

Participation of Youth in Rural Leadership Development Activities in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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The focus of the study was to assess the levels of participation of youth in rural leadership development activities in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Purposive and systematic random sampling techniques were adopted for the study. This study considered the socio-economic characteristics of the rural youth, stages of participation in rural leadership development activities, motivational factors influencing youth's participation and constraints to participation in rural leadership development activities. Structured interviewed scheduled were administered on 108 youths within the age of 18 – 35. Descriptive statistical techniques like frequency counts and percentage were used to analyse the data. Inferential statistics like chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between variables investigated in the study. The study revealed that 57.05% had low participation 29.42% had moderate participation and 13.53% of them had high participation in rural leadership development activities. Results of the hypothesis testing revealed that at 5% level of confidence, significant relationship existed between sex ($X^2 = 59.4$), level of education ($X^2 = 67.0$), religion ($X^2 = 46.5$), marital status ($X^2 = 35.87$), Length of residency ($X^2 = 35.01$), level of education ($X^2 = 35.01$) membership of community association ($X^2 = 70.74$), motivational factors ($X^2 = 48.60$) and stages of participation while no significant relationship exist between age ($X^2 = 2.2$) and stages of participation while no significant relationship exist between age. Conclusively, rural youth should be adequately motivated and oriented by the extension agents and community development workers in order to make them productive to themselves, to the rural community and bring about community development.

Keywords: Youth participation, leadership, development, activity

Introduction

Participation is a concept of getting individuals in the community to be actively involved in those things that are liked, believed and understood by most people, hence popular participation is the method of allowing every member of the community to play an active role in the affairs that affect their lives in the community. Leadership in Nigerian rural communities had been noted to be traditionally administered by the aged or old people while the youth often feel unconcerned (Torimiro, 1998). Youths are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have, not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's future development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

According to Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy (2001), the youth comprise all young people of ages 18 to 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represents the most active, the most volatile and the most vulnerable segments of the population (Agbelemoge & Adigun, 2006).

Studies in Nigeria, have shown that the youth in rural area equally possess similar leadership qualities possessed by the older people, but these are yet to be resourcefully tapped to the advantage of rural leadership and development (Jibowo and Sotomi 1996). Youth have the potentials to participate in rural leadership development activities (RLDAs) by supervising, initiating programmes, monitoring and directing programmes, settlement of dispute in the community among others. Moreso participation in RLDAs may bring the rural youth to limelight in understanding what the policy formulation entails, most especially, if they effectively participate in rural governance. (Cook, 1996)

Problem Statement

Youth have more or less been abandoning the rural community for the old people to continue with their governance because the rural youth have not been motivated to participate in rural leadership administration (Torimiro, 1998). Youth gain confidence, develop

leadership, communication skill and increase their understanding of the rural problems by participating in the rural leadership development activities (Beal, *et al*, 1972). They become accountable and responsible to the activities they participated in. However, they are in need of the adequate understanding of what can really influence them to be able to perform efficiently in each of the identified RLDAs. Specifically, certain pertinent question which the study attempted to answer as pre-requisite to the determination of the motivational factors which influenced rural youth participation in RLDAs are:

- What are the personal and socio-economic characteristics of youth in the study area?
- At what levels do they participate in RLDAs?
- What are the motivational factors influencing the rural youth to participate in RLDAs?
- What are the constraints to youth's participation in rural leadership activities?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to determine the extent of youth participation in rural leadership development activities in the study area.

The specific objectives were to;

- Identify the personal and socio-economic characteristic of youth participating in RLDAs.
- Determine the levels of participation of youth.
- Determine the motivational factors influencing youth participation in RLDAs.

-Identify the constraints to youth participation in RLDAs.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypotheses of the study were stated in a null form.

Ho¹: There is no significant relationship between the levels of participation and socio-economic characteristic of youth participating in rural leadership activities.

Ho²: There is no significant relationship between the levels of participation and motivational factor influencing youth participation in rural leadership development activities.

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The local government was formerly known as Egbado South LGA with its headquarters in Ilaro. It is one of the twenty local government Areas in Ogun State. It has a population of about 168, 336 (NPC, 2010) comprising of farmers, traders, civil servants, business men and women. The area has semi savannah vegetation and is endowed with conducive climatic conditions for agricultural purposes. Major occupation is farming hence agriculture is the largest employer of labour in the study area. The inhabitants are mainly Yorubas, speaking various dialects, with some Ketus, Yewas. and Fulanis. The map is shown in Figure 1 below.

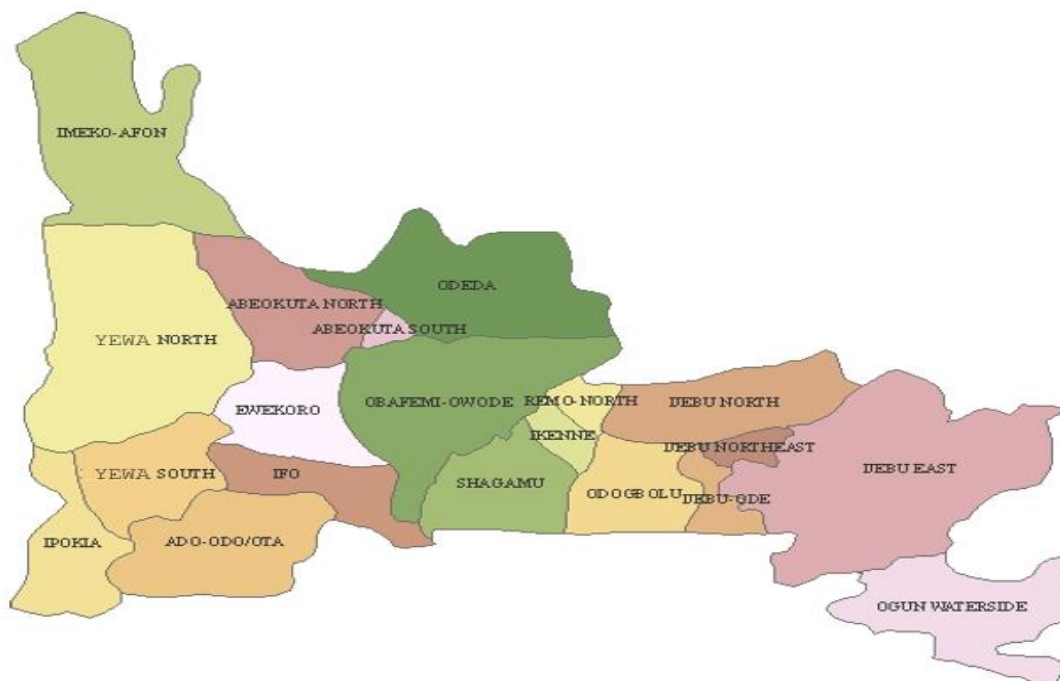


Figure 1: Map of Ogun State Showing Yewa South LGA-The Study Area.

Methodology

Sampling techniques and sampling size

Purposive and systematic random sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Villages where there are registered Youth Association/Organization were purposively selected. There were 27 registered Youth Association which were all located within 20 villages of Yewa South Local Government Area.

Each youth association has four executive members i.e, President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The entire four executive members were selected for the purpose of the study making a total of 108 respondents. The data gathering was done in the month of January, 2011

Measurement of variables

Both dependent and independent variables were considered. Level of participation of youth in rural leadership development activities is the dependent variable, eleven RLDA activities were listed and rated, the scores were summed up for individuals and grouped into low, moderate and high participation while the independent variables included; socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, factors that motivate the youth in rural leadership activities and constraints to participation

Pretesting of the instrument

The instrument of data collection was interview schedule, the prepared questionnaires was administered to twenty youths in Yewa North Local Government Area, they were collated, split into two halves and correlated with Spearman Product Moment Correlation and a coefficient of $r = 0.65$ was gotten. Those questions that were ambiguous were then rephrased or removed.

Administration of the instrument

The interview schedule was then administered by a group of enumerators, who read the question items and the options to them in a face-to-face interview and helped them to record their choices. It helped to achieve 100% rate of return, saved time and resources.

Results and Discussion

Age: The results revealed that 40.7% of the respondents' age ranged between 18 – 25 years, 26 – 30years was 38.0%, while 31 – 35years was 21.3% . Majority (40.7%) of the respondents interviewed were

between the ages of 18 – 25 years. They have potential and energy to work which allow them to be actively involved in RLDAs.

Sex: The results revealed that majority (62.0%) were male while 38.0% of the respondents were female.

Education: The results showed that 1.9% had no formal education, 13.9% had primary education and 45.4% had secondary education, while 38.9% of the respondents had tertiary education. Educational level affects participation of youth. According to Adedoyin (1993) Educational level affects participation of youth, the low standards of education of rural youth has made them to be less productive and are less prone to adoption of innovation. The low literacy level also makes them unwilling and generally made the unable to mix with more literate youths, even if they are of age. This is in line with the findings which state that youth become more involved by increasing academic performance during high school, increasing the likelihood of college attendance (Eccles and Barber, 1999) and greater school engagement (Lamborn et al, 1992).

Religion: About 55.6% of the respondent were Christians, 37.0% were Muslim while 7.4% of them were traditionalist, this showed that each of the respondent belong to one religion or the other and there is no respondent who did not believe in God's existence, this increase the number of youth participation as they intend to do something good to their community.

Marital status: The results revealed that 56.5% of the respondents were single, 40.7% were married while 2.8% were divorced. This implies that when youth are single they have more time to participate effectively in RLDAs. Majority of the respondent were single, which makes them have time to participate in RLDAs.

Length of residency: The results revealed that 17.6% of the respondents resided in the community for less than 10years. About 53.7% resided in the community for between 11- 20years, 26.9% resided for between 21- 30years. While 1.9% of them resided in the community for between 31-40years. This showed that most (80.6%) of the respondents had resided in the community for between 10 – 30years which made them to have enough experience and knowledge about the community and what it takes to participate and the benefit. Majority (99.1%) have outside exposure from their community, which could make them have initiative to bring about development in their community. Cosmopolitaness also affect the levels of participation of youth in that one's level of exposure tends to positively influence his level of

participation more than one who is not exposed to area outside his locality

Occupation: About 25.9% of the respondents were students, 13.9% were civil servants, 29.6% were farmers, 13.9% were tailors and also 5.6% of them

were engineer while 12.0% were traders. This implied that majority (29.6%) and (25.9%) of the respondents were farmers and students respectively who have enough time to participate in RLDAs (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of respondent based on socio-economic characteristics.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25 yrs. Old	44	40.7
26 – 30 yrs. Old	41	38.0
31 – 35 yrs. Old	23	21.3
Total	108	100.0
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	67	62.0
Female	41	38.0
Total	108	100.0
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	2	1.9
Primary Education	15	13.9
Secondary Education	49	45.4
Tertiary Education	42	38.9
Total		100.0
Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	60	56.5
Islamic	40	37.0
Traditional	8	7.4
Total	108	100.0
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	61	56.5
Married	44	40.7
Divorced	3	2.8
Total	108	100.0
Length of residence (years)	Frequency	Percentage
< 10	19	17.6
< 20	58	53.7
< 30	29	26.9
< 40	2	1.9
Total	108	100.0
Major occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	32	25.9
Civil Servant	28	13.9
Farming	15	29.6
Tailoring	14	13.0
Engineering	6	5.6
Trading	13	12.0
Total	108	100

Membership of community development associations

On membership of community development associations, the results revealed that 92.6% of the respondents belonged to community development associations while only 7.4% of the respondents did not. This showed that when youth belong to any

community development associations, it helps them to participate better in rural leadership development activities. Ekong and Ayodele (1980) found that those who had lived in their home communities for longer period tend to identify more with their community by being members of community improvement union.

Distribution of respondents by their level of participation

Range of scores of respondents in relation to their levels of participation the minimum score that a respondents can score is zero (0) and maximum score is 26. Majority (48.15%) of the respondents scored (0 – 7) hence were classified as having low levels of participation in RLDAs, 33.3% of them have moderate score of 8 – 16 while 18.52% of the respondents have high scores of 17 – 26 and were classified into high level of participation. This implies that majority of the respondents had low participation in RLDAs.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho¹ There is no significant relationship between levels of participation and selected socio-economic characteristic of youth in the study area.

The results revealed that there was significant relationship between sex, level of education, religion, marital status and length of residence, but there is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and levels of participation. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted which says that, there was a significant relationship between levels of participation and socio-economic characteristics (Table 2).

Table 2. Chi-square test of relationship between levels of participation and socio-economic characteristics.

Independent Variables	Chi-square Values		Degree of Freedom	Decision
	X ² calc	X ² Tab		
Age	2.189	5.991	2	Not significant
Sex	59.381	3.841	1	Significant
Level of Education	670.380	7.815	3	Significant
Religion	446.454	5.991	2	Significant
Marital status	358.648	5.991	2	Significant
Length of residency	350.077	7.815	3	Significant
Level of participation and motivational factors				
Motivational factor	486.029	42.557	29	Significant

Ho.² There is no significant relationship between the levels of participation and motivational factors influencing youth participation in RLDAs.

The results of the hypothesis testing showed that there was a significant relationship between levels of participation and motivational factors influencing youth participation. The chi-square value was significant at 0.05 levels, hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted, which says there was a significant relationship between the levels of participation and motivational factors influencing youth participation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that there was a significant relationship between levels of participation and motivational factors, that is for youth to be more actively involved in rural leadership development activities, the influencing motivational factors should be increased, this is in line with the findings which stated that youth become more involved by reinforcing positive social values and

setting examples have been found to affect involvement (Youniss and Yates, 1997). The findings also revealed that there was significant relationship between sex, level of education, religion, marital status and length of residency, Nevertheless, there was no significant relationship between age of the respondents and level of participation. Age which is not significant did not affect participation of youth in RLDAs. Majority (40.7%) of the respondent's age fell between the age of 18 – 25 years this showed that they are not too young to participate in RLDAs Sex also affects the levels of participation of youth hence majority (62.0%) of the participating youths were males.

Majority (30.6%) of them can speak their local dialect very well which help them to communicate very well with each other and this increase level of participation of youth. Majority (39.8%) of them can also speak English Language fairly which shows their level of education. Majority (72.2%) of the respondents can be motivated with the motivational factors identified to participate in rural leadership development activities.

Recommendations

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study.

Rural youth should be motivated and oriented by the extension agent, in order to make them productive, as agents of change to bring development.

Government should upgrade and establish more schools. This will enable the youth to be educated and participate more in RLDA's.

Rural development agents must emphasize community participation from conception to implementation. That is, in any rural development programme, youth should be involved from the planning stage to the execution stage.

Community elders and rural development workers in the local government should look at the constraints to participation with a view to eliminate or substantially ameliorate them in order to serve as motivation to youth in the community.

Youth should be given liberty and opportunity by their parents, in order to make them participate in rural leadership development activities.

Employment should be generated and more community associations should be established, so that the youth can belong to more associations.

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