UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.19 (4);
January-June, 2025 https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363*

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study examined youth participation in socio-economic activities and community development in Central Cross River State, Nigeria. two research question were formulated to achieve the purpose of the study. The research design adopted for the study was correlational research design. The area of the study was Central Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study was six hundred and forty-three thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (643,716) youths The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study to select a sample of 480 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was "Youth Participation in Sport Activities and Community Development Questionnaire (YPSACDQ)" The instruments were validated by three experts, The reliability of the instruments was established through the Cronbach's alpha reliability method, using thirty (30) respondents from Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State who were not part of the study. The instruments yielded reliability coefficients between .71 to .81. Data collected was analyzed through SPSS version 23, using Simple regression analysis. The results of the analysis revealed that, sports activities significantly contributed to community development in Central Senatorial District in Cross River State. Based on the result of the findings it was recommended among others that Government and Non-governmental Organisations should increase funding and resources for community-based sport programs; provide adequate funding for schools, local government, and non-profit organizations to develop and maintain sport facilities, equipment, and coaching staff; explore public-private partnerships to expand the reach and sustainability of sport programs.

Keywords: Youth participation, Socio-economic activities, Community Development

Introduction

Community development has taken the centre stage in the discourse of societal progress, advancement and development all over the world. This emerging trend in development studies seems to be occasioned by the fact that community is the nerve centre of the society such that the characteristics of any society revolves around the structural parameters of its communities and thus, the development of communities determines to a large extent the progress of the society. No society may attain any meaningful progress when its communities are economically, politically, psychologically and technologically backward. This implies that an effort to ensure effective and holistic

community development process in Nigeria may be a feasible measure to achieve a phenomenal improvement in socio-cultural practices, economic conditions and socio-political thinking of the people, which are crucial to the growth and development of the Nigeria society.

Community development is a process by which efforts of the community people themselves are united with those of the government authorities to improve the economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate the communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them contribute fully to national progress (United Nations, as cited in Adejoh 2017). It therefore implies that mainstreaming youth in the community development activities and governance structure of the society can enhance their awareness on how they can defend their rights, increase their social capital, improve on their economic activities, resolve immediate issues and help them to tackle issues of victimization that may arise from political and economic interferences as well as promote the objectives of community development.

Agbachom and Amalu (2016) stated specific objectives of community development (i) to organize the people for sustainable development which enable the people to collectively identify, prioritize and plan to solve their problems that ultimately leads to sustainable development. Through successful organization, the community members overall develop their community. (ii) mass awareness: The main objective of community development is making the people aware of various problems in a community. It helps them to provide knowledge and to know about the main causes affecting their social life. Moreover, it enables them to implement social action projects based on self-help or with the help of other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Andong, Ubana, Eloma and Musa (2025) asserts that agricultural activities and economic involvement promotes development in societies and organizations. Promote social cohesion and community engagement (Putnam, 2000); foster inclusivity and diversity (Delgado, 2000); enhance community participation and decision-making (Arnstein, 1969); support vulnerable populations (e.g., youth, elderly, disabled) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993); Improve community health and well-being (WHO, 2019). Economically, stimulate local economic growth and development (Porter, 1995); create job opportunities and entrepreneurship (Hisrich & Peters, 1998); increase access to education and training (OECD, 2019); enhance infrastructure and public services (World Bank, 2020) and reduce poverty and income inequality (UNDP, 2020). Cecilia, Ubana & Jerry (2025) asserts that achieving development through skills is a significant tool for economic, social, political, cultural and environmental development in a growing and developing country. Environmentally, promote sustainable development and environmental conservation (UNEP, 2020); enhance green spaces and public parks (Cranell et al., 2011); support climate change mitigation and adaptation (IPCC, 2018); improve waste management and recycling (EPA, 2020) and protect natural resources and biodiversity (IUCN, 2020).

Culturally, preserve cultural heritage and identity (UNESCO, 2020); promote cultural diversity and exchange (Hannerz, 1992); support arts and cultural expression (NEA, 2020); enhance community pride and identity

(Twynam, 2006) and foster social capital and community relationships for the promotion of development among members. Community education/skill is a vital approach to promoting economic empowerment and community goals in a developing country (Augustine, Ubana, Rose, and George 2025). Asor, Ubana, & Abuokwen (2022) stressed that supervision is the way of guiding, stimulating, improving and overseeing activities and skills of youths.

According to Ukah (2017) development has different meanings in different contexts and may be explained in multiple contexts, considered as progress towards multidimensional goals such as poverty alleviation, employment generation, inequality reduction, and protection of human rights. Helen, Catherine and Ubana (2025) opined that digital learning platforms in enhancing adult literacy skills acquisition play a pivotal role to enhancing development. Helen, Ubana and Grace (2025) asserts that literacy education is a key component for economic development. Helen, Ubana, Glory and Emmanuel (2024) assert that skill competence promotes growth professionalism and increases development in an organization and community. Okoi, Okoringa and Ossai (2024) sees leadership as a contributory factor to economic development and nation building.

Many communities worldwide face significant challenges in achieving sustainable development, including inadequate access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and social services. This results economically to poverty and limited financial resources (World Bank, 2022); lack of access to credit and financial services (IFC, 2020); unemployment and underemployment (ILO, 2022); limited economic opportunities and industries (OECD, 2020) and inequality and uneven distribution of wealth (Stiglitz, 2019). Socially led to social inequality and discrimination (UNDP, 2020); limited access to education and healthcare (WHO, 2020); children with intellectual disabilities affect development in a community (Samson, Adeleke, Akintoye, Mabel, Emmanuel, Okoye, Igbineweka, Ogunjimi, Apie, Ntino, Okoi, Obeten, Christopher, James, Itam, and Orim 2024). cultural and linguistic barriers (Hannerz, 2017); social isolation and lack of community cohesion (Putnam, 2016) and limited community engagement and participation (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Environmentally caused environmental degradation and pollution (IPCC, 2021); climate change and natural disasters (UNFCCC, 2020); limited access to clean water and sanitation (WHO, 2020); inadequate waste management (UNEP, 2020) and loss of natural resources and biodiversity (IUCN, 2020). Institutional barriers caused by ineffective governance and leadership (OECD, 2020); limited institutional capacity and resources (World Bank, 2022); corruption and lack of transparency (Transparency International, 2020); inadequate policies and regulations (UNDP, 2020) and limited access to technology and infrastructure (ITU, 2020). Culturally, traditional practices and beliefs (UNFPA, 2020); cultural and linguistic differences (Hannerz, 2017); limited cultural understanding and sensitivity (Banks, 2019); social norms and expectations (Cialdini, 2019) and limited community ownership and control (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Physical issues such as geographic isolation and remoteness (World Bank, 2022); limited access to transportation and communication (ITU, 2020); inadequate infrastructure (e.g., housing, roads)

(OECD, 2020); natural barriers (e.g., mountains, rivers) (UNEP, 2020) and limited access to basic services (e.g., healthcare, education) (WHO, 2020)

Technological barriers such as limited access to technology and internet (ITU, 2020); digital divide and inequality (OECD, 2020); limited technical capacity and skills (UNESCO, 2020); inadequate data and information management (World Bank, 2022) and cybersecurity threats and risks (ITU, 2020). Policy barriers caused by inadequate policies and regulations (UNDP, 2020); limited funding and resources (World Bank, 2022); bureaucratic red tape and corruption (Transparency International, 2020); lack of coordination and collaboration (OECD, 2020) and ineffective monitoring and evaluation (UNDP, 2020). Michael, Solomon and Anashie (2024) stresses the importance of digitalization management system in educational institution for developmental rationalization among youths. Edet and Obeten (2024) observed technological Innovation management and the teaching of health education as a component of development. Ubana, Glory, Undie and Elizabeth (2024) opined that artificial intelligence promote skills and competence in a developing state and helps to reducing work stress and tension. Emeka and Solomon (2023) stated administrative mechanisms for combating ineffectiveness and unethical practices. Okoi and Ategwu (2024) observed that conflict resolution strategies are significant ways of solving community issues and promoting development. Solomon, Felicia, Odok, Stepen and Offem (2023) stressed the utilization of learning resources and learner performances for developmental purposes.

It is observed that there is a prevailing underdevelopment in Central Senatorial District in Cross River State, where vices are virtue and virtue are vices. These vices are seen in the conduct and lifestyle of youth which is characterized by gross indiscipline, sexual misconduct, smoking, drunkenness, drug trafficking/ addiction, indolence, armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping, and excessive materialism. Leadership crises exist in certain communities as a result of fund misappropriation thereby impeding the progress and development of communities. It is also perceived that meaningful community development has eluded rural communities within the area of study as evident in the poor state of youth participation in decision making process lacks basic community development indices like constant electricity supply, motorable roads, portable and drinkable water supply, good healthcare services, poor state of schools, underdevelopment of rural communities, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, increase in crime rate, low level of social participation in development activities, none recognition of youths and inability to empower youths to influence outcomes and achieve real change. Aderibigbe, Adeleke, Akintoye, Ajah, Ahueansebhor, Ogunjimi, Okoye, Igbineweka, Apie, Ajuluchukwu, Anthony, Bisong, Akin-Fakorede, Ogabor, Obeten, Sanda, and Emanghe (2024) observed the impact assessment of counselling on family of children for community transformation.

Youths represent a vast and often untapped resource for immediate and long-term community development efforts, they also provide an invaluable resource for program planning and effective evaluation. As youths are engaged in more sustained positive relationships with adults, such collaborations

and participation may lead to skill enhancement, empowerments and confidence-building traits, which help prepare them for active community development services in future (Head, 2011).Youths seem to involve more in community development when they are given opportunity to participate in community decision making processes, this may be in politics or social groups meant to influence the decision-making structure of their communities (Mamah, 2017). This implies that the level at which youths are given opportunities for political leadership and leadership of social organization in the society is an indicator of their level of participation in community development because they will be able to influence critical decisions on issues affecting their welfare and ensure development among themselves through participation.

Participation is the process of citizens taking part in policy decisions which always rests on power being shared by the governed and the government. Participation takes place somewhere between policy-making by administrative fiat and direct democracy. Hart (2017) elaborates on this view by referring to participation as "the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives." An essential aspect of participation is that people are free to involve themselves in social and developmental processes and that the individual's involvement is active, voluntary and informed. Bishop and Davis (2013) classifies participation into two main categories; superficial or tokenistic participation, where a desultory effort or symbolic gesture towards youth participation is made and deep participation is an umbrella term encompassing active, authentic and meaningful participation. Deep participation involves youth experiencing elements of citizenship and democracy in their everyday lives, in real and holistic situations with meaningful outcomes or actions through youth participation.

More specifically, Checkoway (2017) conceptualized youth participation as the process of involving young people in the decisions that affect their lives". These include numerous and diverse activities, from forming committees and holding meetings, to lobbying decision-makers and policy-makers, meaningful youth participation occurs when young people are actively involved in programme decisions, design and implementation. For young people to actively participate, they need tools and conditions that enable them to design their own world and future. However, reliable adults' guidance, support and advice coupled with respect in a non-judgmental and inclusive environment are essential if young people are to participate in a meaningful way. Thus it involves sharing decision-making and collaborating with adults who can serve as mentors to foster growth in the community. Youth participation in community development means empowering youth for self-development, autonomy and self-realization, so that they can contribute maximally to the progress of their communities and the society at large. Youth participation in community development is not only considered an element of poverty reduction but also a means of empowering youth in ways that enhance their productive skills, social capabilities, economic competencies, decision-making capacities, social status, health and wellness (Udensi, Daasi, Emah, and Zukbee2018). In the context of this study, socio-economic activities include; social clubs and education activities.

Social clubs are indispensable components that foster unionism among group of organizations which strengthens social cohesion for community development and societal growth, it is usually seen as converge of people who share setting unavoidable traits or characteristics, with the sole aim of achieving social goals and objectives. Families, age-grade associations, religious groups, market women association, drivers association etc are indices of social clubs participation (Pate, Trost, Levin, &Dowda 2016). Social club is a broad term describing an organization consisting of members that have a shared interest **or** group of people, generally formed around a common interest, occupation or activity. Examples include book discussion clubs, chess clubs, country clubs, final clubs, fishing clubs, gaming clubs, gentlemen's clubs, private clubs, hunting clubs, military officers' clubs, political clubs, religious clubs (such as Christian fellowships), science clubs and university clubs. Social clubs often provide opportunities for members to socialize, network, and engage in activities they are passionate about, enriching their overall club unique experience and create lasting memories (Pate, Trost. Levin and Dowda 2016). Formal clubs such as drama, singing, music and sport club relatively increased self-esteem and a stronger sense of attachment which promote community development and plays significant roles to promoting sport activities.

According to Effiom (2019) social clubs in terms of religious organization, political groups, age-grade activities and other social benefits significantly contribute to community development in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria and recommended that government should interface with youth leaders to have a glimpse of social needs and how their needs can boost the economic development of the community, he further recommended that youth should portray sound behavioural pattern with elders to foster peaceful living condition for moral, economical, political and traditional enhancement. Nwankwo & Okoye (2015) identified benefits derived from belonging to social club which includes; giving the students or members opportunity to come together and find solution to common problems, practice at the process skill needed in science, develop and practice critical thinking. Experience a wider range of science topics, hence broadening their enthusiasm for science. Murat (2015) observes social clubs involvement as a tool to be equipped with a broad range of skills that will be essential in their future academic work and build up youth ability to analyze and solve community and technological problems.

Educational activities imply the valuable deeds, actions, or endeavours carried out to bring about satisfaction to educationally related needs/demands within an educational system which contribute towards its development. Therefore, educational developmental activities could be viewed as efforts that engender the worthwhile actions, deeds or efforts meant to facilitate the development of an educational system. Okoro, (2014) asserts educational system's development could be attained through activities such as building of schools, provision of scholarships, equipping various school facilities, organizing a wide range of co-curricular activities, and, also organizing a wide variety of specialized skill acquisition trainings for farmers and agricultural produce. Solomon, Anashie, Offem and Ushie (2022) assert that attitudes to work and effective teaching promote educational activities. Okoi, Kpee, Jack (2021) observed roles of human beautification skills on the

economic sustainability for educational development.

Oghenekohwo (2014) who found out that the educational well-being of the rural dwellers served as a significant predictor of community development. Ukwuaba (2015) revealed that community education programmes impacted significantly on rural community development. Bamiwuye and Adisa (2015) reported that community based educational organisations served as drivers of rural community development. Olaye and Onajite (2015) showed that community-based Adult and Non-Formal Education programmes contributed significantly to attainment of community development. Solomon, Stephen, Oyak and Adie (2022) facilitators attitude towards learner study readiness enhances development in a community. Uno (2016) discovered that community-based educational had a high level of predictability on community development-related policies. Bassey (2016) analysed the effect of rural education development projects in riverside rural communities and observed that they impacted significantly on community development. Obeten, Unamba, Edeh, Echip, (2024) observed principals' administrative effectiveness and teachers' task accomplishment as a tool for community growth. Ubana, Glory, Arikpo and Oku (2024) sees administrators supervisory role on quality service delivery as pivotal tool for promoting community education. Adekola and Opara (2016) verified the effect of adult education initiatives on achievement of community development programmes' objectives and showed that they strategically raised community development.

Mohammed (2016) who showed that educational projects served as significant correlates of community development. Oseni (2017) evaluated the importance of entrepreneurship education to the growth/development of rural communities and observed that they were of profound importance to the growth and development of rural community development. Tawiah (2017) assessed the impact of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) on economic development of communities and found out that community-based socio-economic development was significantly impacted by the training programme. Oladeji *et al*., (2017) examined benefits of community education projects on community development and discovered that they significantly affected community development efforts. Oladejo and Oni (2017) revealed that extent of dissemination of rural political education influenced community development actions. Solomon, Stephen, Ogar-Ikwen, Ushie, and Adie (2023) asserted that Parental Background promotes and mars community development based on conduct and upbringing. Zite and Okwelle (2018) reported that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) significantly enhanced sustainable community development.

Statement of the problem

The essence of community development is to satisfy and enhance the living standard of community members, though the relevance of community development is minimized due to lack of consultation, collaboration and participation amongst community members, this lack seems to retard development process especially in the Central Senatorial District in Cross River State with a resultant effect of underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy, lack of information, low level of social participation in development activities, marginalization, oppression, unjust treatment and violence, poor infrastructure, human capital inadequacies,

inadequate capital accumulation, corruption, poor governance, child abuse and neglect, crime, cultural factors such as customs, beliefs, and values; economic challenges such as money, land, and resources; Political factors such as decision-making power.

It is further observed that high rate of illiteracy through poor educational management, chronic underfunding, lack of motivation of facilitators, misappropriation of fund, lack of skilled facilitators, brain drain resulting from poor staff incentive packages and retention scheme, strike from teachers/lecturers as a result of Government inability to effectively address funding architecture of higher education systems in the country and lack of adult literacy centres has further worsen development process in the study area. Agricultural activities not harnessed properly to revamp the living standards of community members caused by poor mechanized equipment to enhance farming and trading of goods and services (buying and selling) has been terribly affected among members in the communities.

Despite government and non-governmental organizations efforts through provision of social/essentials amenities such as, roads, bridges, market, agricultural extensions, water supply, electricity, soft loans aimed at boosting the economic development at the community level, education and transportation services which trigger economic development and service delivery facilitation as well as empower individuals with the skills they need to effect change within their communities, the problem still persist. It is against this ugly trend the research was embarked upon.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which youths' participation in socioeconomic activities relate with community development in Central Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which youths' participation in social clubs relate with community development in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.
2. ascertain the extent to which youths' participation in education activities relate with community development Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study, thus:

1. To what extent does youths' participation in social clubs' activities relate with community development in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State?
2. To what extent does youths' participation in education activities relate with community development Central Senatorial District of Cross River State?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between youths' participation in social clubs' activities and community development in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between youths' participation in education activities and community development Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was correlation design. This design is

deemed appropriate because it involves accurate and objective collection of data by describing the existing phenomena as at the time of the study (Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim & Ekuri 2004). Thus, the design is appropriate for the study because it provides ample opportunity for the researcher to study the existing phenomena. The study area was Southern Senatorial Zone of Cross River State. The zone which is one of the three senatorial districts of Cross River State.

The population of the study comprised all youths in Central Senatorial District in Cross River State. Information obtained from National Bureau of Statistics 2019 reveals that there are six hundred and forty-three thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (643,716) youths in the study area. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. Multistage sampling is sampling procedure that involves a combination of different sampling techniques based on the nature of the population. Stratified, purposive and accidental sampling techniques was used for this study. Stratified random sampling was used to stratify the entire Central Senatorial District into six strata based on the six (6) Local Government Areas: Abi Local Government Area, Boki Local Government Area, Etung Local Government Area, Ikom Local Government Area, Obubra Local Government Area and Yakurr Local Government Area. Purposive sampling was used to select four (4) Wards from each of the Local Government Areas in Central Cross River State. The researcher further used accidental sampling to select twenty (20) youths from each of the selected wards as sample for this study. The need for accidental sampling was because of the impossibility of meeting all the youths at the same time in their localities. This will allows administration of instrument to those available during the time of administration. The sample of this study comprised four hundred and eighty (480) youths from the six Local Government Areas in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, which each ward consisted of twenty (20) respondents and each Local Government area; eighty (80) respondents for this study.

The instrument used for data collection was tagged; Youth Participation in Sports Activities and Community Development Questionnaire (YPSACDQ). The questionnaire had three sections each: Section A, B and C. Section A of the questionnaire was designed to obtain information on the demographic variables of the respondents (Gender, age and educational qualification). Section B of the questionnaire was designed to measure ten items from on social clubs and educational activities. While section C was designed to measure the community development of ten items. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Never Occasionally (NO), Moderately (M), Frequently (F) and Always (A) and weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The research instruments undergo face and content validity by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. This was to ensure that the items measure exactly what they are meant to measure in the study. To determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial test was done using fifty (50) respondents drawn from the population area who are not part of the real study. Cronbach alpha method of reliability was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instrument. The scores obtained ranged from 0.71 to .81, which revealed that the instrument was reliable. The data collected was analysed to determine the reliability coefficient. Data

collected was analyzed using Simple regression analysis.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between youths' participation in social clubs' activities and community development in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. The independent variable of this hypothesis was youths' participation in social clubs while the dependent variable was community development. Simple regression statistics was used in testing the hypothesis and the results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of data and simple regression analysis on the relationship between youths' participation in social clubs and community development in Central Cross River State.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.372	.0138	.1372.	15866

Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig
Regression	357.800	1	357.800	76.784	.000*
Residual	2227.397	478	4.660		
Total	2585.198	479			

a. Predictors: (Constant): social clubs
b. Dependent Variable: community development.

The simple regression analysis in table 1 on the relationship between youths participation in social clubs and community development in Central Cross River State. produced an adjusted R^2 of .137 . This implies that 13.7 percent of the variance can be predicted from the independent variable (social clubs) in predicting community development. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was F = 76.784 having a p-value .001 with 1 and 478 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore implies that social clubs significantly predicted community development in Central Cross River State by 13.7 percent. The result therefore implies that there was a significant relationship between

youth's participation in social clubs and community development.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between youths participation in education activities and community development Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

The independent variable of this hypothesis was youths participation in educational activities while the dependent variable was community development Simple regression statistics was used in testing the hypothesis and the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of data and simple regression analysis on the relationship between youths participation in educational activities and community development in Central Cross River State.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.343	.117	.116	2.18475

Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig
Regression	303.636	1	303.636	63.613	.000*
Residual	2281.562	478	5.131		
Total	2585.198	479			

a. Predictors: (Constant): educational activities
b. Dependent Variable: community development.

The simple regression analysis in table 2 on the relationship between youths' participation in educational activities and community development in Central Cross River State. produced an adjusted R^2 of .116. This implies that11.6 percent of the variance can be predicted from the independent variable (educational activities) in predicting community development. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was F = 63.613 having a p-value .000 with 1 and 478 degrees of freedom at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore implies that

educational activities significantly predicted community development in Central Cross River State by 11.6 percent. The result therefore implies that there was a significant relationship between youths' participation in educational activities and community development.

Discussion of findings

The finding in hypothesis one revealed that youth participation in social clubs' activities has a significant relationship between community development. The implication of this finding is in line with Effiom (2019) who opined that social clubs in terms of religious organization, political groups, age-grade activities and other social benefits significantly contribute to community development in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria and recommended that government should interface with youth leaders to have a glimpse of social needs and how their needs can boost the economic development of the community, he further recommended that youth should portray sound behavioural pattern with elders to foster peaceful living condition for moral, economic, political and traditional enhancement. This result also conforms Nwankwo & Okoye (2015) who identified benefits derived from belonging to social club which includes; giving the students or members opportunity to come together and find solution to common problems, practice at the process skill needed in science, develop and practice critical thinking. Experience a wider range of science topics, hence broadening their enthusiasm for science. Murat (2015) sees social clubs' involvement as a tool to be equipped with a broad range of skills that will be essential in their future academic work and build up youth ability to analyze and solve community and technological problems.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that youth participation in educational activities has a significant relationship between community development. The implication of this finding is in tandem with Oghenekohwo (2014) who found out that the educational well-being of the rural dwellers served as a significant predictor of community development. Ukwuaba (2015) revealed that community education programmes impacted significantly on rural community development. Bamiwuye and Adisa (2015) reported that community based educational organisations served as drivers of rural community development. Olaye and Onajite (2015) showed that community-based Adult and Non-Formal Education programmes contributed significantly to attainment of community development. Uno (2016) discovered that community-based educational had a high level of predictability on community development-related policies. Bassey (2016) analysed the effect of rural education development projects in riverside rural communities and observed that they impacted significantly on community development. Adekola and Opara (2016) verified the effect of adult education initiatives on achievement of community development programmes' objectives and showed that they strategically raised community development.

The finding also agreed with Mohammed (2016) who showed that educational projects served as significant correlates of community development. Oseni (2017) evaluated the importance of entrepreneurship education to the growth/development of rural communities and observed that they were of profound importance to the growth and development of rural community development. Tawiah (2017) assessed the impact of Technical and Vocational

Education Training (TVET) on economic development of communities and found out that community-based socio-economic development was significantly impacted by the training programme. Oladeji*et al*., (2017) examined benefits of community education projects on community development and discovered that they significantly affected community development efforts. Oladejo and Oni (2017) revealed that extent of dissemination of rural political education influenced community development actions. Zite and Okwelle (2018) reported that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) significantly enhanced sustainable community development.

Conclusion

Youth participation in socio-economic activities and community development in Central Cross River State is a vital component for sustainable growth and societal transformation. The region, characterized by a vibrant and youthful population, presents both challenges and opportunities in leveraging this demographic for meaningful development outcomes.

Evidence from various community initiatives, agricultural projects, entrepreneurship ventures, skill acquisition programs, and youth-led advocacy groups indicates that young people are increasingly becoming active contributors to the socio-economic landscape. Their involvement in sectors such as small-scale farming, ICT, local crafts, tourism, and education has shown positive impacts on job creation, poverty reduction, and social cohesion.

However, this participation is often hindered by systemic challenges such as limited access to funding, inadequate infrastructure, poor policy implementation, and a lack of mentorship or institutional support. Many young people face unemployment or underemployment despite their potential and willingness to contribute to community development.

Despite these challenges, the growing awareness among youth about their role in shaping their communities has led to the emergence of youth cooperatives, NGOs, and local movements that are demanding inclusion in decision-making processes and access to economic resources. The introduction of government and NGO-led programs such as skill empowerment schemes, youth agriculture programs, and educational grants has also begun to bridge some of the gaps, although these efforts need to be scaled and better managed.

In conclusion, youth in Central Cross River State are an indispensable asset for socio-economic development and community transformation. To maximize their potential, there must be a concerted effort from government bodies, traditional institutions, private sector actors, and civil society organizations to create an enabling environment. This includes investment in education, entrepreneurship, digital skills, and inclusive governance. By fostering a culture of meaningful youth engagement and participation, the region can harness the energy, creativity, and resilience of its young population to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that youths participation in socio-economic activities in terms of social clubs and educational activities significantly relate with

community development in Central Senatorial District in Cross River State.

Recommendations

1. Youths involvement in social engagements should be encouraged by government through provision of community benefits and self-help programmes that would improve community development. Government should also improve participating in social clubs activities which is recognized as a rewarding experience for youth and help develop valuable skills, expand their network, and have fun in a supportive and engaging environment.
1. Government should set up educational body that will encourage youth to attend educational workshops, seminars, or conferences to learn from experts in different fields and network with other like-minded individuals. Also encourage youth to participate in extracurricular activities at school, such as clubs, sports teams, or academic competitions, to enhance their learning experience and develop new skills.
2. Educational activities seen as the oil that lubricates the wheels of development in most countries should be reawakened by government for the purpose of developing youths and encouraging participation in the community.

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