

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Demographic information sources and utilization as determinants of educational policy making in South Western Nigeria

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The paper examines demographic information sources and utilization as determinants of educational policy making in South West Nigeria. Using validated and structured questionnaire, the study population of 398 officers in the ministries of education in the affected states were enumerated. The study establishes population census, vital registration, sample survey and internally generated technique as main sources of demographic information. The study also establishes demographic characteristics of religion, age/date of birth, sex, tribe, family type and home location which are injected into the process of education policy making in South West Nigeria. The utilization of demographic information is capable of assisting policy makers to evolve effective education policies at all levels of education. The study also finds out that general sources of information like Internet, radio/television, colleagues and reference books are consulted in the course of searching for demographic data. Appropriate recommendations are made to address some emerging challenges.

**Key words:** Demography, Demographic information, policy making, education policy making and education policy.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized worldwide as the bedrock for national development. No nation can aspire to greatness without giving priority to educating her citizenry. Education according to Orobosa (2010) is an ultimate value and hence through the provision of social service, it is an agent of change. Federal Government (2004) has considered education to be an instrument 'per excellence' for effecting national development. As a social service of national importance, all children of school age should have access to education. Shewawa (2011) states that in a broad sense, education is the process by which the individual acquires the many physical and social capabilities demanded of him by the group into which he is born and within which he must function. Therefore, the government must create enabling environment to acquire the right knowledge through the establishment of functional and affordable education. Education as an

important tool accounts for changes in demographic dynamics. Odumosu et al. (n.d.) say its implications for demographic change were not paid any attention as population growth was not considered a likely problem for the future.

In Nigeria, free Universal Primary Education (UPE) was first introduced in 1955 by Western Regional Government. In 1957, the Eastern Regional Government launched her free Universal Primary Education. Free Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched at National level in 1976. The UPE programme was truncated by the intervention of military in governance. In May 1999, the emergence of democratically elected government led to the introduction of free Universal Basic Education (UBE). The nine years compulsory education under UBE programme has the potential of increasing the pupil enrolment in schools. High school enrolment on the

other hand, has far reaching implications on education policy making process. Therefore, education policy makers could not afford to ignore the use of basic demographic information.

### Literature Review

There are different definitions of demography. According to Thomson (2007) demography is the study of human populations- their size, composition and distribution across place and the process through which populations change. Birth, deaths and migration are the big three of demography, jointly producing population stability or change. From this definition, a population composition will talk about demographic features- age, sex, family and household status. Demography of a given place will also look at the social and economic aspects such as ethnicity, religion, language, education, occupation, income and wealth. Wikipedia (n.d) defines demographic as statistical study of human populations and sub-populations, spatial and temporal changes in them in response to birth, migration, aging and death. Demographic information conveys information expressed in numbers that can easily be used for arithmetic and qualitative analysis while non-numerical demographic is expressed in words or an outcome of processed numerical demographic information. Demographic is therefore the study of population based on factors such as age, sex, race and economic status, level of education, income level and employment among others. ([www.webdynamic.com.au/glossary/d/demographic-characteristics.html](http://www.webdynamic.com.au/glossary/d/demographic-characteristics.html))

A policy is typically described as a principle or rule to guide decisions in order to achieve national outcomes. A policy can be considered as a 'statement of intent' or commitment (Wikipedia, n.d.). Policies are therefore formulated in written formats or unwritten statements usually adopted by governing board or senior governing body within an organization. Policy making on one hand, is the process by which government translates their political, economic, social, education or health vision into programmes, projects and actions to deliver outcomes and desire changes in real world. Education policy is therefore an intended goals and outcomes which government wishes to achieve at various levels of educational system. Education policy making on the other hand, is the process by which government consummates their education visions, goals and objectives into programmes and outcomes using human and materials resources at the point of implementation. Formulating education policies based on faulty demographic information (characteristics) may lead to faulty education policy. Faulty education policies may lead to poor policy implementation. It is in the light of this, that the study investigates the sources and utilization of demographic information as determinants of effective educational policy

making in South Western Nigeria.

The goals and outcomes of education policy are translated into programmes and actions using human and material resources in the process of implementation. Adiele (2006) says the adoption of a national policy on education in 1977 in Nigeria was seen as a great innovation in the school system but 29 years of policy implementation, Nigeria are ever worried on the level of achievement recorded. The poor policy implementation called for education policy reform. Moja (2000) notes that national policy document has been revised twice in 1981 and 1990. The revision of the policy document is to ensure that perceived needs and gaps are addressed to meet the government needs and aspirations. Machin and Vignoles (2006) note the poor and apparently falling standards in school, poor skills and persistent inequalities in education are due to deficiency in education policy. They therefore called for paradigm shift in education policy direction in United Kingdom.

In Nigeria, Alaba (2010) writes that Universal Basic Education provides for children between the ages of three and fourteen. It is expected that pupils will spend 3years each in Early Children Care Development and Education (ECCDE), primary and junior secondary Education. In Nigeria, it covers other special areas like mass literacy, nomadic and migrant children. The implementation of UBE is faced with many challenges which include among others; provision of infrastructural facilities, enrolment of pupils and provision of quality teachers and more importantly the non-utilization of accurate demographic information (characteristics). One singular way to bridge the gap in education policy implementation is to seek access and utilize accurate demographic information in education policy formulation. The linkage between demography and education planning and policy making must be well understood. On one hand educational policy establishes the principles and rules that guide the direction to achieve intended education outcomes. Educational planning on the other hand sets up human and material resources with which policies are implemented. Educational policy and planning can only lead to intended outcomes if accurate demographic characteristics are tapped and utilized. Barakat (2008) submits that the linkage between the demographic change and education policy challenges can no longer be ignored and that the social organization of schooling needs must be considered. Mohauty (n.d.) says it is vital for planners, education policy makers and decision makers to know the structure and distribution of population as well as how it has changed. Therefore, education policy makers should consider the demographic dynamics of population (That is the growth and change). However, Mba (n.d.) notes with concern that most of the civil registration system in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are far from yielding the accurate and complete data needed for direct estimation of demographic and socio-economic measures.

In formulating workable education policy, demographic data must be accessed and factored in so as to come up with effective education policies that will address all contending issues in policy formulation and implementation. The sources of demographic data needed for social-economic to include national census, sample survey, vital registration and ad-hoc source. Vital events include births, deaths, still-births, marriages and annulment of marriages.

Demographic information end-users are largely policy-makers, planners and administrators in education, health, agriculture, finance and economic, urban and rural developments. Demographic information is put into various use. Afolayan (1989) posits that demographic information is used for analyzing the present and future population sizes, structure and distribution. Canadian Education Association (2001) submits that age distribution provides an excellent road map for future planning and finding of Canadian education as long as local authorities use local demographic information for planning purposes. School enrolment is an important demographic factor in education planning and policy making. Where data on school enrolment is readily available, policy makers could use such as basis for the provision of infrastructural facilities in schools. Thomson (2010) writes that demography is useful for understanding social and economic problems and identifying potential solutions. Demographers are engaged in social planning, market research, insurance, forecasting, labour market analysis, economic development.

Demographic information, in particular, census data has multi-dimensional uses in policy making. According to a report by The White House (2000) the uses of census data include but not limited to assessing economic well-being, assisting families and low-income, the elderly, the disabled and veterans, health, environmental protection and programme planning. Further to this, is the fact that demographics play a crucial role in understanding past trends and preparing for future developments and policies. ([www.gnb.callegis/business/committees/previous/reports-e/demog/what-e-asp](http://www.gnb.callegis/business/committees/previous/reports-e/demog/what-e-asp)).

### Research Objectives and Hypothesis

The study sets to investigate the following objectives: to determine the conventional sources of demographic information use in education policy making; to examine the uses of conventional sources of demographic information in education policy making process; to find out the demographic information (characteristics) utilized in education policy making process; and to find out the sources of information mostly utilized in education policy making. The study tests one hypothesis to examine relationship between demographic information utilization

as it affects educational policy making. The hypothesis states that demographic information dissemination and utilization will not significantly correlate with effective educational policy making.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study focused on education policy making process in the education ministries of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos States of Nigeria. The officers on grade level 13 and above are involved as they are classified as the most senior and superior officers according to civil service guidelines and such responsible for the formulation and implementation of educational policies. The target population was 398 officers in all the six ministries of education in South Western Nigeria as shown in Table 1.

Total enumeration technique was used to collect data using validated and structure questionnaire. The reliability of the research instrument was measured to be 0.74 using Cronbach's alpha method. The reliability value of 0.74 of the research instrument is considered to be above average. This implies a low degree of error. The discussions there from are likely to reflect the actual situation. Therefore, inferences drawn from such discussions are likely to be dependable.

Four research questions and one hypothesis were formulated and tested for significance at the probability level of 0.05. Research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as percentage, mean and standard deviation while the only hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. A total of three hundred and twenty (320) questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 80.4%.

The questionnaire on demographic information sources and utilization in educational policy making using appropriate rating scale was designed and used. (See appendix A). A 4-point Likert scale is used in consistent with researches in different climes of data utilization. The response options in the study are worded to bring about the expected results which will pave way for critical analysis. The options are highly utilized (4), utilized (3), fairly utilized (2), not utilized (1), no response (0), the other rating used in the study are very often (4), often (3), sometime (2), never (1), no response (0), while mostly consulted (4), consulted (3), fairly consulted (2), not consulted (1) no response (0) ratings are used to capture other responses.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion in this study are strictly based on the objectives and hypothesis.

In Table 2, population census has the highest percentage

**Table 1.** Officers on grade level 13 and above in Ministries of Education in six states of South Western Nigeria.

S/N	Cadre	Oyo State	Ogun State	Osun State	Ondo State	Ekiti State	Lagos State	Total				
1	Commissioner	01	01	01	01	01	01	06				
2	Permanent secretary	01	01	01	01	01	01	06				
3	Finance and Administrator	01	06	08	04	05	08	34				
4	Accountants	01	01	05	01	01	02	18				
5	<b>Educational Officer Cadre:</b>											
	i. Directors	03	06	06	01	04	04	29				
	ii. Deputy Director	10	10	12	08	12	10	58				
	iii. Asst. Director	04	01	03	03	06	06	44				
	iv. Chief Educational Officer			01		02		33				
6	i.Chief library Officers	01	01	05	01	01	05	01	01	06	06	30
	ii.Ass. Chief Library Officers	04				06						
7	<b>Technical Instructor's cadre</b>			16		12		14		16	68	
	i. Chief Technical Officers	11	13	18	04	12	12	12	16	57		
	ii. Asst. Chief Technical Officer	13		18								
8	<b>Catering Officers</b>	01	01	15	02	02	02	02	09			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>398</b>				

Source: Ministries of Education: Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos States.

**Table 2.** Mean scores of convectional sources of demographic information use in education policy making in South-Western Nigeria. N= 320.

S/N	Major sources of Demographical information	No	%	Yes	%					
1	2 Population Census	Vital	95	126	29.68	39.37	225	194	70.31	60.62
3	4 Registration	Sample Survey	173		54.06		147		45.93	
	Internal Generated Information	Demographic	237		74.06		83		25.93	

score of 225(70.31%). Population census is followed by vital registration with a percentage of 194 (60.62%). The sample survey has 147 (45.93%). The internally generated demographic information has the least mean percentage score of 83 (25.93%). The data in table 2 further reaffirms the importance of population census in generating demographic information. Out of 320 respondents, 225 (70.3%) agreed to fact that population census top all other sources of demographic information. This is in consonant with the position of Onokerhoraye (1985) who categorically stated that the most important sources of information about demography of a country or any locality within is the national census according to United Nations in 1975. However, population census is less useful for analyzing population dynamics and changes over a period of time. The respondents rated vital registration with 190 (60.67%) next to population

census. This is to underscore the importance of vital registration as a way of bridging the gap between one population census exercise and the other. Onokerhoraye (1985) described vital registration as a major source of data for the study of population dynamics. In the realm of policy making, demographic information is particularly useful to assess how the needs of the population are changing and how such could be met.

A critical look at Table 3 reveals that vital registration events, sample survey, internally generated source of demographic information and population census are used very often with mean scores of 2.01, 1.94, 1.88 and 1.58 respectively. On the other hand, administrative census and school enrolment register are sometimes used with mean scores of 1.77 and 1.26 respectively. School enrolment register is the least used source of demographic information. School enrolment could be

**Table 3.** Uses of conventional sources of demographic information. N=320.

S/N	Demographic information sources	Very often (4)	Often (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	No response (0)	Mean X Type equation here.	Std
1	Vital registration events	33	90	90	60	47	2.01	1.214
2	Sample survey	27	94	90	51	5	1.94	1.232
3	Internally generated demographic information	52	58	73	74	63	1.88	1.357
4	Population census	30	78	47	136	29	1.58	1.175
5	Administrative census	23	62	95	98	42	1.76	1.124
6	School enrolment register	09	17	34	249	11	1.26	0.734

used as basis to put up policies that would address the provision of classrooms, furnitures, instructional materials and other school infrastructural facilities. It can therefore be inferred that the three sources of demographic information such as vital registration, sample survey and population census are very often useful in education planning and policy making. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (n.d.) writes that in a number of countries, the population census plays a major role in the allocation of elected political seats in government. The number of elected officials for each governmental administrative unit is determined by the population size of a given location. It further establishes that sample survey information helps planners study trends in fertility and also provides regional information on basic demographic characteristics of households between census takings.

Table 4, reveals that the respondents (educational Policy makers) utilized a good number of demographic information characteristic such as religion, age/date of birth, tribe, family type, home location, income, disability among others. When this demographic information is ranked, religion with mean score of 2.68 and standard deviation of 1.38 is ranked highest. Age/date of birth is ranked second with mean score of 2.62 and SD = 1.33. Sex as a characteristic is ranked third with mean score of 2.60 and SD = 1.34. Tribe is rated next with mean score of 2.56 and SD = 1.41. Family type with mean score of 2.56 and SD = 1.35 and home location are rated low with mean score of 2.54 and SD = 1.40 among others.

For any meaningful research analysis and inferences, studies have shown that researchers' preliminary explanations and analysis are usually based on analyzing demographic variables of their respondents. This is with a view to establishing the authenticity of their study audience. In education policy making process the analysis in table 4 above indicates that religion, age/date of birth, sex, tribe, family type, home location income, disability and occupation are giving serious consideration in formulating education policy. This is so because the mean scores of these demographic characteristics are relatively high between (2.68 and 2.10). This demographic information is highly utilized. On the other

hand, demographic characteristics such as marital status, nationality, class size, literacy level are fairly utilized with mean scores of between (1.97 and 1.83). Educational qualification and pupil enrolment are least utilized with mean scores of between (1.23 and 1.28).

The utilization of demographic characteristic in educational policy making process as in table 4 above indicates that the emerging education policies will take care of all aspects of school children population. Demographic data such as religion could be used as basis to hire teaching personnel in aspect of Islamic and Christian religious studies in schools. Age/date of birth could be used as basis, to determine the rate of transition from pre-primary to primary level or from primary level to secondary level. Public school administrators could use locational data to distribute school age children to various schools within a geographical area. Demographic characteristics of tribe and family type can be used to evolve education policies that will provide for neglected groups such as nomadic, almajiris and children in the riverine areas, divorce and separated ones and their likely implication on children.

The respondents were requested to identify major sources of information they consult when searching for demographic information. Their responses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that computer network /Internets, radio/television, and colleagues have higher mean bracket with computers network / Internets having the highest ( $x=1.81$ ,  $SD=1.25$ ), radio/television ( $x=1.72$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ) and colleagues ( $x=1.67$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ). The least sources of information consulted for demographic information as revealed in table 5 include school records ( $x=1.18$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ), statistical publication ( $x=1.29$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ). When searching for demographic information however, the right sources should be consulted to get the right information. The ability to access the right information is contingent upon consulting the right information products.

Information sources can be general in nature and specific to some group of professionals. Among the general sources of information are libraries of different

**Table 4.** Mean scores of demographic information (characteristics) utilized by educational policy maker, N=320.

S/N	Demographic information (characteristics)	Highly utilized (4)	Utilized (3)	Fairly utilized (2)	Not utilized (1)	No response (0)	Mean (x)	STD deviation
1	Religion	119	83	42	49	27	2.68	1.334
2	Age/date of birth	08	18	70	199	25	1.32	1.38
3	Sex	08	19	68	197	24	1.31	1.34
4	Tribe	119	58	70	30	43	2.56	1.41
5	Family type	116	48	89	32	35	2.55	1.35
6	Home location	80	59	107	35	39	2.33	1.40
7	Income	81	63	70	51	55	2.20	1.29
8	Disability	23	109	99	56	33	2.10	1.42
9	Occupation	55	51	86	87	44	1.97	1.10
10	Marital status	42	41	104	25	38	1.63	1.29
11	Nationality	46	41	83	83	119	1.73	1.19
12	Class size	33	53	103	89	42	1.83	1.20
13	Literacy	04	29	145	117	25	1.59	1.16
14	Educational qualification	01	12	75	221	11	1.28	0.81
15	Pupil enrolment	06	12	62	211	29	1.23	0.61

**Table 5.** Result on major sources of information mostly consulted by education policy maker n=320.

S/N	Sources of Information	Mostly Consulted (4)	Consulted (3)	Fairly Consulted (2)	Not consulted (1)	No Response (0)	Mean X	STD
1	Computer Network/Internets	132	201	170	77	0	1.81	1.248
2.	Radio/Television	88	189	172	02	0	1.40	1.142
3	Colleagues	36	132	314	54	0	1.67	1.012
4.	Reference books	16	66	274	119	0	1.48	0.838
5.	Library, archival & information centres	32	81	180	138	0	1.34	0.951
6.	Government document	04	27	208	181	0	1.28	0.699
7.	Statistical publication	04	33	198	178	0	1.29	0.699
8.	School record	04	48	74	253	0	1.18	0.593

types, news-stands, education resources centres and bookshops, newspapers and magazines. Ajuwon (n.d.) identifies three types of information sources to include primary, secondary and tertiary and that information is of great diversity and in various formats such as print (books, periodicals, bibliographies) and non-prints which include (audio, visual, multimedia, electronic books and journals). The study reveals the major sources of information consulted for education policy making to include computer network/ Internets, radio/television, colleagues, reference books. These findings are almost in congruence with Ajuwon's position. Ajuwon (n.d.) says the broad information sources are human, archives, library and Internet professionals. However, studies have

revealed that different professionals require diverse sources of information in order to address their specific information needs. The argument in favour of the importance of radio/television as a source where demographic information could be obtained is established in the findings. Perhaps, the use of the Internet as a source is due to the awareness being generated for the adoption of Information and Communication Technologies in all sectors in developing countries.

The only hypothesis tested states that demographic information dissemination and utilization will not significantly correlate with effective education policy making. The result of the test is as states in Tables 6a and b.

**Table 6a.** Analysis of variance (ANOVA<sup>b</sup>).

Sources of variance	Sum of square	df	Means	f-Ratio	Sig.	Remark
Regression	1780.654	2	890.327	24.786	0.0000	Sig.
Residual	11386.834	317	35.921			
Total	13167.488	319				

R = 0.368; P<0.05; R square 0.135; Adjusted R square = 0.130; Standard Error of the Estimate 5.99338.  
 Predictors: (constant), Demographic information Dissemination and Demographic information utilization.  
 Dependent Variable: Effective Educational Policy Making.

**Table 6(b).** Relative Contribution of dissemination and utilization of demographic information for the effective educational policy making.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T-Ratio	Sig.	Remark
	Regression W+B	Std Error	Beta			
Constant	22.877	1.103		20.749	0.000	Sig.
Demographic Information utilization (x1)	.122	.033	.200	3.669	0.000	Sig.
Demographic information dissemination (x2)	.290	.061	.258	4.752	0.000	Sig.

Correlation Significant at P < 0.05.

Table 6a indicates the analysis of variance of multiple regressions which generated a f-ratio. (24.786),  $x = 890.327$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . In table 6b, the prediction ability of the t- value of the utilization of demographic information is statistically significant ( $t=3.699$ ;  $df= 0.317$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), while the t-value of prediction ability of the channels of dissemination of demographic Information is statistically significant ( $t= 4.752$ ;  $df= 0.317$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ).

From table 6a, it is evidenced that demographic information utilization and dissemination statistically and significantly correlated with effective educational policy making.

The statistics in table 6b however, indicated that dissemination and utilization of demographic information were found to be significant predictors of effective educational policy making. Table 6b also showed the contribution of each of the independent variables (predictor variable x1) =utilization of demographic information and demographic information dissemination (X2) and effective educational parry policy making (Y). Table 6b reveals that demographic information utilization was found to be 0.200 (20%) and that of demographic information dissemination was 0.258 = (25.8%). It implies that demographic information dissemination contributes more than utilization in the effective educational policy

making process in South Western, Nigeria.

### Contributions

The outcomes of the study will sensitize the governments at both federal and states levels to appreciate the sources and uses of demographic information. The utilization of demographic information (characteristics) such as age, sex and so on will provide accurate data to evolve workable and effective educational policies. Such data will assist the policy makers to take cognizance of demographic characteristics as it affect children population and transition from pre-school age to school age in a given area and formulate policies that will take care of such.

### Conclusion

It established that population census; vital registration, sample survey and internally generated demographic information are the conventional sources of demographic information. It is also established in the study that religion, age/date of birth, sex, tribe and family type

ranked topmost demographic characteristics that are utilized by educational policy makers in the course of policy making process and each of the characteristics are used for different purposes. Furthermore, educational policy-makers consult computer network/Internet, radio/television, professional colleagues and reference books when seeking for demographic information. That, demographic information utilized significantly correlates with effective educational policy making implies that effective educational policies would be formulated and implemented where demographic characteristics are accessed and factored into policy making process. In order to access demographic information, policy makers should be provided with personal computers and its accessories. Each ministry should be linked to the internet and should endeavour to provide functional library and information centre to host the internet facility.

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**APPENDIX A**

Questionnaire instrument used in capturing responses on demographic information sources and utilization in educational policy making.

1. General information: Tick ( ) as applicable

1. Name of ministry.....
2. Please indicate your department/cadre.....
  - i. ( ) permanent Secretary
  - ii. ( ) Finance & Section
  - iii. ( ) Account Section
  - iv. ( ) Education Officer Cadre
  - v. ( ) Library Section
  - vi. ( ) Technical Section Cadre
  - vii. ( ) Catering Section

2. Do you agree that the following are the main sources of demographic information in Nigeria? Tick right as many as relevant

- viii. Population ( )
- ix. Vital registration ( )
- x. Sample Survey ( )
- xi. Demographic Statistics generated internally

3. How often do you use conventional sources of demographic information in your ministry?

S/N	statement	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never	No Response
I	Population census					
li	Vital Registration Event					
lii	Sample Survey					
Iv	Administrative census					
V	School enrolment registers					
Vi	Internally generated demographic information					

4. Which of the following demographic information are utilized by you in the course of making educational policy?

s/n	statement	Highly utilized	Utilized	Fairly utilized	Not utilized	No response
i.	Age and date of birth					
ii.	Literacy level					
iii.	Educational qualification					
iv.	Marital status					
v.	Sex					
vi.	Nationality					
vii.	Occupation					
viii.	Disability					
ix.	Home location					
x.	Religion					
xi.	Tribe					
xii.	Income					
xiii.	Class-size					
xiv.	Pupils enrolment					
xv.	Family type					

5. What are the major sources of demographic information most consulted by you and other policy makers in your ministry

S/N	Statement	Mostly consulted (4)	Consulted (3)	Fairly consulted (2)	Not consulted (1)	No response (0)
i.	Library, archival and information centres					
ii.	Radio/television					
iii.	School records					
iv.	Colleagues					
v.	Computer networks/internet					
vi.	Government documents					
vii.	Statistical documents					
viii.	Reference books					