’. A Lagos participant did not hide his intentions:

I’m from Delta State and we have oil in my place, so those people eating that money, I want to reach there too. That’s why I’m reading Mechanical Engineering, so that I’ll go there... That’s why I say I’ll still go to that oil place to go and chop that oil money.

‘As for me (name withheld), I want to be a SAN (Senior Advocate of Nigeria). I want to be a perfect lawyer, but if Nigeria decides to be my stumbling block, I will make Nigeria my stepping stone, by defrauding the country.

We dream to have flashy houses, flashy cars and flashy everything.

Like me, I discuss how I will make it, that is making money. Have my own flat, buy Mercedes 190, giving my girlfriend good money, how to find myself at Abuja doing one or two political appointments (Port Harcourt).

I like to be a businessman importing goods of all kinds.... When I get America, London, South Africa and buy goods to bring to Nigeria, so I make my money there. I’ll have a house in America, Germany, London whatever. I don’t have interest in having a house in Nigeria.

On the whole, money was the bottom line for most people. This in itself is hardly surprising as in nearly all societies, money is the underlying reason for most transactions. What was revealing was the amount of money people aspired to and the means of getting rich. The quest for money was so strong that some respondents felt ‘if you have good health but you don’t have money what is the good health for?’ A participant even went further that he would kill for money: *‘To me o, I’ll do anything to have money o! I can even do ritual o’*. Notwithstanding such outlandish and extreme viewpoints, a great many of the participants took the middle-of-the-road approach. Two participants from Makurdi in the Middle belt summed up the aspirational tripod upon which the hopes of middle ground young persons are underpinned.

I value my education, I value my kids, I value my job; that is how to be a good citizen in life.

My future dream is to be a geologist, and my aspirations are getting a good wife by my side with my kids, my house, my car. Just ok; just want to be ok in future.

3.12 **The purchasing power of young persons and how they spend their money?**

Discussions on how participants spent their money were interesting. Many queried how you can spend if you do not have. Lack of money seriously affects the purchasing power of many of the participants. It was clear that most of the participants, for lack of money, buy mainly

cheap products. There was the perception that cheap(er) products are not good and they do buy them because they do not have money to buy the best. It was mentioned in Makurdi for example that:

Sometimes we go for cheaper thing and the cheaper thing is not... valuable or even good for our own consumption or for our own usage so it affects even our health and other things around us because we go for cheap things and so on (Makurdi).

You see your fellow mates buying expensive things you don't have that money to buy.... You go for the less ones and you see the less ones are not very expensive and not very good like the other ones (Makurdi).

It was obvious that in Kano, perhaps unlike in the south, many of the young men relied on their parents for basic upkeep.

Most of the youths here in Kano, most of them rely on their parents for their food, sometimes even cloth...the youths here, Mallanfachi, rely mostly on their parents for these.

Some male participants claimed to have worn their shirts continuously for two or three years. Some said since they cannot afford to buy from a 'boutique' they shop for cheap *ghanjo* - second-hand clothing from the market. Many reiterated that they go to 'bend down boutiques'. They were quick to point out however that they know of 'designers' but they cannot afford. Many claimed they cannot even feed properly, taking only one meal a day at "Mama-put". They can also not afford medical treatment.

The affluent display of wealth by a few, with the majority wallowing in poverty is often cited as a deep source of pessimism. A participant in Ibadan provided a picture:

As a guy, you have a girl friend and you want to go to say Eleyele. You're standing at the bus stop and the sun is hitting you hard; suddenly you see another guy with his girlfriend in a fine car cruising along. You will feel; Is it God that created this one too? The sun will hit you, the rain will beat you at the bus stop.... You know your girl friend can leave you.

On spending habit it was agreed that, on the whole, young women are 'selfish' as they mostly spend money on themselves. Money were spent on two main things: clothing and caring for the skin and hair.

Youths spend money on themselves mostly; when you're a youth; they are most selfish, because you do your manicure, pedicure, your hair, your clothes. Everybody likes to look very good when they are youth. So youths spend money on themselves... (Aba).

Most girls like spending their money on wears. We want to wear the latest things, we want to wear the latest shoes, "Ah have you seen her bag"? that kind of thing (Aba).

Me I like getting the latest fashion that is in vogue; hairstyles, shoes, trousers. I like going on trousers, so jeans and tops.

3.12.1 Food and drink

A few said they take friends out to restaurant. Most youths use their cash on consumables like drinks, and food and other stuff. Excessive spending was reported, particularly in Port Harcourt as illustrated by the two participants below:

Guys do spend their money mostly on drinks. Like Sundays like this you see guys spending close to three to four thousand naira drinking. But your cloth, you may buy this cloth seven hundred naira, you won't buy again but constantly you'll be drinking on Sundays; you take two bottles of Star or small Stout

I want to agree with him. If you really want to see where guys really spend, Sunday go to any drinking parlour, look on their tables, you'll see, the tables will tell for themselves.

Unlike the men, none of the women mentioned drinking with friends as means of relaxation. However, some mentioned a stroll to fast food joint— mainly Mr. Biggs – to have a meal, either with or without a male partner. A participant in Port Harcourt explained:

To me relaxation is a coll environment, clean and quiet. As for going out, I don't really need a guy, I can take myself out. With N250 I can at least buy a bottle of mineral and meat pie.

3.12.2 Music and Internet surfing and GSM

Music cassettes are also mentioned. A few others did spend on browsing at Internet cafes. Some also mentioned spending on their mobile phones.

3.12.3 Clothes

It appears that money is spent on two main things: clothing including shoes for themselves and spending in cash or otherwise on their girlfriends for the men. It was clear that many preferred to spend their money on things that will impress others. Some of the men felt that spending on clothing was essential because 'we want to look good so that when a girl sees you even if you don't have money your clothes will speak for you'. In Kano most of the participants mentioned that they spent money mainly on clothes, cosmetics, creams (in Kano bleaching ones), perfumes, shoes. In Ibadan spending on underwears appeared to be the main one.

3.12.4 School items

Female students mentioned spending on education: including recommended books and handouts. Many, especially students or those preparing to attend universities, spend their money on 'many things for school'. These include videos, television, CDs, rugs, carpets. It was explained that these are used to arrange your room 'so that it would look good'.

3.12.5 Buying things for a future home

In Kano, some young female spend their money buying small things mainly kitchen item which they intend taking to their marital homes.

3.13 **Young persons role models or individuals they hold in high esteem**

Modeling ones life on others is an essential part of behaviour change as it often leads to imitational learning. A participant in Kano noted: 'Imitation is part of the youth. I want to be like this person'. A male participant in Makurdi threw some light on this:

They make us; that is they influence us; we take it as a challenge to be like them...They have influenced me in such a way that I want to be like them; that's to serve my country and be a great man in my country ...They do influence our lives because when we look at them we would say one day we would like to be like them...We feel some day, sometime, something is gonna be happening like that.

Others look at the influence not in terms of sheepish imitation or growing up to be like them, but rather in terms of how their work, music, ideas etc has influenced their ideas and beliefs, as the following participant in Makurdi explained:

Actually they really influence our lives through their music, the kind of music they play. Because we go to the clubs parties, it is their jams they're playing, and you just can't help it you just have to dance.

Others thought of heroes in a different way; they are those in posh cars in the fast lane of life.

Actually this stage of life we're in; the people we take to be our heroes are the people who are living large. Young people who have the money to spend, who wear the most expensive clothes, move with the most expensive girls and they drive the best cars; as young men that's what we see as heroes (Makurdi).

3.13.1 What do young persons want to see in role models?

When asked the traits they wanted to see in their role models or heroes, many participants emphasized integrity, honesty, sincerity, optimism and commitment to work especially given the pervasive nature of corruption in the country. It was important to note that participants in Kano pointed out that the hero could be of any religion. People wanted models to be dedicated and take pleasure in what they do.

Young persons look up to several role models. They ranged from humble family members, church leaders to American presidents. Some claimed that role models should only be persons who have worked hard for their success and should therefore not include people who had life carved out for them. Quoting Chinua Achebe, the prominent Nigerian author, a participant explained who a hero is not: 'somebody who had their kernels cracked for them'.

3.13.2 Family

Some mentioned family members they admire; they could be uncles, fathers, elder brothers, etc. Family members were on the top list of heroes. Some were quick to point out that heroes and role models need not be celebrities who are known by everybody, she/he is just somebody whose way of life you admire and want to follow, whether they are family members or not. Many felt they learned a lot in life from family members who live or lived honest but challenging lives. In Aba a participant remarked: *My father is my hero. I see my father as a hero because he achieves anything he wants to achieve.* Asked how his father has affected him, he explained:

He enlightens me about the future. He tells me what is about to happen in the future, that I should do this or I should do that. Those words give me life so I see his speech as a speech.

Some were medical doctors, accountants

I look up to my uncle.... He graduated from polytechnic as an accountant and at the same time wants to go to Law School. I look at him and I say "how I wish I can be like him".

I don't have any (hero) except my father.... Because he taught me to work in a manly way and live well.

Family models were particularly mentioned because they were 'wise and talented' and also looked after the young ones in the family providing financial and career advice.

3.13.3 Religious leaders

Some mentioned that their heroes/models were 'men of God'. Because of their humility and leadership qualities, church leaders particularly those with large follower-ship were mentioned. The most popular was Pastor E.A Adeboye. He was singled out for his humility. A participant explained why his role model is Charles Usuike, the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God Church for dedicating his time mostly for the things of God' (Markurdi). Pastor Chris was admired by some apparently because he 'is a man of God'. Jesus is a hero to a few participants.

3.13.4 Nigerian leaders, statesmen and other national figures

A few, to the chagrin of others, mentioned Nigerian politicians as their heroes. They included Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Aminu Kano (for dying to emancipate the down trodden); Alex Ekueme, Babangida, Abacha, Chuba Okadigbo, Bola Ige, Ojukwu. Babangida's 'fans' believe that 'he is a good man on his own but there were dangerous elements that influenced him and made him turn to another thing'. For his insistence on telling the truth, Wole Soyinka was mentioned. MKO Abiola was loved by some, because 'he was a very hard working man who loved the masses and he spent his money in a rightful manner'. Again he was said to have risen from nobody by selling firewood to become somebody. Abiola's fans believed that if he could make it from that background they too can. Obafemi Awolowo was cited for his visionary politics. The human right activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was a

model for some since he fought for the rights of others as was the human rights lawyer Gani Fawehinmi. For 'being the only person in the country to challenge the Federal government' Adams Oshimole was cited by a participant in Kano. When El-Rufai was mentioned, there was a counter argument that he should be de-listed because he serves 'the evil regime of Olusegun Obasanjo'. Alvan Ikoku was mentioned because he brought 'qualitative knowledge'. Mike Adenuga 'the Globacom man' was mentioned. Female participants included women on the list: the former Aviation Minister, Dr. (Ms.) Kema Chikwe and '*that NAF-DAC lady.... That woman is a heroine. She doesn't believe in bribery and corruption. In fact she is ... really doing a nice work. In fact I like that woman so much*'.

3.13.5 External musicians and pop stars

Tupac, the American rap singer, was mentioned as a hero by some of the young men. Others were Puff daddy; 50 cents

3.13.6 Musicians footballers and pop stars

Fela, the popular and controversial musician was mentioned citing his 'fight for the masses' as a reason. Others pointed out that Fela, because he openly popularized the smoking of Indian hemp, was not a good role model, his followers in the group argued that he never asked anybody to do what he was doing, and that people should consider what he stood for and the injustices he sang about and fought against. Another musician cited is Gbenga Adeboye, not only because of his music but because 'Gbenga himself like to help people'.

The Nigerian footballer Daniel Amokachi was mentioned because 'he's always determined to win a match'.

For female participants, Mary Onyali was mentioned because of his attitude, conviction and frame of mind. Fela because he was outspoken, even not afraid of God. In Ibadan mention was made of Bamiloye; and also RMJ. Others mentioned in Ibadan included Baba-ara; and Shola Alawiye. A participant in Ibadan mentioned Opeyemi Olumolade who was said to be a Mass Communicator; *whenever I see her, I feel very happy because I want to be like her, because I have the mind of being a a mass communicator*. Nigerian female actresses were mentioned only in Ibadan where Genevieve Nnaji was mentioned mainly because of 'the way she dresses, her stature, her steps'. Similar reasons were given for Omotola Jolade. The latter was singularly cited by female participants in the south-west as a 'very beautiful woman', and most of the Ibadan participants confessed that they wanted to be 'as beautiful as Omotola'

3.13.7 External persons

Some mentioned internationally renowned persons including American presidents: Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, and Bill Clinton. Abraham Lincoln was cited because he reportedly started from a humble beginning; Harry Truman, because he rose to be a president from a poor background. Nelson Mandela was mentioned as a good case of what you can achieve when you are determined and focused. He was seen as helping to move South Africa forward after apartheid. Martin Luther King was mentioned, because 'he fought for the freedom of the black in America'. Those who want to model their lives after him argued that if they ever are in the 'helm of affairs' they would want to fight for the less privileged. Kofi Annan for being a distinguished diplomat. Osama bin Laden for standing up to America.

Winnie Mandela, for standing her grounds even after going through tough time, was mentioned so was Lady Diana, for associating with people who were sick and discriminated against and Queen Elizabeth.

3.13.8 Academics/theorists

Marxism still holds sway on a few male students as Karl Marx was a hero mainly to a few of the university students, as well as the German sociologist Max Weber. Both were admired for 'propounding some theories'.

3.13.9 Fictional characters

There was a mention of fictional characters. Notable among them was Romeo, the Shakespearian character. A participant argued his case for picking Romeo:

'He taught me lots of things, love, caring, respect; you see, with all these qualities as a human being if you have them, you don't have problem' (male, Lagos).

A few had intangible things as heroes and role models, apparently because you can 'only chase them but you cannot beat them'. A participant mentioned 'education' as his hero. He equated in this instance, education with fashion. Like education 'you can't beat fashion' fashion will surely beat you because you can't meet fashion.'

On the whole, role models were not necessarily the pop idols or television personalities. They were mostly humble and hardworking family members who have made tremendous impressions on the lives of participants. It was observed that some participants felt they took inspiration from their role models.

A young man should believe in himself as much as the environment will allow him to cope. Let him look at his role model knowing that one day he will get to that height.

3.14 Favourite leisure activities

Leisure and relaxation activities in the form of holidaying, travelling, sightseeing, and exercising were perceived to be for the rich only. Leisure activities they often engaged in included going out to visit friends and drinking with friends, perhaps in a beer parlour. To some of the participants, people who engaged in such activities 'do not have focus in life'. Some queried why drinking beer could be said to be relaxing; to some it was rather stressful. Many preferred to be at home listening to music, watching television including 'Nigerian movies'. Male participants were quick to point out that relaxation is best when 'you're with your babe'. For them, leisure was almost always associated with women and romance. Participants from Ibadan emphasized the importance of being with women as the most important aspect of leisure:

Me, I like chatting with babes, moving up and down. I like having a nice time, 'jiration' and going to clubs, having a nice time.

When I'm with a babe, a beautiful girl, not just a babe; I'm alright. I may not touch her as in having sex with her, but just staying around her 'gisting'; I'm okay. I feel big, I feel on top of the world.

I can imagine myself in my room; you have your CD player beside you and you have may be a drink beside you, with may be you best friend and you're discussing intimate things together.

With my girlfriend discussing intimate things listening to music just relaxing together especially in the evening time when you have a very cool environment or you have AC in your room.

For Christians, the relaxation is in the form of spiritual uplift as shown by a respondent in Makurdi.

I listen to tapes that will help me like Christian tapes and Christian music to help me in order for me to grow higher, to know God, grow higher in the spiritual realm (Makurdi).

For many, lack of money may lead to loneliness since they cannot visit friends. In such situations, leisure and relaxation took the form of sleeping: 'you just sleep, when you don't have anything to do, you sleep till your eyeball comes out'.

Reading a novel as a leisure activity was mentioned only by female participants did. Only a few traveling, and surfing the net.

Similar to men in all respects, except that some women mentioned reading of novels as means of relaxation.

A participant from a middle class home in Ibadan described her relaxing posture: *For me, I like relaxing by switching on the TV, sit on a couch watching cartoons and putting my head on the pillow.* Another Ibadan participant apparently from a working class background described as follows: *Well, as for me, I will like putting on the fan, lay my head and sleep... while listening to music.*

In Makurdi, some participants stated as a young lady 'you relax with your lover' 'even going to a quiet place' and spending time together. On the whole, relaxation and leisure is not a major aspect of their lifestyle. Some did consider leisure and relaxation as over-indulgence. A participant stated that there is no need to 'pet' the body: *I don't have time for myself talk less of relaxing*

4 CONCLUSIONS

The study sought out to understand the lifestyle, as well as the aspirations and hopes of young persons. The youth can be classified broadly into the high class (the hommies); and the low class (the Amakwu youth) with the latter forming the majority. The group is small but more visible, often seen as living rosy lives and described as 'having things going for themselves'.

Dressing was seen as very crucial in the construction of youth lifestyle. Dressing was seen as a means of communication, as a means of sending a message to others; with many stating that 'your mode of dressing announces who you are'. Many, particularly females, concluded that they may not have time for persons whose dressing does not 'sell him' well. A clear implication is that any visual campaigns need to pay even more attention to appropriate mode of dressing. In terms of preference, most preferred western dressing for most situations for its smartness. The use of jeans by women for example enabled them to 'climb motor bikes'. In a sense, therefore, western dress is an essential characteristic of urban, educated, young persons.

In terms of food, both young men and women prefer eating their ethnic food at home. However, whenever they went out to posh restaurants, or fast food facilities, women were known to eat something different, often western food, while the men insist on 'going traditional'. On the whole, women loved 'light food' to keep them in shape as many preferred slim bodies (Lekpa).

Young persons who work, the feeling of being employed was 'good' and self-fulfilling and most considered themselves lucky. In a country of ever increasing number of unemployed graduates, being employed gave a young person respect in the community. For many youngsters who work, the excitement of 'leaving home in the morning and coming back in the evening' was what made the heart beat. Many enjoyed the thrill of meeting other persons at the workplace, and for some others, an opportunity of putting on their best clothes to work since 'the way you dress to the office...earn you respect'. Both employed and unemployed participants mentioned three things that they considered essential at the work place: the salary (especially where cost of travelling to and from work is high) and how good they care for the staff and the level of stress associated with it. Women detest sexual harassment, intimidation, and coercion, which sometimes do take place at the workplace. Notwithstanding their age, young persons expect to be respected at the workplace, and request to be given the chance to perform.

For many without jobs, the spectre of joblessness was humiliating. Their feelings about lack ranged from frustration and disappointment to utter annoyance. Respondents who were not unemployed or those who have ever faced long periods of unemployment were asked to describe how and what they felt being unemployed. Some described it as 'being cheated, an embarrassment, felt alienated, and downcast'. Many were at pains to point out how unemployed youth may often be wrongly accused by friends and family members of petty thieving of small household items including apparently because they were unemployed and therefore

could be the likely perpetrators arguing that ‘if you leave home by 7:30 am, nobody will come and ask you about a lost underwear’.

Youth lifestyle was found to be affected by the prevailing climate of pervasive youth unemployment. Eating and dressing behaviours were reported to be adversely affected, as unemployed youth are unable to ‘eat well’ or ‘dress well’. An important effect of unemployment is the loss of self-worth and a feeling of being inferior. Respondents reported that, in such desperate situation you only buy cheap things: cheap food and second-hand clothing since ‘you cannot buy designer’ products. Some of the effects may be health impairing. Young women may engage in risky transactional sex for survival by trading sex for money, jobs, or other material gains. It was obvious that many knew the risks associated with such behaviours and dreaded the consequences. A participant noted: *you will find yourself having sickness... and all the men will run away from you. You know your life is finished.* For young men, unemployment can easily send young men into engaging in criminal behaviour. Youth idleness could easily degenerate from touting, to armed robbery.

There are several obstacles which young persons face. The most common was the phenomenon of ‘godfatherism’: and that without a ‘sponsor’ it is very difficult for a young person to succeed. Without ‘connection’ you would find it difficult to find a job, gain admission to university, or gain access to or support from government. Some of the participants decried the discrimination against young persons to obtain jobs because they had no experience; the insistence of ‘federal character’ in job and resource allocation. They were of the view that the recent government directive on retiring age, if implemented well, can open up employment opportunities for young persons.

A key segment of the 15-24 age groups are those in school. While many of them enjoyed school because of friendships they contract with people from other tribes and states, there difficult times for students prior to admission, and if admitted, during the period of study. A great many young persons are disappointed at the poor conduct of public examinations often leading to mass cancellation of results, lack of transparency in university admission process, poor quality of teaching in secondary schools and universities as well as pitiable teaching and learning facilities. Insecurity on campuses arising from cult activities was also a major concern, and for women in particular, sexual harassment and sexual coercion by teachers and lectures, was another issue. For young persons who are self-employed, the influx of cheap imported products that stifle local initiatives was a sore point. The erratic supply of electricity was cited as a main problem for young hairdressers and tailors who relied on power.

While on the whole, young persons were pessimistic about their future; some identified some areas of hope. Some cite the dawn of the computer age, the increase in the number of pre-degree courses, government’s new directive on retiring age, and the toughness of the average Nigeria as pointers of hope in the future when one considers a participant’s view that: ‘when you’re young, time is still ahead’.

For those with no university education, the topmost immediate ambition of most young persons is to enter university. People respond to the highly competitive entry conditions by either learn hard or cheat the system.

A major difference was observed regarding what young persons aspire to be. Many young men wanted to be rich and for the graduates, in order to achieve this, the best place to work was with an oil company or become a politician as noted by one participant: *Because of the way things are today, be you doctor, engineer, everybody is aspiring to be a politician because that is where the money is.* Unlike men who wanted to work in high-ranking money making positions, some women wanted to work in a government ministry, having an office with my own 'seat'. Many of the females just wanted to be working in a comfortable office and 'just have a car'. Irrespective of how they wanted to make money, both males and females wanted three things in life: good job, good spouse, and good home.

Young persons held some pop stars, statesmen and other personalities both Nigerian and foreign in high esteem. The list compiled by female participants was limited, compared to men. Women concentrated mainly on politicians and female artistes, unlike men who included academicians, theorists and even fictional characters. However, the persons most young persons admired most and wanted to imitate were not celebrities but ordinary family members: mothers, fathers, brothers or sometimes church members whose lives they have found challenging and worth emulating.

The group possess limited purchasing power given the key constituents: students, unemployed youth, youth undergoing training or apprenticeship. Women, on the whole, spent their monies on 'their bodies', mainly on clothes, shoes, perfumes, creams, and hair products. Students may also spend on CDs, and on items to decorate their rooms. Men do mainly on food and drinks for themselves and their girlfriends, and on cheap clothing. The initial and recurrent cost of owning a cell phone was also noted as a major source of spending.

On the whole, leisure and relaxation in the form of holidaying and travelling were not part of the lifestyle of the young persons. Men's relaxation activities included drinking. It is important to note that while men almost always wanted to relax with women, most of the women felt they could relax without the company of men'. Reading of novels as a means of relaxation was reported by women only.

On the whole, the evidence shows that irrespective of sex and city of residence, young persons have similar dreams and aspirations: to obtain higher education, secure a good job, be married and have children, and most importantly be financially secure. It may also be useful to describe the target group as an 'aggrieved group'. It overwhelmingly consists of dissatisfied secondary school students; anxious and perplexed school leavers retaking their exams, disenchanted students in higher institutions studying under poor teaching and learning conditions; openly angry unemployed graduates; unfulfilled small scale self-employed beginner businessmen/women; and apprentices. These are the people whose behaviour we intend to change. Their feelings, purchasing power, hopes and aspirations should be taken into account when we design interventions, and more importantly when we want reasons to explain why behaviour change and behaviour maintenance are difficult to achieve.