**Exposure to, and Public Perception of Media Messages on NIN Scheme Campaign among Residents of South-East, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The issue of proper identification is one that has raised concern among governments, institutions and individuals alike. In Nigeria, the Federal Government introduced the National Identification Scheme (NIN) to address the problem of identification. To create awareness of the scheme, several media campaigns have been broadcasted to sensitize Nigerians on the need to get their NIN, while organizations/institutions used NIN as a means of identification for citizens. However, the extent to which these campaigns have been successful is still unknown. This study therefore sought to analyse South East residents’ exposure to, and perception of these messages, and whether it has influenced them to get their NINs. The general objective of this study is to ascertain the “Exposure to, and Public Perception of Media Messages on National Identification Number (NIN) Scheme in South East Nigeria.The study adopted the survey method with 432 residents in South East Nigeria (Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo). Data was analysed and presented using frequency tables, mean and standard deviation. The result of the study shows that there is absolute knowledge of NIN Scheme by residents in South-east, with the mainstream media especially Newspapers, Televisions and Billboards leading as preferred media for information relating to NIN enrolment; while social media complements the use of mainstream media as an effective channel of message delivery for NIN Scheme. Findings also reveal that infrastructural development is vital for the effectiveness of the NIN Scheme Ecosystem, and that grassroots mobilisation is a key strategy in mass mobilization on issues of public interest.

**Keywords**: National Identification Number, NIN Scheme, Exposure, Campaign, Perception, Media Messages.

**Introduction**

Improper Identification is fast becoming an issue in our society that globally requires deliberate attention from the government, institutions and individuals. In spite of the various measures in many developed and developing Countries on proper identification, different world leaders still find it a daunting challenge in getting the exact number of their population and to answer the question of who is who. It is noticed that a billion people globally, with approximately half in Sub-Saharan Africa lack a government-recognized proof of identity and consequently face barriers to accessing critical services (Awodele & Adelekan, 2021). The 2018 update of the Global ID4D Data set shows that an estimated one billion people globally face challenges in proving who they are because they lack official proof of their identity. As a result, they struggle to access basic services including healthcare, education, financial and mobile services, thus, may miss out on important economic opportunities, like participating in the digital economy or formal employment (The World Bank Group, 2018). It is for these reasons that the “2030” provision of Identity for All has become an agenda shared by the global community as part of the UN’s sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The NIN Scheme was introduced to leverage existing capabilities and enrolment facilities of government agencies, partners and the private sectors in Nigeria, as opposed to building new ones. The approach of enrolment also constitutes trusted partners and a pay-per-play model for successful enrolments (Aziz, 2019). However, getting Nigerians to register with this well-developed digital identification programme require media campaign with appropriate messages to not only create awareness but strengthen NIN increased registration. This will help deliver the Federal Government of Nigeria’s development agenda, provide for key government services, such as Social Safety Net, Agriculture, Pension scheme, Health Care, Education, Financial Inclusion, law Enforcement, Election, Terrorism, to mention but a few (Jokosenumi, 2018).

The National Identification Number (NIN), a digital identification system, is a set of non-intelligent numbers, randomly generated by Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) upon completion of the de-duplication process, to provide the ‘useable’ component of the unambiguous and unique identification of an individual, using his/her biometric and demographic data. NIN is the symbol of the key deliverable of the National Identity Management System (NIMS) based on the National Identity Database (NIDB), which will be used to provide authentication and verification services. Once the NIN is assigned, the Front-End Partner (FEP) is notified as well as the applicant. It ensures building or having tapped into a Single Version of Truth, the Private Blockchain infrastructure that will establish Trusted Tokens for requesting clients, building a reliable layer of trust that will cross borders and regions over time. Thus the slogan “One Person, One Identity, Multiple Tokens, One Lifetime” (Durodola, 2018).

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) aims to develop implementation strategies for identity proofing to ensure that the enrolment model would be non-discriminatory, thereby reducing the risk of exclusion of marginalized groups, refugees and non-documented persons (Pangestu, 2020). The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), as of 2019, had captured over 33 million Nigerians out of 190 million Nigerians in its database. In terms of geo-political enrolment figures in Nigeria, the South-West and North-West are topping the National Identity Database with 9.1 million and 5.9 million enrolments respectively, while the South-East is trailing the other zones in national identity registration (Odebode, et al., 2019).

Looking at the above figures, it is important to note that leveraging the services of stakeholders and front-end partners for enrolment is not just enough but creating enough media awareness will be beneficial to improve the enrolment figures. Influencing individuals’ decision in identification matter requires the ability to make the exposure to and to shape people’s perception about identity to validate the possibility of changing one’s decisions which intimately improves significantly general identity status (NIMC, 2017).

This study will be significant in revealing the current status of public perception of programmes initiated by the government of Nigeria especially as regards the NIN Scheme. The findings of this study will also be significant in equipping media practitioners with knowledge of the way the public make sense of the reality of media messages of government programmes and how such media messages shape public opinion over time. Consequently, this study aims to find out the:

1. Level of exposure to the NIN scheme
2. Effects of media messages on NIN enrolment
3. Challenges respondents encounter when getting their NIN

**Literature Review**

Digitalized identity NIN has no doubt enabled government and institutions to affirm the identity of its customers with ease, necessary for security in government administrative duties, where the e-ID cards served as identity documents to distinguish citizens for taxation, conscription and crime control (Olaniyi, 2017). For instance, Ketan and Yunak (2005) see NIN as an identification system that has the potential to prevent or detect terrorists, must have functionality that takes into account the activities and circumstances of terrorists, therefore essential to review the key methods used by terrorists to enter a country or to operate within its borders. Furthermore, it is assumed that issuing a national identity card to all citizens would help governments to combat social maladies such as terrorism, illegal immigration, fraudulent activities, as well as acceleration of the social service delivery mechanism (Anisur, 2018). This concurs with an earlier submission by Armstrong (2017), who opines that NIN will curb identity theft, a deliberate use of someone’s identity, usually as a method to gain financial advantage or obtain credit and other benefits in other person’s name like credit card number, without their permission to commit crimes. Identity theft and financial fraud is not new in Nigeria as Ebem (2017) noted that with over 97 million internet users on a daily basis, 45.3% have suffered internet crime and identity theft in the third quarter of 2015

Given the importance of this scheme, there have been various media messages on the importance of NIN enrolment. This is to sensitize Nigerians to key into the scheme. However, Moye (2018) contends that the perception of NIN through the KYC (Know Your Customer) banking system seems to influence applicants more than media messages. On February 14, 2014, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), through the Bankers’ Committee and in collaboration with all banks in Nigeria, launched a centralized biometric identification system, named Bank Verification Number (BVN), for the banking industry. In the study, biometric information is first used to identify and verify individuals who have an account(s) in any Nigerian financial institution, and, second, establish the credit history of the individual to prevent identity theft, thus reducing non-performing assets for Nigerian banks.

However, the Nigerian Interbank Settlement System (NIBSS), owned equally by all licensed banks in Nigeria and by CBN, maintains the ID repository for BVN and provides verification services. The verification services involve 30-40 million Bank account holders; 5,000 bank branches with 10,000 stations with biometric and demographic details of customers. A cumulative reading of the KYC Guidelines and the CBN Anti-money Laundering/ Counterfeiting of Terrorism Regulations 2013 lays down the specific state-issued identification documentation permitted for opening a high-value account. These include the INEC voter card, the National Identification Management Commission (NIMC) National Identification Number card (NIN card), international passport, driver’s license, tax assessment slip, social security records and permanent residence permit bearing a photograph, NIN, Voters Cards, Drivers’ Licence or International Passport, etc. CBN has made BVN mandatory for all banking transactions; that any customer without any Identification Documents is deemed noncompliant with KYC rules, and hence ineligible to carry out financial transactions. The program started in February 2014, and began enrolments in August 2014. From the survey carried out, the programme. By March 2015, about 6.75 million records are retained in the BVN registry. That shows high compliance, especially with the awareness and acquisition of the NIN permanent residence permit bearing a photograph (Moye, 2018). The study suggests high compliance within one year of study, and basically, as customers are registering for their BVN, they are forced to obtain their NIN, which creates high awareness.

A study on citizens’ perception towards the Philippine identification system through the lens of the technology acceptance model was conducted byAceron (2020) to evaluate the perception of the Filipino citizens towards the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys). The study also investigated the citizens' opinions on facilitating and hindering factors that ensure PhilSys ID's success. Based on the findings, the researchers identified 10 patterns in the citizens' responses and developed categories to provide the overall scope of their responses. These are; Corruption and Bad Governance and Misuse of the System, Ineffective Implementation of PhilSys ID, Lack of IT Skills of Public Officials and Availability of Secure IT Infrastructure, Lack of Internet literacy, accessibility to internet and technology and efforts of the government to inform the citizen, Lack of Cooperation and Participation of Citizens, Public Awareness through the media, Data Protection, Privacy & Security, Trust in Government, Government Transparency, Impacts of COVID-19.

Based on the responses, citizens suggested nine collective categories, which include among others, to provide public awareness through information dissemination, seminars and training; the hindering factors to awareness of NIN messages results from little knowledge on available media by the respondents. The work suggests the need for attitudinal change to ensure the level of awareness is matched with strategies designed to influence positive adoption of messages on NIN scheme programmes in creating awareness among Philipinos. Again, Public Awareness through information dissemination, seminars and training education appears more effective. Also; studies are related as they employed communication tools in significant mannerism knowing the peculiarities of their target audience (Aceron, 2020).

A study by Abdulkareem et al. (2024) was conducted to identify the factors influencing electronic identification adoption in Nigeria using the Technology Acceptance Model and self-determination theory as bases. The researchers collected 692 responses using a questionnaire, and the data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling. The findings indicate that the strongest factor affecting the adoption of electronic identification is perceived credibility, followed by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Furthermore, electronic identification adoption is also predicted significantly by digital literacy, trust, and perceived autonomy. (Abdulkareem et al., 2024)

Another study aimed to identify the use of social media by University students of Saudi Arabia and to examine the extent to which social media strengthens their national identity. It also explores gender and academic level-based differences in social media’s impact on strengthening national identity. Data were collected from 283 university students and questionnaires were used to examine the impact of social media on students’ national identity. The findings revealed that 97.17% use social media every day, while 2.47% use social media poorly. Furthermore, the results indicated a significant impact on the use of social media in strengthening national identification number (Mohammad, 2018) Also, for effective change which can only be achieved by incorporating variety of communication methods, it is expedient to demand extra effort in upgrading to the level of technological prowess in vogue.

The study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a theoretical framework for understanding the adoption of the NIN scheme in Nigeria. TAM is a popular theoretical framework for understanding how individuals adopt new technologies. The model was first proposed by Davis (1989) and has since been applied to various technologies, including electronic identity (e-ID) systems. The TAM model implies that the usage of new technologies is prompted by perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU).

**Methodology**

This research adopted a quantitative research design to examine the public perception of media messages on the NIN scheme in Nigeria. The population of this study comprised the residents of South-East Nigeria, particularly those who have obtained their National Identification Number (NIN) and are 15 years and above. The choice of the South-East as the population stems from the fact that the research work is a survey that sees Nigeria as a population too large to be studied. For convenience and also to ensure geographical representation, the South-East, which is one out of the 6 geopolitical zones, is to be studied. According to 2006 census, 0-14 years constitute 41.83%, 15-64 was 54.94% and 65+ was 3.23%. So the percentage of ages from 15 and above was 58.17%. From the population census of 2006 the researchers did a projection of 17 years using UNDP’s annual growth rate of 3.2%**.** The projection formula provides that Pp = Gp × Pi × T….. Pi = 3.2% or 0.032, 2023 – 2006 = 17. Going by this projection, the population of two local governments in South-East Nigeria ages So the population of study is 399,846.

The sample size was calculated using Freund and William (1962) statistical model for a finite population

Where: No = Z2 NPQ

N(e)2 +Z2 PQ

No = Initial estimate of sample size

Z = The abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area at the tails.

P = The estimated population under consideration.

e = The desired level of precision or margin of error.

Q = 1-probability of failure

Note:

If No\_\_\_\_ is negligible, then No is satisfactory

*Population*

Note: N is obtained as follows:

N = No

1 + no – 1

N

Where:

n = Sample size and

N = Population

Using the Cochran formula, the sample size was calculated as follows:

No = Z^2PQ

e2

Where: Z = 1.68 (from normal distribution table)

P = 40% or 0.4 (Assumed)

Q = 1-0.4 = 0.6

e = 100% - 99.96% or 0.04%

N = 399,846

= 1.682 x 399846 x0.4 x 0.6

399846 x (0.042) + (1.68)2 x 0.4x0.6

= 2.8224 x 399846 x0.24

(399846 x 0.0016) + (2.8224 x 0.24)

(639.78) + (0.68)

= 270117.19

640.5

= 423

No = 423\_\_\_

Population 399846

0.00106 (i.e. Negligible)

Hence, the sample size of 423

In distributing the copies of the questionnaire, the haphazard and face-to-face distribution method was adopted.

The researchers purposively interviewed one Functional and one Foundational Stakeholders from the five South East States making it up to ten people interviewed. Five NIMC staff were interviewed from the five South East States as Foundational Stakeholders, while five immigration Staff were interviewed from the five East States as Functional Stakeholders.

The study used a Questionnaire and an Interview Guide in collecting data. The questionnaire forms the primary source of data collection. It is a draft in simple sentences, consisting of 70 questions which include open and closed-ended items that are related to the theme of the study. The same questionnaire is used across the South-East states in order to ensure that standardised responses are elicited. The Interview Guide, on the other hand, is drafted in simple language and is administered on the selected key informants on Exposure to and Public Perception of Media Influence on NIN Campaign Scheme in South-East States, Nigeria. Open-ended questions were used in the interview process, which focused on key informants (about 10:2 from each state of the South East Geopolitical Zone; 1 Foundational Stakeholder and 1 Functional Stakeholder).

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

The findings in this study are discussed in this section as they provide answers to the proposed research questions in the study. The findings were used to either strengthen or refute an existing theory in the context of the phenomenon under investigation. In interpreting the qualitative data of this study, in-depth interviews formed the basis for the research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, simply because the research questions tackle the variables studied and can only be expressed one-on-one from the key informants. It is crucial to understand that the interviews were conducted at different settings owing to the peculiarities of the work schedules of the key informants. More so, this research delves into topical issues as discussed with the interviewees who are NIN State Coordinator and NIMC staff and also Deputy Comptroller of Immigration and Immigration Staff.

**Demographic Information of Respondents**

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SN** | **Gender** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Male | 207 | 48.9% |
| 2 | Female | 216 | 51.1% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| **SN** | **Age Range** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | 15-25 Years | 60 | 14.2% |
| 2 | 26-35 Years | 135 | 31.9% |
| 3 | 36-45 Years | 161 | 38.1% |
| 4 | 46 years and above | 67 | 15.8% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| SN | **Marital Status** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Single | 156 | 36.9% |
| 2 | Married | 179 | 42.3% |
| 3 | Divorced | 56 | 13.2% |
| 4 | Widowed | 25 | 5.9% |
| 5 | Separated | 7 | 1.7% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| **SN** | **Qualification** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | No Education | 18 | 4.3% |
| 2 | Primary School | 50 | 11.8% |
| 3 | Secondary School | 92 | 21.7% |
| 4 | First Degree | 166 | 39.2% |
| 5 | Masters | 76 | 18.0% |
| 6 | Doctorate | 21 | 5.0% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| **SN** | **Occupation** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Student | 50 | 11.8% |
| 2 | Teacher | 110 | 26.0% |
| 3 | Petty Trader | 118 | 27.9% |
| 4 | Self Employed | 99 | 23.4% |
| 5 | Unemployed | 46 | 10.9% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| **SN** | **Religion** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| 1 | Christianity | 392 | 92.7% |
| 2 | Islam | 25 | 5.9% |
| 3 | Others | 6 | 1.4% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |

The result of the study as presented on Table 1 shows that there were 207 male respondents while the female respondents were 216 representing. Result also shows that majority of the respondents were within 36-45 years of age and majority were married. Result in Table 1 also shows that 166 of the respondents are first degree holders, and 18 of the respondents had no formal education. It can be seen from Table 1 that only few of the respondents were students and unemployed. It was also found that majority of the respondents were Christians while Muslims and those that practice other religion were 5.9% and 1.4% respectively.

**Research Question one:** **What is the level of knowledge/exposure on NIN Scheme among residents of South-East, Nigeria?**

**Table 2:** Have you been exposed to messages on NIN Scheme Ecosystem Approach?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Exposure to messages on the NIN scheme |  |  |  |
|  | Yes | 423 | 100% |
|  | No | 0 | 0% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100.0%** |
| Frequency in which respondents get such messages |  |  |  |
|  | Rarely | 98 | 23.2% |
|  | Seldom | 140 | 33.1% |
|  | Occasionally | 95 | 22.5% |
|  | Very often | 90 | 21.3% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100%** |
| Medium through which they are exposed |  |  |  |
|  | Media | 79 | 18.7% |
|  | Friends | 80 | 18.9% |
|  | NIMC Newsletters | 89 | 21.0% |
|  | Banks | 101 | 23.9% |
|  | Workshop | 74 | 17.5% |
|  | **Total** | **423** | **100.0%** |

Table 2 shows that all the respondents representing 100% have been exposed to messages on NIN scheme ecosystem approach. The implication of this finding is that media messages on facts about individual’s records that have security implications has the tendency to attract the attention of people easily than media messages on other issues. Hence, knowledge about these kinds of messages is found to be easily retained over a long period of time because of its importance to the individual.

**Interviewee A:** There is awareness of NIN in most places but many people do not know so much about the benefits. A lot of people do not know the usage until when they are being asked of it.

**Interviewee B:** People tend to wait until they are desperately in need of it before they go for it. The media has not done enough especially the mainstream media to create awareness of NIN. Most applicants get information from their service providers like Banks, JAMB, immigration office and more.

**Interviewee C:** I would say that people do not hear. They are very stubborn. They prefer seeking information from their friends and do not put into consideration the peculiarities of the information they are seeking if any of their friends tells them to go to so so so… place; making reference to the person’s experience, or not to go, they take it hook line and sinker. *This supports the quantitative analysis that shows people get information about NIN from banks, their friends and relatives and occasionally from the media of communication.*

**Research Question Two:** **What is the effect of media messages on NIN enrolment among residents in South East, Nigeria?**

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation on the level of Effect of Media Messages on the enrollment figures among residents of South-East, Nigeria**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SN** | **Item Statement** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Criteria** |  | **SD** | **Dec** |
| 29 | Media Messages have opened my eyes that NIN curbs security challenges like kidnapping and insurgency | 79 | 266 | 64 | 14 | **+2.5** | 2.97 | 0.68 | A |
| 30 | Media Messages on NIN have helped the government in economic planning | 117 | 245 | 61 | -- | **+2.5** | 3.13 | 0.63 | A |
| 31 | NIN has helped me to do transactions in banks | 179 | 216 | 28 | -- | **+2.5** | 3.36 | 0.60 | A |
| 32 | Presentation of NIN in my transactions has proven my real identity | 1 | 327 | 40 | 55 | **+2.5** | 2.65 | 0.70 | A |
| 33 | Obtaining NIN through NIN Scheme Ecosystem Approach has greatly solved the problem of dual identity or identity theft | 63 | 317 | 32 | 11 | **+2.5** | 3.02 | 0.57 | A |
| 34 | Since I know the importance of NIN through the media, I always present my NIN anytime I do verification in my office | 125 | 248 | 42 | 8 | **+2.5** | 3.16 | 0.66 | A |
| 35 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Messages makes me go everywhere with NIN in my pocket | 5 | 217 | 19 | 182 | **+2.5** | 2.11 | 0.99 | D |
| 36 | I have not been going everywhere with my NIN even with the knowledge of value of NIN | 56 | 367 | -- | -- | **+2.5** | 3.13 | 0.33 | A |
| 37 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Messages made me believe that NIN is central to realizing economic growth and recovery | 71 | 352 | -- | -- | **+2.5** | 3.17 | 0.37 | A |
| 38 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Messages made me believe that my personal information that is given out is secured | 8 | 360 | 55 | -- | **+2.5** | 2.89 | 0.37 | A |
| 39 | That my personal data can always be provided when authorized for verification purposes | -- | 369 | 54 | -- | **+2.5** | 2.87 | 0.33 | A |
|  | **Cluster Mean** |  |  |  |  | **+2.5** | **2.95** | **0.24** | **A** |

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Dec = Decision

Out of a total of eleven items used to measure the level of effects, ten out of the eleven had mean scores leading to an “Agree” decision. What this means is that the responses had a mean score that fell within the Limit of Real Numbers for “Agree”. The implication of this finding is that information on an individual’s security coming from the media tends to attract more attention. Hence, most of the responses that had the “Agree” decision point to security issues around personal identity. The usefulness of this information makes it attract much attention. This agrees with the TAM maxim that people tend to be predisposed to certain technology because of its usefulness as well as the usefulness of the messages that emanate from it. This model, as proposed by Rogers (1960) thrives on two key principles: “Ease of Use” and “Usefulness”. The former deals more on utilitarian value, while the latter has to do with benefits derived therefrom.

**Interview A:** Generally, the media has not had an impact on disseminating NIN information, especially before the compulsory use of NIN, which commenced on 1ST January 2019. Surprisingly, people were shocked as they went for utilisation of some services and were confronted with the presentation of NIN. Compulsory use of NIN has been in the Act of Parliament 2007 establishing NIMC.

**Interviewee B*:*** People can go to any length to ensure they obtain what will help them solve their economic. Social and political issues. If you ask people going to bank; obtaining their passport, pensioners or children looking for admission to obtain NIN, they can gladly comply 100%. This is evident in the data from the quantitative data above.

**Interviewee C:** The messages on NIN are usually at a level that could be understood by people from all walks of life and usually contain what the individual can do for themselves or for their relatives to ensure it is obtained. Messages usually include possible signs and a message to urge patients to go to the nearest enrollment centre for acquisition. *This simply proves positive compliance.*

**Research Question Three: What are the challenges in getting media messages and education on NIN enrolment among residents in South-East, Nigeria?**

**Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation on the audience language preference in getting media messages and education on NIN in South-East, Nigeria.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SN** | **Item Statement** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Criteria** |  | **SD** | **Dec** |
| 40 | I am less concerned about national issues despite NIN Scheme Ecosystem Campaign | -- | 51 | 372 | -- | **+2.5** | 2.12 | 0.32 | D |
| 41 | There are many centres even private partners, still, I have not obtained my NIN | -- | 46 | 344 | 33 | **+2.5** | 2.03 | 0.43 | D |
| 42 | I cannot leave my business to go to my local government or other centre for enrollment despite the awareness | -- | 56 | 367 | -- | **+2.5** | 2.13 | 0.33 | D |
| 43 | NIMC staff and Front End Partners are not friendly | -- | 39 | 328 | 56 | **+2.5** | 1.96 | 0.47 | D |
| 44 | There are technical issues in generating NIN despite having enrolled | 82 | 119 | 222 | -- | **+2.5** | 2.67 | 0.78 | A |
| 45 | Enrolment centres are too far from my home | 48 | 357 | 18 | -- | **+2.5** | 3.07 | 0.38 | A |
| 46 | Unavailability of power supply in the enrollment centres deprived my from enrolling | -- | 180 | 171 | 72 | **+2.5** | 2.26 | 0.72 | D |
| 47 | I have not heard of NIN Scheme Ecosystem Approach but I have enrolled | 1 | 99 | 291 | 32 | **+2.5** | 2.16 | 0.54 | D |
| 48 | Too many people in the enrollment centres stopped me from enrolling | -- | 269 | 72 | 82 | **+2.5** | 2.44 | 0.79 | D |
| 49 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Approach messages I heard from friends motivated me to obtain NIN | -- | 255 | -- | 168 | **+2.5** | 2.21 | 0.98 | D |
| 50 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Messages on social media and main stream media motivated me to enroll | 115 | 308 | -- | -- | **+2.5** | 3.27 | 0.44 | A |
| 51 | Lack of stable Internet accessibility affected my enrollment | 155 | 223 | 45 | -- | **+2.5** | 3.26 | 0.63 | A |
| 52 | NIN Scheme Ecosystem Messages did not reach the grassroots | 119 | 269 | 33 | 2 | **+2.5** | 3.19 | 0.58 | A |
|  | **Cluster Mean** |  |  |  |  | **+2.5** | **2.52** | **0.16** | **A** |

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Dec = Decision

The implication of the above findings is that infrastructural development is vital for the effectiveness of the NIN Scheme Ecosystem. Also, grassroots mobilisation has been shown to be a key strategy in mass mobilization on issues of public interest. What this means is that any programme or policy of the government that must be sustainable must reach the grassroots and the people at the grassroots level must be involved in the programme for it to be effective.

**Interviewee A*:*** Naturally, people tend to be disinterested on national matters. So I do not expect anyone to be stranded without embracing solution. No rational mortal would ignore what is so important like NIN without critically having a rethink. This response is in agreement with the interpretation of the quantitative analysis showing that lack of trust and nonchalant misbehaviors is dangerous.

**Interviewee B*:*** The poor attitude of everyone is the major challenge. The government, the people all show negative attitude towards this disorder. *People are* not serious. They are so interested in their business more than any other thing and sometimes cause problems for themselves because of their stubbornness*.* This implies that some peopledeliberately refused to adhere to instructions on the way and manner to obtain their NIN.

**Interviewee C:** I know that people are willing to obtain their NIN, but logistics is one of the bottlenecks. Getting the poor and the vulnerable is also a big challenge. This group of people are almost neglected and forgotten in the scheme of things. Also, lack of adequate resources and other things could contribute to the decline of adoptive behaviours. This shows the positive attitude the have-nots show despite all obstacles they encounter.

**Discussion of Finding**

Studies have shown that any programme or policy of the government that is “owned” by the grassroots as a result of effective grassroots mobilisation tends to outlive the government that initiated such a programme and garner much support in the long run (Abrahams and Newton-Reid, 2008; Akbar, 2004). Further findings also reveal that people tend to be discouraged from participating in schemes that do not have enough centres or widespread distribution of centres across the country. The implication of this finding is that convenience of NIN enrolment and registration outlets closer to residents further enhances their participation and can boast mass participation but the reverse will discourage mass mobilization especially in rural areas where some roads are not easily accessible by vehicles which should convey residents to the centres.

**CONCLUSION**

It is the conclusion of the study that audience perception of NIN scheme in South East Nigeria is though not low, but requires deliberate efforts for the media to take responsibility. NIN, because of its importance in our economic, political and social sectors needs a strategic approach from all concerned, the government, and stakeholders. While more of the traditional means of communicating NIN information should be engaged, extending the frontiers of the new media is imperative. Because obstacles in the way of effective dissemination of NIN information are obvious, it is important that these deficiencies are methodically addressed to improve the targeted awareness of NIN scheme in the South East.

The media used by government to convey any programme or policy of government must relate with the frame of mind (understanding) of the target audience. Audience research will help achieve this task. In communicating the essence of any government programme via the media, attention should be given to educating the masses not just about the importance of participating but also about driving home the relevance of sustaining the programme for posterity. This is because any government programme that is not “owned” by the public cannot be sustainable in the long run.

Summarily, the general perception of residents about the NIN Scheme were found to be positive and based on an already built mind-set about the scheme based on some benefits it has for security their identity and serving as a means of reducing identity theft. Research conducted byMarikini **(**2017)on “Public Perceptions on National ID System in Japan”, has reported similar outcome. The result shows that this public relation strategy is reasonable for positive perception. According to him, when the government accordingly launched a new policy called “My Number”, people are reluctant to register to the system, and the registration rate is about 10% of the whole population as of the end of 2016. Another research carried out by Hassan et al., 2020 also emphasized that among other factors, institutional practice and inadequate media coverage are major constrains in NIN campaign (Hassan, Sandip, & Olumide, 2020).

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