



Investigation of Factors Affecting the Participation of Young Adults in Community Development Projects in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study is to investigate factors affecting the participation of young adults in community development projects in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Literature was reviewed according to the variables of study. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested and a sample of two thousand and fifty (2,500) respondents was adopted for the study. The simple random technique was used for this study. The main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. One way analysis of variance was employed for data analysis at .05 level of significance. The result shows that there was a significant influence of literacy level, skill acquisition and public awareness on participation of young adults in community development projects in the study area. These findings formed the basis of the recommendations made in this study that government should embark on adult literacy programmes in the various communities in the study area as the main option for the literacy and semi-illiterate.*

KEYWORDS: *Adult Community, Literacy, Skill, Awareness, Education, Societal Values, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

In Ebonyi State especially, some form of community development had existed before the advent of the colonialist. There were the age grades, women meetings and exclusively men meetings which were used as forums for improving the community. For instance, the age grades were used to construct and clear roads (foot paths) to the community streams, community markets and other places of worship. The age grades were used to fell trees and some construction work within the rural communities, women groups participated in the fetching of water for construction purposes (building mud houses) while the men were involved in some form of tutelage like the master craftsman, apprenticeship scheme and other skills that were family related. There were also the enforcement organs of government like the Ekpe and Obon masquerades in the local community which ensured that community rules and regulations were upheld and abided by. The participation of young adults in community development projects like building of markets, roads, toilet, schools is often too low especially in the rural

areas of Abakaliki Local Government Area, Efforts of NGO's and government agents to solve this problem have not yielded desired result. For instance, most young adults do not participate in the identification of the felt needs and in deciding the aspects of financing the programmes of the community. They tend to development cool feet when it comes to effective participation. Consequently, many projects for some communities are either abandoned or poorly executed. It is against this background that this study sought to ascertain whether such variables as literacy level, skill acquisition and public awareness could be responsible for this unpleasant situation among the Abakaliki people of Ebonyi State.

The purpose of the study is to investigate factors affecting the participation of young adults in community development projects in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which literacy level influence participation of young adults in community development projects, determine the extent to which skill acquisition influence participation of young adults in community development projects, and examine the extent to which public awareness influence participation of young adults in community development projects. After this introductory section, section two reviews related literature. The methodology is discussed in the third section. Section four comprises results and discussion of findings, and finally, section five summarizes the study, draws conclusions based on the findings and recommends the way forward.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy level and participation in community development project

Robinson-pant (2015) opines that literacy leads the people to sow heir capability to plan for community development -activities by themselves, particularly in terms of participating in community development discussion, involvement in community development activities, and contributing to improve family living standards. Me also said that this has led to a decrease on [he levels by social discrimination against all sexes and age. This nieans that literacy build peoples capacity and also gives them the sense of pride in participating in community development programmes. Maddox (2005). says that literacy have had a positive influence on the behaviour and livelihood of the people and commune life. He maintained that people are more self-sufficient and responsible for their families and community. This reflect the relevance of literacy on every day's life of the people and their involvement in participating in the developmental programmes of their respective communities.

Brown (2010) posit that literacy level of a person allow the person to conveniently contribute his quote in development programmes of the community especially during meetings and also discussions about their situations, problems and difficulties they face in their daily lives, the discuss and analyze the causes and consequences of the problems and agree on the courses of action to solve diem. This means that literacy-helps in building confidence among individuals by providing them the necessary knowledge and skills to combat their problems and difficulties and it also occupies and essential place in the life the community.

Kasworm et al (2000) maintains that literacy development of a person is a total approach to development, lie further said that people should be encouraged to identify their own needs and then develop interest and enthusiasm to satisfy their needs. This shows that literacy aid people's participation and is vital to community development programme as it is a democratic process involving self-help by the people and for the people in order to satisfy their utmost needs. Jellema (2013) claims that literacy is a basic human need and human right to knowledge and. also recognized as an important tool for community development. It is important to describe

the contribution of literacy in various aspects of community development and it has meaning only when it leads to participation in community social activities.

Skill Acquisition and participation in community development project

Oduaran (2016) declared that acquiring skills for work is an individualistic approach for self-reliant and independent but most people don't render their services free (or community work except it is under a contractual arrangement). He further said that for skill acquisition to be effective in community work, the individual in the community must learn how to use their skills voluntarily to participate in self-help development project in the community without any charges what so ever to the community. This shows that skill acquisition is beneficial mostly to an individual who acquire skills to become self-independent but solemnly used it to voluntarily participate in communal development programmes. Except a carrot and stick" method is applied.

Yusuf (2018) maintained that skill acquisition is a gradual developmental process that require a process to work with our physical abilities to learn how to perform task that were previously unfamiliar with, lie states that the major aim of acquiring skills is for attending to problems and also advance in technology by way of making work easier. He further states that acquiring skills is what motivate people to fully get involved in performing great task that would cost the organization a great deal to get such work done. This means that skills acquisition help people to perform their duties in solving problems in work oriented environment and it also motivate individuals to get involved in work require their services especially in the community. Aroge (2009) defined skill acquisition as a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in the society, tie maintained that its purpose, in the work situations and future expectations, is to develop the abilities of the individual and so satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organizations and the society. This shows that it is through skill acquisition that the individual's scope of skill knowledge arc broadened in order to meet up with the current and future obligations in both the work place and for the development of the community.

Public awareness and participation in community development project

Rutherford (2000) posit that public awareness in an issue help people to participate in community development programmes because even those who are from different social or development groups within the community shares information and exchange ideas in a positive and productive fashion. He further said that dialogue can be enriched by understanding how development issues affect them, discovering what others thing in order communities, and seeing effective methods to help people participate in community development programmes and also reach a consensus and find common grounds for action, based on their own needs and capabilities. Hughes (2011) has his own views on public awareness as a deliberate intervention to affect social and economic change that holds the most interesting possibilities. Me further maintained that a development strategy that uses public awareness as an approach will stimulate the level of participation among people and can also reveal peoples, underlying attitudes and traditional wisdom which help people to adapt to their views and to acquire new knowledge- and skills, and also spread new social and development messages to large audience or a cross section of people in the community. This is to say that if development can be seen as a fabric woven out of the activities of group of people, public awareness represents the essentials thread that binds them together in decision making and greater involvement in community matters.

Skidmore, Bound and Lownsborough (2006) says that awareness on matters that affect the people in the community is an effective way of eliciting peoples' participation in community development programmes. They further said that if the understanding of development process in the community are changing, there can be no doubt that its future shape, its pace, sustainability and ultimate direction for better or worse will be determined by the people, and the level of their awareness and participation is what will guide development in the community. This means that in the community, the challenge is to increase the quantity and accessibility of information, to ensure its exchange in appropriate ways, and to elicit more information from the people themselves in order to guide development from planning to completion stage. Muggah and Bachelor (2012) maintained that public awareness is central to the task of developing the community in many ways. For example, it enables planners when identifying and formulating development programmes, to consult with the people in order to take into account their needs, attitudes and traditional knowledge. He further maintained that it is only with public awareness that project beneficiaries become the principal actors to make developmental programmes successful in the community. It is important to note that creating awareness to the public, opens up an avenue by which they reach in the implementation of community development programmes.

Rosender (1978) opined that it is through awareness that people get actively involved in community development activities. He further said that a planned use of public awareness campaign as a technique in community development programmes is a powerful tool that gives people the ideas to both experience change and actually guide it and intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of people in a common cause. This shows that public awareness is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development in the community because it has raised the spirit of the people to work as a team to achieve a common goal in the community.

Gap in the research

From the review of related literature based on experts' opinions and research carried in different parts of the world, authorities have observed that literacy level, skills acquisition and public awareness has a lot of positive influence on participation of young adults in community development projects like building of markets, schools, and so on. On the whole, it is generally accepted that literacy level is the strongest root of any form of advancement in the community. Although much has been written on the independent variables of the study as well as participation of young adults in community development in other countries and some part of Nigeria, not much has been written on this with particular reference to Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The methodology of the present study also differs to some extent with that of some reviewed studies, in the area of the design, population, sampling technique, sample size and statistical technique adopted. All these are the gaps this study sought to fill.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is survey research design. This research was carried out in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The population of this study was made up of 2,500 young adults in seven communities of Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. These adults were considered appropriate for the study because of their maturity and on the assumption that they understood the instrument for data collection. The sampling technique adopted for this study was the simple random sampling technique. The aim was to give every member of the population, equal and independent opportunity of being selected.

The technique employed by the researcher is the hat and draw (balloting) method. Here, the researcher wrote the numbers of all the communities on piece of papers, rolled each slip into a paper ball mixed those paper balls well in a container (hat) and blindly drew the required number of communities. In the same manner, the required sample was randomly drawn for the study using 10%. The sample of this study was made up of two hundred and fifty (250) respondents randomly selected from five (5) communities in the study area. The researcher employed the modified four point Likert type questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with demographic issues such as age, sex, marital status, qualification and occupation of the respondents. On the other hand, section B dwelt on contextual issues of the research study which included various items on the variables under study. Furthermore, the one-way analysis of variance was used as the method of data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of results

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant influence of literacy level on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Independent variable: Literacy level

Dependent variable: Participation of young adults in community development projects.
Statistical technique: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

From Table 1, the calculated F-value of 23.99* was found to be greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 needed for significant level with degree in of freedom 2 and 247. In this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of literacy level on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Table 1: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of literacy level on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Variation	N	X	SD		
High	76	15.62	2.169		
Moderate	93	14.37	0.968		
Low-	81	14.36	1.096		
Total	250	19.45	1.411		
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-cal	P-val
Between groups	1004.784	2	502.392	23.99*	0.000
Within groups	426.611	247	2.166		
Total	1431.395	249			

*P<0.05, df - 2 and 247, Crit - F - 3.00

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant influence of skills acquisition on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Independent variable: Skills acquisition

Dependent variable: Participation of young adults in community development projects

Statistical technique: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. From Table 2, the calculated F-value of 18.87* was found to be greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 needed for significant level with degree of freedom 2 and 247. In this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of skills acquisition on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Table 2: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of skill acquisition on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Variation	N	X	SD		
Computer skill	53	12.65	2.512		
Barbing skill	70	15.83	0.370		
Tailoring skill	127	14.94	1.096		
Total	250	22.30	1.989		
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-cal	P-val
Between groups	930.309	2	465.155	18.87*	0.000
Within groups	501.086	247	2.544		
Total	1431.395	249			

*P<0.05,df=2and247. Crit-F-3.00

Hypothesis 3:

Public awareness does not significantly influence participation of young adults in community development projects.

Independent variable: Public awareness

Dependent variable: Participation of young adults in community development projects

Statistical technique: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3. From Table 3. the calculated F-value of 17.80* was found to be greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 needed for significant level with degree of freedom 2 and 247. In this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of public awareness on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Table 3: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of public awareness on participation of young adults in community development projects.

Variation	N	X	SD		
High	72	13.67	2.509		
Moderate	59	15.80	0.092		
Low	119	12.92	1.094		
Total	250	19.30	1.983		
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-cal	P-val
Between groups	920.301	2	460.153	17.80*	.000
Within groups	490.077	247	2.534		
Total	1410.398	249			

*P<0.05, df = 2 and 247. Grit - F - 3.00

DISCUSSION

This section is concerned with the discussion of findings of the hypotheses directing the study. The discussion is presented hypothesis by hypothesis.

Literacy level and participation in community development projects

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of literacy level on participation of young adults in community development projects. The finding of this study hypothesis is in line with Robinson-pant (2015) who opines that literacy leads the people to sow heir capability to plan for community development activities by themselves, particularly in terms of participating in community development discussion, involvement in community development activities, and contributing to improve family living standards, lie also said that this has led to a decrease on the levels by social discrimination against all sexes and age. This means that literacy build peoples capacity and also gives them the sense of pride in participating in community development programmes. Maddox (2005), says that literacy have had a positive influence on the behaviour and livelihood of the people and commune life. He maintained that people are more self-sufficient and responsible for their families and community. This reflect the relevance of literacy on every day's life of the people and their involvement in participating in the developmental programmes of their respective communities. Jeilema (2013) claims that literacy is a basic human need and human right to knowledge and also recognized as an important tool for community development. It is important to describe the contribution of literacy in various aspects of community development and it has meaning only when it leads to participation in community social activities.

Skill acquisition and participation in community development projects

The result of this hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of skill acquisition on participation of young adults in community development projects. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with McCain (2015) who maintained that skill acquisition is an opportunity to practice the skills that are needed to participate in finding solutions to the local issues that concern the people in the community. He further said that this will help to develop the citizenship objectives of learning for a sustainable development in further and integrates skills for the planning and analysis of developmental programmes in the community with the possible solutions to local problems so that people can take actions to help achieve a sustainable future development programmes in the community. It means that people need to acquire skills in the community in order to be able to assist in finding solutions to problems faced by the community during the time of project implementation in the community and also for the future purposes.

Oduaran (2016) declared that acquiring skills for work is an individualistic approach for self-reliant and independent but most people don't render their services free for community work except it is under a contractual arrangement. Me further said that for skill acquisition to be effective in community work, the individual in the community must learn how to use their skills voluntarily to participate in self-help development project in the community without any charges what so ever to the community. This shows that skill acquisition is beneficial mostly to an individual who acquire skills to become self-independent but solemnly used it to voluntarily participate in communal development programmes. Except a carrot and stickl method is applied.

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CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors affecting the participation of young adults in community development projects in Abalakili Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Three null hypotheses and research questions were generated to guide the study. Literatures were reviewed according to the variables of the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of two hundred and fifty (250) respondents was randomly selected for the study using simple random sampling technique. The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire constructed by the researcher and validated by the project supervisor. To test the hypotheses formulated to direct the study and to ascertain whether to retain or reject them, ANOVA was considered appropriate statistical technique. All the hypotheses were subjected to testing at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analyses indicated that there was a significant influence of the independent sub-variables on the dependent variable of the study. Based on these findings, recommendations were made to relevant authorities. Based on the result and findings of the study, the researcher concluded that: there was a significant influence of literacy level, skill acquisition and public awareness on participation of young adults in community development projects in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should embark on adult literacy programmes in the 'various communities in the study area as the main option for the illiterate and semi-illiterate.

- The Governments both Local and State should be committed to carrying out skill acquisition programmes for young adults in the various communities,
- There should be awareness creation of community projects in the various communities to enable the young adults participate.

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