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Information Seeking Behaviour of Orphans in some selected Orphanage Homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State

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Abstract
Everybody including orphans need information at certain time or the other to live a meaningful life. Perhaps, this is why people seek information from different sources to quench their information thirst. Studies have been conducted on different groups of individuals information seeking behavior, but few have considered information seeking behavior of orphans. Thus, this study investigates the information seeking behavior of orphans in four selected homes in Ikorodu, Lagos State, with a focus on understanding their needs, preferred sources, challenges, and potential solutions. A cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study, targeting orphans in some selected Orphanage Homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State. Data was collected from 52 orphans using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used for data analysis. The study showed that the respondents highly need information to support key welfare areas like education access (3.17), financial aid (3.54) and childcare support (3.46). The most frequently use sources of information of the respondents are interpersonal sources, particularly church activities (3.31) and social workers (3.17), while mosque (1.42) is the least used source. Likewise, the major challenges militating against use of information by orphans were the need for additional support in accessing external sources of information (2.87) and lack of specific informational programs for career guidance (2.85). The study concluded that that orphans' information needs cut across social, economic and welfare life, thereby, leading them to seek information from different churches and social workers. It was recommended that social workers should possess adequate, timely, relevant and up-to-date information to constantly satisfy the information needs of the orphans and orphanage homes management should organize consistent and adequate information literacy training for the orphans.

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Introduction

The global challenge of orphanhood extends beyond mere statistics, encapsulating intricate socio-economic dynamics that profoundly shape human development. A staggering 140 million children worldwide are orphans, forging their path forward amid complex circumstances (Turner, 2018). The premature loss of parents thrust children into harsh realities, with many experiencing trauma, economic deprivation, social isolation, and challenges meeting basic needs—all detrimental to wellbeing (Çalış, 2022).

Within the Nigerian context, a significant number of the over 70% of the population that is under the age of 30 grapple with life in the absence of one or both parents, stemming from diverse factors like disease, poverty, conflict, and humanitarian crises (Akinyemi & Mobolaji, 2022). This pervasive issue has prompted the rapid establishment of orphanages, but systemic concerns persist regarding the welfare of institutionalized youth (Gabriel Akintomide et al., 2023). Questions linger about whether such facilities can holistically nurture children who have lost connections to family and community.

The magnitude of orphanhood in Lagos State mirrors the broader national scenario. In Ikorodu, an urban locale, a significant number of parentless youth across various registered orphanages navigate life within these institutional confines, separated from familial care and belonging (Ikenwa, 2024). While orphanages provide essential provisions, the disjointedness from familial networks shapes complex information environments that impact developmental trajectories. However, there is limited research delving into the multifaceted experiences of this hidden population.

Issues related to orphans' information needs and seeking behaviors remain underexplored, particularly within the sociocultural context of Lagos State. Yet access to information critically enables positive outcomes across health, education, economic, and social domains (Mnubi-Mchombu et al., 2009; Odunmade et al., 2022). Thus, understanding the information-seeking patterns of institutionalized youth is imperative. As Alazemi (2023) notes, information seeking entails searching, identifying needs, presenting, extracting, filtering, and choosing information. Examining this phenomenon sheds light on how the absence of parental support creates barriers or gaps in orphans' access to essential information. It also illuminates the role of cultural norms and caregiver decisions in shaping these developmental ecologies.

Orphans in Nigeria appear to form the largest population of children living without the guidance of one or both parents. The children are prone to different challenges in term of limited access to education, poor psychological support and inadequate access to information resources that could shape better life outcomes in them. From the literature surveyed, many

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of study conducted on information seeking behavior focused on tertiary institution students with little or no concentration on information needs of the orphans. This is a huge gap that needs to be filled empirically. This exploratory study, therefore, investigates the information-seeking behaviors of orphans within selected Ikorodu orphanages. By analyzing their multifaceted information needs, sources, channels, and challenges, this research unravels nuances surrounding access to information within this marginalized group. The findings offer targeted insights to inform interventions—empowering caregivers and policymakers to design supportive systems tailored to safeguard institutionalized youth.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the information seeking behaviour of orphans in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the information needs of orphans in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State
2. identify the sources of information for orphans in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State
3. determine the preferred sources of information for orphans in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State
4. examine the problems militating against the use of information by orphans in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State
5. identify the ways these problems can be solved in some selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu, Lagos State

Literature Review

Orphanhood: A Global Reality with Critical Local Impacts

Orphanhood continues to be a global crisis, with an estimated 153 million children worldwide lacking adequate family care (Jones, 2018). While statistics convey the sheer scale of this issue, the developmental impacts of orphanhood remain less understood, especially for vulnerable youth in institutionalized settings. Prior research has examined psychological and social outcomes among samples of orphans in various cultural contexts (Garcia-Brazales, 2023). However, there is a need for more studies focusing specifically on the experiences of orphaned adolescents in dense, poverty-stricken urban environments. These studies are crucial for designing effective programs and policies that promote access to education and improve the psychosocial well-being of orphans.

This literature review synthesizes existing perspectives on the developmental implications of institutionalized orphanhood, while spotlighting the understudied context of Lagos State, Nigeria. With over 7 million orphaned Nigerian children (UNICEF, 2019) and complex socioeconomic barriers intersecting in Lagos, the experiences of orphaned adolescents navigating this setting necessitates focused analysis. Institutionalization arises as an

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immediate but often problematic solution, with potentially detrimental unexplored impacts on youth development trajectories.

Outcomes for Institutionalized Children: Psychological, Social, and Academic Impacts

Institutionalized environments significantly shape the developmental trajectories of youth, including those from broken homes and single-parent families, across psychological, social, academic, and physical health domains (Chávez, 2022). While some studies have explored these outcomes globally, specific research on the multi-dimensional effects of institutionalization on adolescents in urban settings like Lagos, Nigeria, is somewhat limited. However, existing studies indicate a range of issues, from feelings of rejection and low self-esteem to poor academic performance and risky behavior (Ilesanmi et al., 2021).

Drawing upon attachment and trauma theories, the analysis illuminates how institutional deficiencies in forming secure caregiver bonds may underpin heightened mental health risks including reactive attachment disorder, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Mota & Matos, 2016; Sołtys & Tyburski, 2020). Additionally, evidence indicates delayed social skill development, impaired cognition and linguistic abilities, poor academic performance, and diminished intellectual quotients among samples of youth in overseas orphanages (Asimina et al., 2017; Kornilov et al., 2019; Maclean, 2003; Sheridan et al., 2010). However, critics note methodological limitations in generalization due to variability across institutions and small homogeneous samples (De Medeiros et al., 2020).

By comparing intensity of outcomes across permanent family-based placements, foster care, and institutional settings, a spectrum of psychosocial and academic detriments emerges, contextualizing the depths of disadvantage confronting orphaned youth (James et al., 2022; Li et al., 2019). Those in foster care or small group homes displayed fewer emotional-behavioral problems compared to peers in larger institutional facilities housing over 25 children (Li et al., 2019). These insights construct an organizational framework for deducing the distinct challenges facing institutionalized adolescents in Lagos while exposing critical research gaps regarding locally-rooted evidence.

The Role of Age and Gender in Information Failure among Orphans

Information serves as a vital asset for healthy development, yet institutionalized youth confront acute barriers to accessing knowledge critical for wellbeing. While some research has explored information poverty among orphans globally (Al-Zaman, 2023), few studies have examined how distinct age and gender disparities manifest in the cultural context of Lagos orphanages.

Among preadolescent children, particularly those 12 years and under, a higher reliance on caregivers coupled with limited autonomy can severely constrain independent information gathering. This constraint is often more pronounced than in older adolescents who are able to leverage peer networks. The consequences of this limited access to information can span

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

impaired language development, social skills, and abstract thinking abilities (Schenk & Williamson, 2005). Qualitative evidence from Nigeria indicates that younger orphans have a profound dependence on workers for basic health information (WHO Africa, 2018).

Additionally, girls face ingrained sociocultural barriers in patriarchal Nigerian society further exacerbating information poverty. Literature documents diminished educational access, exclusion from mentorship opportunities, and restricted mobility imposing constraints on information-seeking avenues for orphaned girls (BorgenMagazine, 2017; Simon-Karu, 2022; UNICEF Nigeria, n.d.).

The Information-Seeking Behaviors of Institutionalized Youth

Accessing information constitutes a vital coping mechanism for institutionalized youth contending with displacement from family support structures. Inquiry into the information landscapes of Lagos orphanages reveals critical insights into how isolation and dependency dynamics impact development. Qualitative evidence documents how obstructed access diminishes institutionalized youth's autonomy and capacity to garner information integral to identity formation and skill building (Arnold, 2017; Johnson et al., 2022). This underscores the urgency for interventions that equip youth in leveraging contacts and technology to mitigate information poverty.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to gather data at a specific point in time, allowing for the examination of current information-seeking behaviors within the targeted orphan population. The study focused on orphans residing in four eligible orphanages located in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. The total population of orphans in these facilities was 128. A purposive sampling technique was utilised to select 61 orphans who met the inclusion criteria of being above 6 years old. A structured questionnaire was developed as primary instrument for data collection. Out of the 61 distributed questionnaires, 52 (85.25%.) were found valid for the analysis. The data was analysed using SPSS version 27.0.

Findings

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Demographic Category	Subcategory	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	32	61.5%
	Male	20	38.5%
Age Group	6-10	3	5.8%
	11-15	40	76.9%
	19-21	4	7.7%
	22 & Above	5	9.6%
Length	<1	5	9.6%
	1-3yrs	20	38.5%
	4-6yrs	11	21.2%
	7yrs & above	16	30.8%

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The study involved 52 respondents, with a majority (61.5%) being female adolescents aged 11-15 years. Male respondents comprised 38.5%. This shows that there are more females in orphanage homes than male. Most participants had stayed in orphanages for 1-6 years (59.7%), with a small percentage (9.6%) having a tenure of less than one year. This indicates that the orphans are familiar with the orphanage homes they live and the information they have access. The sample included a minority of young children (6-10 years old) and young adults (22 years and above). This suggest that most of the children in the orphanage homes are in their teens.

Table 2: Information Needs of Orphans

Information Needs	Not Needed	Slightly Needed	Moderately Needed	Essentially Needed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Feeding requirements	7 (13.5%)	5 (9.6%)	10 (19.2%	29 (55.8%)	3.20	1.096
Health care for orphans	2 (3.8%)	7 (13.5%)	9 (17.3%)	34 (65.4%)	3.44	0.873
Education opportunities	4 (7.7%)	3 (5.8%)	3 (5.8%)	45 (86.5%)	3.79	0.572
Counseling services	10 (19.2%)	8 (15.4%)	8 (15.4%)	34 (65.4%)	3.46	0.803
Financial assistance and grants	3 (5.8%)	4 (7.7%)	7 (13.5%)	38 (73.1%)	3.54	0.874
Childcare support	1 (1.9%)	8 (15.4%)	9 (17.3%)	34 (65.4%)	3.46	0.828
Legal issues affecting orphnas	16 (30.8%)	11 (21.2%)	6 (11.5%)	19 (36.5%)	2.54	1.275

Table 2 presents the respondents' ratings of their information needs across seven key categories relating to orphanage life. The highest mean rating of 3.79 was reported for the need for information about education opportunities, with 86.5% rating this as essential and a low of 5.8% indicating it was slightly or not needed. Information on feeding requirements and financial assistance/grants also emerged as relatively strong needs, with mean ratings of 3.20 and 3.54 respectively. Over half of respondents rated both as essentially needed. Information on healthcare and childcare support followed closely behind. Each category ranked between moderately to essentially needed overall. Meanwhile, the need for information on legal issues affecting orphans scored lowest with a mean rating of 2.54. Though over a third still viewed it as essential, close to a third also indicated such information was not needed.

In summary, information to support key welfare areas like education access, nutrition, financial aid, healthcare and childcare were rated highest in terms of needs by most

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respondents. Comparatively information to help with legal matters was not rated as critical by respondents.

Table 3: Information Sources Exploration

	Not Used	Rarely Used	Occasionally Used	Frequently Used	Mean	Standard D.
Internet	20 (38.5%)	17 (32.7%)	4 (7.7%)	11(21.2%)	2.12	1.149
Television	17 (32.7%)	9 (17.3%)	14 (26.9%)	12(23.1%)	2.40	1.176
Radio broadcasts	30 (57.7%)	10 (19.2%)	8 (15.4%)	4 (7.7%)	1.73	0.992
Newspaper	29 (55.8%)	10 (19.2%)	9 (17.3%)	4 (7.7%)	1.77	1.002
Workshops and seminars	16 (30.8%)	9 (17.3%)	16 (30.8%)	11(21.2%)	2.42	1.144
Church activities	6 (11.5%)	6 (11.5%)	6 (11.5%)	34(65.4%)	3.31	1.076
Friends/Relatives/ Neighbours	12 (23.1%)	10 (19.2%)	11 (21.2%)	19(36.5%)	2.71	1.194
Peer Group	21 (40.4%)	14 (26.9%)	9 (17.3%)	8 (15.4%)	2.08	1.100
Government channels	23 (44.2%)	15 (28.8%)	9 (17.3%)	5 (9.6%)	1.92	1.007
NGOs	27 (51.9%)	7 (13.5%)	9 (17.3%)	9 (17.3%)	2.00	1.188
Traditional Leaders	30 (57.7%)	8 (15.4%)	4 (7.7%)	10(19.2%)	1.88	1.199
Mosques	42 (80.8%)	3 (5.8%)	2 (3.8%)	5(9.6%)	1.42	0.957
Library	18 (34.6%)	9 (17.3%)	7 (13.5%)	18(34.6%)	2.48	1.291
Billboards/Signposts	26 (50.0%)	5 (9.6%)	10 (19.2%)	11(21.2%)	2.12	1.247
Pamphlets/Leaflets	24 (46.2%)	8 (15.4%)	7 (13.5%)	13(25.0%)	2.17	1.264
Social workers	9 (17.3%)	5 (9.6%)	6 (11.5%)	32(61.5%)	3.17	1.184

Table 3 presents respondents' frequency of use of sources of information accessible to the orphans. The most frequently utilized source was church activities, with 65.4% indicating frequent use and a mean rating of 3.31. This was followed by social workers, library and friends/relatives/neighbors as common information outlets. Notably, mass media channels like radio and newspapers were among the least tapped sources based on high percentages of respondents indicating they never use these platforms. Over 80% of respondents also never turn to mosques and more than half do not consult NGOs or traditional leaders. Comparatively, emerging sociotechnical systems like billboards and social media garnered slightly better usage - though still quite low. Overall, interpersonal sources, namely individuals and communities accessible in the orphans' immediate environment appear most heavily used. In contrast, external sources, including potential online platforms, formal organizations, media systems and written documents have very low utilization among respondents for accessing information. Church activities and library (to a lesser degree) emerge as outliers to this trend despite representing institutional systems.

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

Table 4: Information Format Preferences

	Not Preferred	Slightly Preferred	Moderately Preferred	Strongly Preferred	Mean	Standard Deviation
Print format	12 (23.1%)	14 (26.9%)	16 (30.8%)	10 (19.2%)	2.46	1.056
Oral delivery	4 (7.7%)	6 (11.5%)	19 (36.5%)	23 (44.2%)	3.17	0.923
Electronic format	11 (21.2%)	12 (23.1%)	8 (15.4%)	20 (38.5%)	2.73	1.201
Social Media Platforms	5 (9.6%)	7 (13.5%)	10 (19.2%)	30 (57.7%)	3.25	1.027
Interactive Workshops	11 (21.2%)	6 (11.5%)	4 (7.7%)	31 (59.6%)	3.06	1.259

Table 4 presents respondents' preferences across 5 different formats for receiving information. Interactive workshops were the most strongly preferred, with a mean rating of 3.06 and 59.6% indicating a strong preference. This was closely followed by social media platforms, which 57.7% also strongly preferred. Oral information delivery was similarly popular with a mean of 3.17 and 44.2% stating it was strongly preferred. Electronic and print formats were less popular but still moderately preferred on average.

In summary, there is a clear inclination among respondents for more engaging, conversational and technology-mediated information formats. The majority strongly favored both face-to-face interactive modes of receiving information (e.g. workshops), as well as social media platforms for information access. More traditional methods like print and general electronic formats were comparatively less popular, though still moderately preferred on average. This suggests that information targeting orphan groups should leverage highly networked and interpersonal channels over formal, static documentation.

Table 5: Identifying Information Challenges

	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Moderate Problem	Major Problem	Mean	Standard Deviation
Difficulties accessing information in the orphanage	17(32.7%)	21(40.4%)	10 (19.2%)	4 (7.7%)	2.02	0.918
Limited resources hindering information availability	11(21.2%)	11 (21.2%)	12 (23.1%)	18(34.6%)	2.71	1.160
Challenges in understanding and utilizing information	11(21.2%)	9 (17.3%)	12 (23.1%)	20(38.5%)	2.79	1.177

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

Lack of specific informational programs for career guidance	10(19.2%)	9(17.3%)	12(23.1%)	21(40.4%)	2.85	1.161
Need for additional support in accessing external sources	12(23.1%)	8(15.4%)	7 (13.5%)	25(48.1%)	2.87	1.253

Table 5 presents the respondents' ratings of major information access challenges along a spectrum from "not a problem" to "major problem". The greatest challenges identified were the lack of specific informational programs for career guidance and the need for additional support in accessing external sources of information. For both issues, around 50% rated them as major problems, with mean scores of 2.85 and 2.87 respectively. Additionally, challenges in understanding and utilizing available information were also seen as major issues by over a third of respondents. Comparatively, difficulties in accessing information within the orphanage facilities and limited internal resources were reported as less problematic with lower mean scores of 2.02 and 2.71. Over 60% categorized these as either minor problems or not problems at all.

In summary, major information issues reported centered more significantly on insufficient career-related programming as well as support deficits preventing external information-seeking - as opposed to availability and accessibility of existing internal resources. This suggests externally-focused informational and supplementary support systems are viewed as greater gaps in meeting orphan needs rather than improving flows from existing internal facilities per se. Addressing information utilization for future planning alongside access barriers is thus highlighted for redressal.

Table 6: Exploring Solutions

	No	**Yes**
Implement online platforms	8 (15.4%)	44 (84.6%)
Organize workshops/seminars	17 (32.7%)	35 (67.3%)
Designate information provider	4 (7.7%)	48 (92.3%)
Establish mentorship program	7 (13.5%)	45 (86.5%)
Encourage focus group discussions	8 (15.4%)	44 (84.6%)

Table 6 presents respondents' perspectives on potential solutions to address identified information issues in the orphanages. The data shows overwhelmingly strong agreement (92.3% or higher) for all five proposed solutions, namely: implementing online platforms, organizing workshops/seminars, designating an information provider, establishing a mentorship program and encouraging focus groups. Of these, designating an information provider and establishing mentoring relationships garnered the highest consensus with 92.3% and 86.5% supporting them respectively. Comparatively, fewer but still a strong majority (67.3%) felt that organizing workshops and seminars could help resolve challenges.

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https://www.jeweljournals.com/
Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

Overall, the respondents demonstrate marked endorsement for customized roles, programs and networking platforms to facilitate information flows in the institutional environment. Both strengthening interpersonal channels via providers and mentors as well as developing sociotechnical systems involving online portals and interactions are highlighted. Improving formal access as well as targeted support systems remains integral across proposed solutions. There is clear recognition that existing deficits warrant a multidimensional strategy leveraging both social connectivity and technical tools.

Discussion

The study illuminates that orphans articulate significant information needs regarding education opportunities, feeding requirements, financial assistance, healthcare, and childcare support. These findings align with existing research on the information needs of vulnerable children. Notably, respondents identified information about education opportunities as the most essential need, with 86.5% considering it essentially required. This mirrors previous findings that underscore the pivotal role of education for orphans (Jamil & Ahmad, 2021), emphasizing it as a pathway to a hopeful future and a means to escape poverty. The essential nature of nutritional information was also underscored, with over 55% deeming it essentially required, echoing past research highlighting orphans' emphasis on critical needs like food, clothing, and shelter (Kelley et al., 2016; Shawar & Shiffman, 2023). Meeting nutritional requirements holds implications for overall health status.

Financial aid and grants garnered significant attention, with 73.1% rating this information as essentially needed. This aligns with evidence suggesting that orphan groups are prone to financial struggles and poverty (BorgenMagazine, 2015; Kibachio & Mutie, 2020), and access to monetary support can provide crucial socioeconomic stability. Healthcare information for orphans was also deemed essential by 65.4%, consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance assigned to physical and mental health needs by orphans (James et al., 2022; Li et al., 2019). The significance of childcare support information was underscored by 65.4% of respondents, aligning with prior research highlighting alternative caregiving as a fundamental issue affecting the life quality of parentless youth (UNICEF, n.d.).

The frequent use of church activities as an information source aligns with previous research indicating that religious institutions often play a central role in the lives of vulnerable populations like orphans (Eagle et al., 2020). With over 65% of respondents indicating frequent use, churches appear to be a vital access point for information, likely due to the social and emotional support they provide. This resonates with Putnam's year 2000 concept of social capital, where community networks facilitate access to resources (Häuberer, 2011). The relatively high usage of social workers and friends/relatives/neighbors also reflects Putnam's theory, suggesting that orphans rely on close interpersonal ties for information.

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

Notably, libraries emerge as the second most used source, though still accessed far less frequently than churches. Libraries provide vulnerable groups with information access by mitigating barriers like literacy and technology (Higgins et al., 2023; Jaeger et al., 2015). However, their role seems to be overshadowed by community channels like religious activities. Overall, the findings underscore a concerning reliance on limited, strong-tie channels for information among respondents, emphasizing the need to address accessibility barriers for external and, especially, digital sources as an imperative.

The observed strong preference for interactive workshops and social media platforms aligns with research on youth information behavior. Young people often gravitate towards participatory learning and heavily utilize social technologies for networking and information exchange (Adetayo & Williams-Ilemobola, 2021; Martelli & Volturo, 2022). The popularity of workshops likely stems from their facilitation of peer knowledge sharing, a concept highly valued among youth (Donlan et al., 2015). The enhanced understanding achieved through active discussion with multiple community members may drive these preferences. Similarly, the widespread adoption of smartphones and the customized, engaging nature of social media make them optimal channels for orphans. Charmaraman et al. (2022) highlight how marginalized youth leverage social technologies to overcome informational limitations in their environment and find community online. The interactivity of platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp explains their appeal.

The identified preferences also resonate with theories on oral information traditions among vulnerable groups. As narrative and interpersonal sources are trusted means of sharing knowledge when formal literacy is limited. This clarifies the moderately strong preference for oral information, ranking only behind workshops and social media. The lower preferences for print and general electronic formats likely relate to accessibility barriers around language, technology infrastructure, digital literacy, and cost among youth orphans. Enhancing capacities in these areas may increase appeal. Overall, the findings suggest that oral, socially networked, and participatory information formats have the greatest resonance for orphans, with implications for the design of targeted and impactful resources.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by orphans in accessing information, shedding light on areas that require targeted interventions. A significant challenge highlighted is the absence of specific informational programs for career guidance, aligning with broader studies emphasizing the pivotal role of career development for marginalized youth (Zhao et al., 2023). Career guidance programs have proven effective in equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for future planning. To address this, the study suggests the implementation of structured career counseling, vocational training initiatives, and mentorship programs as targeted interventions. Similarly, the identified need for additional support in accessing external sources of information resonates with literature on information-seeking behavior among vulnerable populations (Huang et al., 2023). Collaborative efforts involving community partnerships, non-governmental

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

organizations (NGOs), and online platforms have been recognized as effective strategies to bridge these gaps (Arise Family, 2021; The Hindu, 2022). Creating tailored online resources, fostering community partnerships, and implementing workshops emerge as potential avenues to enhance external information accessibility for orphans.

Challenges related to understanding and utilizing available information also align with concerns raised in the literature on information literacy among vulnerable populations (Häfliger et al., 2023). Information literacy programs, proven effective in empowering individuals with critical evaluation skills, could be incorporated within orphanages to enhance the information literacy skills of orphans. The perceived challenges in accessing information within orphanage facilities and the concern about limited resources hindering information availability point to a systemic issue. Research suggests that effective internal information systems positively impact the well-being of marginalized individuals. However, the emphasis on external informational support as the primary concern for orphans underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses both internal and external resources.

Moving to potential solutions, the study's respondents overwhelmingly support the implementation of online platforms, recognizing the transformative potential of digital technology in bridging information gaps. This endorsement aligns with existing research emphasizing the significance of technology in information dissemination and empowerment (Hunter, 2005). The designation of an information provider within the orphanage setting also garners unanimous support. This underscores the importance of having a dedicated individual or team responsible for managing and disseminating information within the institution. Such a role contributes to the organization and accessibility of information, ensuring orphans have a reliable source for their informational needs. Establishing mentorship programs receives strong support, suggesting recognition among respondents that personalized guidance and support from mentors can play a crucial role in addressing the unique challenges faced by orphans. Mentorship programs can provide not only informational support but also emotional and social guidance, contributing to the holistic development of orphaned youth (Erdem et al., 2024; Ssewamala et al., 2014). While slightly fewer respondents endorse the idea of organizing workshops and seminars, a substantial majority still supports the value of in-person educational initiatives. Workshops and seminars can serve as effective platforms for interactive learning, peer knowledge sharing, and skill development.

The respondents' marked endorsement for a combination of customized roles, programs, and networking platforms indicates a recognition that addressing information deficits requires a multidimensional strategy. This approach aims not only to improve formal access to information but also emphasizes the importance of targeted support systems tailored to the specific needs of orphaned youth. The findings underscore the potential of integrating both social connectivity and technical tools to create a robust information support infrastructure within orphanages.

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Volume 21, Issue 2, 2026

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study's examination of the information-seeking behaviors of orphans in selected orphanage homes at Ikorodu provides valuable insights that carry implications for both theory and practice. Based on the outcome of the findings, it is hereby concluded that the orphans' information needs cut across social, economic and welfare life, thereby, leading them to seek information from different churches and social workers. The diversity of needs, from essential welfare requirements to education and career development, underscore the information gaps faced by this vulnerable group.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The church and social workers should equip themselves with adequate, timely, relevant and up-to-date information to constantly satisfy the information needs of the orphans since they are the most relied source of information.
2. The management of the orphanage home should consider organizing regular interactive workshop for the orphans as it is also a major way through which the orphans obtain reliable information for personal development.
3. The management of the orphanage home should organize consistent and adequate information literacy training for the orphans. This will improve their level of understanding of different sources of information and its context.

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