

PRINCIPAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN RURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.

D.O. Torimiro and E.A Laogun

Department of Agricultural Extension & Rural Sociology,

Obafemi Awolowo University,

Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

E-mail: torimiro@oauife.edu.ng

Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the factors associated with youth participation in rural leadership development activities (R.L.D.As.) in Ogun State, Nigeria. It specifically identified some demographic characteristics of the youth, some of the R.L.D.As. they participated in and their level of participation was determined. Principal factors related to their level of participation were equally established. Pre-tested and structured interview schedule was used to elicit information from 558 respondents that were randomly selected, using multi-stage random sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics like frequency counts and percentage were used to analyze the data. Principal Component Analysis and Pearson's Correlation Analysis were used to establish the principal factors associated with youth participation in R.L.D.As. The studies revealed among others, that factors such as communication skill ($\bar{x}=1.1980$), motivational factor ($\bar{x}=4.6062$), parental dependency ($\bar{x}=2.8619$) and community organisation membership ($\bar{x}=4.7241$) are principally contributive to youth participation in R.L.D.As. Low level of youth participation in some identified activities was revealed. Encouragement of joint participation between youths and elders was solicited as a way to ensure sustainable development in the rural communities.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of youth participation in rural community development processes is worth noting for consideration, most especially now that many scholars have commonly recognized the rural youth as a potent force in agricultural and rural development programmes, which are yet to be fully tapped to the rural communities' advantage (Ijere, 1988; Jibowo, 1989 and Umaru, 1992).

One of the key factors to rural development is the need for effective participatory approach, which is now gaining more prominence in almost every sector, Nigeria's rural sector inclusive. In fact, participation of all categories of people in rural leadership has been assumed to be a promising approach to rural leadership administration (Disu, 1998). In this wise, the argument for youth participation in leadership development activities recognizes the abilities of young people to serve as resource persons and partners in various leadership development activities in their rural communities.

By participating in rural leadership development activities (R.L.D.As.), youths gain

self-confidence, develop leadership and communication skills and increased understanding of rural problems. Youth participation, according to Gobeli (1996), provides a balance between self-fulfillment and service, and includes a range of interaction between adults and youths. Leadership development is characterized by a spiral of learning and action that includes: skill and knowledge development, participation where young people apply their knowledge and skills in leadership roles and situations and, finally, empowerment where they take responsibility for executing programmes. Pittman (1990), observed that as young people develop leadership ability, they naturally progress to become actively involved in the building and re-building of themselves, their families, their communities and the larger institutions that shape the quality of life. Bird *et al* (1987) see the youth participation as an essential component of youth development and leadership development. In such development activities, the youths are involved in responsible challenging action that meets genuine needs with opportunities for planning and/or decision making as co-workers with adults in an activity whose impact or consequences extend to others.

However, there is need for adequate understanding of factors associated with youth participation in leadership development activities in rural communities. This paper, therefore, identifies the leadership development activities in which the youths participate; their level of participation and variables contributing to each of the factors associated with their participation in the leadership development activities are determined. Also relationships between their level of participation in rural leadership development activities and some of the factors are established.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ogun State, one of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria. The State is predominantly agrarian with about 70 percent rural population (Onakomaiya, *et al*, 1992). Rural youth between the ages of 13 and 30 years were selected for the study. This age group was determined in each of the sampled communities through the estimated population, which was based on 32 percent of the total population of each community, since

the National Population Census could not provide the actual population of the age category.

Multi-stage random sampling technique though the use of table of random numbers was used to select the Local Government Areas (L.G.As), the rural communities covered by the study and the rural youths interviewed from all the four divisions of the State (see Table 1). Among the estimated population of age group between 13 and 30 years (rural youth) in each of the fourteen (14) rural communities, proportionate sample of 10.00 percent were randomly selected to make up a total of five hundred and fifty-eight (558) respondents interviewed for the study. Structured pre-tested interview schedule was designed and used to elicit information from the rural youth.

Simple descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the data collected. Principal component analysis was used to identify the variables contributive to some of the factors identified, while the Pearson's correlation (r) was used to establish the relationships between some of the factors and the level of participation of rural youth in R.L.D.As.

Table 1: Proportionate Sample of Selected Rural Youth by Rural Communities and Divisions.

Divisions	Local Government selected	Rural Communities selected	*Population of the communities	Estimated population of age group between 13 and 30 years in the rural communities based on 32% of the total population.	Proportionate sample of the rural youth (Age group 13 and 30 years) selected
Egbado (Yewa)	Yewa South	Idogo	2110	676	70
		Ajegunle	161	52	06
		Agosasa	1447	453	48
		Eredo	1942	621	62
		Ajebo	1121	359	36
Egba	Abeokuta North	Isaga Orile	1587	508	52
		Olorunda	563	180	18
		Remo	2193	702	72
Ijebu	Ijebu-North	Akaka-Remo	248	79	08
		Kajola	478	152	16
		Odofin	1805	578	60
		Agunboye	836	268	28
Ijebu	Ijebu-Ode	Aba Paanu	657	210	22
		Odosenuli I	1787	572	60
Total	06	14	16935	5421	558

*Source; Okuboyejo (1991) National Population Commission Census '91: Final Result, Ogun State.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

(a) Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents: It was revealed that majority (72.58%) of the youth was in the age group of 13 and 24 years, while others, 27.42 percent were between the age group of 25 and 30. The former category almost fell into the age category of youth as defined by the United Nations, that is, young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 (Seiders, 1996). Also 55.56 percent were males and 44.44 percent were females. This agrees with the State's 1991 final population census results as reported by Okuboyejo (1991), which indicated that there were more males (50.40%) than females (49.96%). It was further revealed that 59.14 percent could speak their local dialect and 53.94 percent could speak Yoruba Language very eloquently, while very small percentage (8.96%) could speak English language very eloquently. Also, 33.69 percent had secondary education, 31.90 percent did not complete their secondary education, 18.82 percent had primary education, and 4.30 percent had post secondary education. However, 1.08 percent specifically had University education, while 5.56 percent had no formal education at all. This is an indication that majority of the youth was literate that is, they could read and write.

Majority (59.13%) were Christians, followed by Islam (37.81%). Traditionalists (2.51%) and Atheists (0.54%). Also, 68.00 percent of the respondents were still single, that is, they were not yet married. While those who have married were just 29.57 percent, 1.08 percent was living separately, that is, they were no more living with their spouses, as husband and wife while 0.36 percent was divorcees. Majority (88.71%) has had the opportunity to travel out of their communities, while 11.29 percent indicated that they have never traveled out of their communities. This is an indication that majority have had a level of exposure to the life beyond their communities. Majority (62.73%) has spent over ten (10) years in their various communities, 55.20 percent belonged to rural community associations, while 44.80 percent indicated non-membership of such associations.

Findings further show that 33.51

percent were unemployed, 18.82 percent were students, 15.23 percent were technicians, 13.98 percent were farmers, 13.26 percent were traders, 3.76 percent were civil servants and 1.43 percent were drivers. This is an indication that majority (52.33%) of the respondents was not working, that is, they were either in student's category or unemployed group. The unemployment situation may constitute an impending factor to the participation in any programme that may require their financial contribution. Among those who are employed, 47.74 percent realized between N20,000.00 and N40,000.00 per annum, 12.03 percent realized between N41,000.00 and 60,000.00 per annum, 7.52 percent realized between N81,000.00 and N100,000.00 per annum and 3.76 percent realized more than N100,000.00 per annum. This is an indication that majority realized low and meager income from their occupation per-annum.

(b) Level of Participation of the Respondents in Rural Leadership Development Activities:

Table 2 revealed thirteen (13) activities in which the rural youths were participating in. These were: decision-making process, resource(s) donation, planning of rural programmes, execution of rural programmes, supervision of rural programmes, monitoring of rural programmes, officership of development association, serving in rural governance committee, representing community outside, helping community in making contact, advising the community, settlement of dispute, and headship of rural institution. The Table further revealed that majority (between 55.02 percent and 82.44 percent) did not participate in one activity or the other, while between 6.09 percent and 21.68 percent participated little in one activity or the other. This is an indication that the rural youth did not participate much in rural leadership development activities, which is a very dangerous signal to the future continuity in rural leadership administration. This situation further confirms that the potentials of age group of 13 and 30 years are not fully tapped in the rural communities.

The unstructured interview conducted with parents confirmed their belief that there is limit to which youths can participate in leadership development activities in the rural areas.

Although, they agreed that the youths could participate in activities that are youth oriented, such as development works that require physical

energy, whereas in the areas of governance and traditional affairs, youths may require proper initiation before they can participate.

Table 2: Distribution of Rural Youth by their Participation in R.L.D.As N=558

S/No	Activities*	0	1	2	3
1.	Decision-Making process	398 (71.33)	90 (16.13)	29 (5.20)	41 (7.35)
2.	Resource(s) donation	307 (55.02)	121 (21.68)	65 (11.65)	65 (11.65)
3.	Planning of rural programmes	402 (72.04)	72 (12.90)	46 (8.24)	38 (6.81)
4.	Execution of rural programmes	416 (74.55)	63 (11.29)	44 (7.89)	35 (6.27)
5.	Supervision of rural programmes	428 (76.70)	59 (10.57)	34 (6.09)	37 (6.63)
6.	Monitoring of rural programmes	422 (75.62)	66 (11.83)	32 (5.73)	38 (6.81)
7.	Office ownership of development associa	459 (82.26)	46 (8.24)	23 (4.12)	30 (5.37)
8.	Serving in rural governance committee	454 (81.36)	34 (6.09)	27 (4.84)	29 (5.20)
9.	Representing community outside	441 (79.03)	53 (9.50)	30 (5.38)	34 (6.09)
10.	Helping community in making contact	483 (78.49)	53 (9.50)	33 (5.91)	34 (6.09)
11.	Advising the community	410 (73.48)	72 (12.90)	36 (6.45)	40 (7.17)
12.	Settlement of dispute	412 (73.84)	57 (10.22)	43 (7.21)	46 (8.24)
13.	Headship of rural institution.	460 (82.44)	45 (8.06)	26 (4.66)	27 (4.84)

Source: Field survey, 1998

Note: - () Percentages; *Multiple responses were recorded;

0: No participation; 1: Little participation; 2: Moderate participation; 3: Much participation.

(c) **Results of Principal Component Analysis:**

Findings from Table 3 reveal the results of the principal component analysis showing the variables that are contributive to the principal factors associated with the youth participation in R.L.D.As. Rules of decision as published in Koutsoyiannis (1977) were followed thus:

- Test for significance of the loadings is based on the levels of significance of the Pearson's correlation co-efficient, hence, critical value (Cv) at 0.05 significant level and 556 degree of freedom = 0.0880.
- Kaiser's criterion is used for the number

of principal components to be extracted, hence, only the principal components (factors) having latent root greater than one (i.e. $\lambda > 1$) were considered and retained in the analysis.

The factors retained were named based on the similarity of the features reposed in the variables contributive to the factors.

The following four major factors were then identified, viz: communication skill ($\lambda = 1.1980$); motivational factor ($\lambda = 4.6062$); parental dependency ($\lambda = 2.8619$) and; community organisational membership ($\lambda = 4.7241$).

Table 3: Principal Component Analysis showing variables contributing to the identified factors

S/N	Principal factors	Variable	L	L ₂	λ
1	Communication skill	- Eloquence in Dialect	0.0921*	0.0085	1.1980
		- Eloquent in Yoruba Language	0.7492*	0.5613	
		- Eloquence in English Language	0.7926*	0.6282	
2	Motivational factor	- personal interest	0.0730	0.0053	4.6062
		- Family value	0.4745*	0.2252	
		-Promotion	0.6920*	0.4789	
		-Community value	0.7401*	0.5477	
		-Peer Group Pressure	0.8032*	0.6451	
		-Recognition	0.6134*	0.3762	
		-Responsibility	0.7651*	0.5854	
		-Incentives Derived	0.6068	0.3682	
		-Government Support	0.6798*	0.4621	
		-Achievement	0.5106*	0.2607	
		-Ability Utilization	0.5070*	0.2570	
		-Economic Status	0.6189*	0.3830	
		-Occupational Status	0.0906*	0.0082	
	Activity itself	0.0570	0.0032		
3	Parental dependency	-Accommodation	0.9834*	0.9671	2.8619
		-Feeding	0.9883*	0.9767	
		-Clothing	0.9582*	0.9181	
4	Community membership	-Religious group	0.4037*	0.1630	4.7241
		-Village Council	0.9616*	0.9247	
		-Cooperative society	0.6000*	0.3600	
		-Community development association	0.9616*	0.9247	
		-Political group	0.9616*	0.9247	
		-Social organization	0.7087*	0.5023	
	-Philanthropic organization	0.9616*	0.9247		

Source: Calculated from field survey, 1998.

Note: *: Significantly contributive to the factors at 0.05 level.

L: Loadings for factor.

λ: Latent root of the factor. i.e. summation of the squares of the loading ($\lambda = \sum L^2$).

Communication skill: The values of the loading (L) for communication skill as revealed by Table 3, show that all the variables, that is, eloquence in dialect (L=0.0921), eloquence in Yoruba (L=0.7492) and English languages (L=0.7926) are significantly contributive to the communication skill at 0.005 level. However, Yoruba language and English language had 56.13 percent and 62.82 percent levels of contribution respectively, while the eloquence in dialect had a very low contribution (0.85). This further strengthens the concept of communication (Ekong, 1988) as a factor, which entails the transmission, and reception of information, signals, symbols or messages

through talks, etc. He further stresses that for such factor to be effective, the message transmitted must be rooted in the prevailing culture or have cultural references in order to be more meaningful and legitimate.

Ability to communicate effectively in the prevailing languages in a rural community is expected to enhance the level of participation. Although, Pearson's correlation's result further established significant and negative correlation ($r = -0.0420$) between the communication skill and level of participation in R.L.D.A.S (Table 4).

Table 4: Correlation Analysis Showing Linear Relationship between the Level of Participation of the Rural Youth in R.L.D.As and Some of the Identified Factors

S/N	Principal Factors (X-variables)	Pearson's correlation coefficient (r)	Co-efficient of determination (r^2)
1	-Communication skill	-0.0420	0.0018
2	-Parental Dependency	-0.2239*	0.0501
3	-Community Organizational membership	0.2292*	0.0525

Source: Calculated from the field survey, 1998

Note: Number of independent variables = 12; Number of respondents = 558; Degree of freedom = 556

Level of significance = 0.05; Critical value of 'r' at (0.05) (556) = 0.088

*: Significant at 0.05 level.

Motivational factors: Table 3 further shows that of all the fourteen (14) variables contributive to the motivational factors, only two were not significant, that is, personal interest and activity itself with $L=0.0730$ and $L=0.0570$ respectively. While other variables such as family value ($L=0.4745$), promotion ($L=0.6920$), community value ($L=0.7401$), peer group pressure ($L=0.8032$) etc were significantly contributive at 0.05 level. All these constitute motivators to the youth's participation in R.L.D.As.

Some of the motivators identified in this study agreed with some of the motivational factors listed by Hertzberg *et al.* (1959), these are; recognition and achievement. It also agrees with some identified by Menon *et al.* (1978) as follows: responsibility, promotion, ability utilization, achievement and recognition. However, those listed by these two scholars were identified in a non-rural community setting and they only focused on motivators in a working environment.

Parental dependency: Table 3 also shows that youth dependency on their parents for accommodation ($L=0.9834$), feeding ($L=0.9883$) and clothing ($L=0.9582$) are significantly contributive to parental dependency factor at 0.05 level. In addition, they all have very high percentage (over 90%) levels of contribution. It is expected that the provider of these basic needs should have a very great influence on the youth, either to impel or inhibit their participation in any of the activities. However, this may not hold in an environment that is youth centered, which promises

opportunities for young people to acquire the skill that expand personal competence and confidence which are based on the personal characteristics, traits, needs and interests of each young person (Coleman, 1972).

Pearson's correlation analysis further revealed that parental dependency had a negative but significant correlation ($r=-0.2239$) with level of participation, although at very low percentage of contribution, that is, 5.01 percent (see Table 4). This implies that the more the youths are dependent on their parents for food, clothing and shelter, the less they likely participate in the rural leadership development activities in which their parents are not interested in, most especially if such activities involve money. This is logically expected to occur, as participation in such activity will have its own accompanied financial commitment, which might be too difficult for these poor parents to meet along with the other basic needs.

Community organisational membership: The values of the loadings for community organisational membership as revealed in Table 3 show that all the variables, that is, membership of religious groups ($L=0.4037$), village council ($L=0.9616$), cooperative society ($L=0.9616$), political group ($L=0.9616$), social organisation ($L=0.7087$) and philanthropic organisation ($L=0.9616$) are significantly contributive to community organisational membership as a major factor associated with youth participation in R.L.D.As. However, their percentage levels of contribution vary, ranging from 16.30 percent to 92.47 percent.

This implies that the level of the youth commitment to rural community organisation either as ordinary members, committee members or executive members will go a long way in enhancing their participation in R.L.D.A.s. Pearson's correlation (Table 4) further reveals that community organisational membership had positive and significant relationship with level of participation in R.L.D.A.s ($r=0.2292$). This is still very much in consonance with Pittman (1990) who noted that youth involvement in community organisations will enhance their leadership ability.

CONCLUSION

Higher participation of youth in the various leadership development activities in rural communities culminates in high leadership capacity building, optimal sustainability of rural community administration and high level of rural development. However, this study showed little participation of youth in some leadership development activities. This is due to lack of fund, inadequate motivation from elders and local government.

Joint participation of both the youth and elders are very important for adequate sustainability in the development activities going on in the rural sector. For this situation to be fully embraced in the rural communities, the principal factor associated with youth participation in the rural development activities must be fully harnessed.

In realization of this, the following recommendations are, therefore, made:

- The rural youth must be encouraged to participate in such activities as decision making process; resources donation; planning, execution, supervision and monitoring of community development project. These can be achieved through enlightenment programmes for both the youth and the community elders in order to educate them on the need for their joint participation in rural

leadership administration.

In order to reduce the high level of dependency of the youth on their parents for basic needs and to reduce the unemployment situation prevailing in the rural sectors, the community based organisations in conjunction with the local government should organize training workshop on investment opportunities that have the capability for generating self-sustaining income. All tiers, of government must continue with their joint efforts in ensuring that conducive atmosphere is created for establishing rural based industries. This can be achieved through continual provision of adequate infrastructure and social amenities in the rural communities.

Speaking of various languages prevailing in the rural communities must be encouraged in the various meetings of different community organisations, which have been found as the major forum for communal participation.

References

- Bird, T., Berville, S.L. Cartson, O. and Johnson, G (1978) A design for youth Development policy. Washington D.C.: D.H.E.W. Publication No. (045) 78-26042, 1-12.
- Coleman, J.S. (1972): Youth: transition to adulthood. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 34.
- Disu, A.I. (1998): Popular participation in development justice, Development and peace Commission, Ijebu-Ode, 1-96.
- Ekong, E.E. (1988): An introduction to rural sociology. Ibadan, Nigeria: Jumak Publishers Ltd., 387-388.
- Obeli V.C. (1996): "Part of a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development in developing countries". In J.F. Cook (Ed). Expert consultation on extension rural youth programmes and sustainable development. F.A.O., Rome, 65-76.

Hertzberg, F., Mensner, B. and Sunderman, B.B. (1959): The motivation to work. New York: John Wiley and Sons. 17.

Ijere, M.O. (1988): Rural youth as a factor for agricultural transformation. (Keynote address). 1988 World Food day, Abuja, Nigeria, 11p.

Jibowo, A.A. (1989): Rural youth: a vital but untapped human resources (An invited paper). Proceeding of the NAERIS, National Rural Youth Workshop. June 6-8, 17-49.

Koutsoyiannis, A. (1977): Theory of econometrics: an introductory exposition of econometrics method. 2nd Edition. London, Tokyo: Macmillan Press Ltd. 425-436.

Menon, K.R., Viswana, R.N. and Balasubramania, S. (1978): Job content and context factors in job stratification of deputy agricultural officers. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 14 (1 and 2), 1-5.

Okuboyejo, R.T. (1991): Comparative analysis of 1991 provisional census figures with final result for Ogun State, National Population Commission, Ogun State. 1-46.

Onakomaiya, S.O., Oyesiku, O.O. and Jegede, F.I. eds. (1992): Ogun State in Maps. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication, 19.

Pittman, K. (1990): Promoting youth development: strengthening the role of youth serving and community organisations. Paper prepared for U.S.D.A., Extension service, National Youth of Risk initiative Task Force. June, 1990.

Seiders, R.W. (1990): "FAO's role in supporting rural youth programmes and possibilities for the future". In: Expert consultations on extension rural youth programmes and sustainable development. F.A.O., Rome. 27-44.

Umaru, M (1992): Extension strategies for reaching rural youth workshop on Rural Youth. NAERLs, Zaria. 20th-24th, July 1992.