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CONTENTS

Editorial

vi

1. Perceived Influence of Pre-Marital Pregnancy on Academic Achievement, Social and Emotional Health among Female Students of Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State
O. O. Kalesanwo¹, and S. B. Adegbite²
¹Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, ²Dept. of Primary Education, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State. 1
2. Prevalence and Socio-Economic Predictors of Mental Stress among Undergraduates of Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
K. O. Lateef¹ and T. A. Ola²
¹Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, ²Dept. of Physical and Health Education, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria 12
3. Interconnectivity of Spiritual and Psychological Dimensions of Health in The Promotion of Community Health
Hamilton-Ekeke and Joy-Teju
Dept. of Science Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. 23
4. Psychological and Nutritional Factors as Correlates of Wellbeing of Female Athletes in Oyo State
O. M. Jaiyeoba
Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan 33
5. The Roles of Social Workers In Reducing Stigmatisation in Mental Illness
T. I. Ibe¹, R. T. Ibe², and C.A. Ajibola³
¹Dept of Social Welfare Services, Federal NeuroPsychiatric Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria. ²Dept. of Public Health Nursing, College of Health Technology, Calabar, Nigeria, ³Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria. 43

6. Implications of Insecurity Activities on Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Riverine Communities of Ogun Waterside Local Government of Ogun States
A. V. Igbokoyi¹, And M. A. Faleke²
¹*Dept. of Dental Therapy, Ogun State College of Health Technology, Ilese Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria.* ²*Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Nigeria.* 52
7. The Impact of Family Instability on Adolescents' Well-Being: Implications for Health Education
S.D Nwajei and B. A. Efue
Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Delta State University, Abraka. 59
8. Stress Management in Workplace and Community in Nigeria
E. I. D. Nkere¹, C. A. Ajibola², and R. T. Ibe³
¹*Dept. of Nursing, University of Calabar, Teaching Hospital, Nigeria.* ²*Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria.* ³*Dept. of Public Health, College of Health Technology, Calabar-Nigeria.* 67
9. Assessment of Citizens Participation in Community Development Self-Help Initiated Projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State
O.A. Moronkola¹, P.B. Abu¹, O.A. Moronkola² and Biola Omokhabi¹
¹*Dept of Adult Education, University of Ibadan,* ²*Dept of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Ibadan.* 75
10. Vulnerability to Indian Hemp Usage and Its Perceived Health Implications among Female Youths in Kwale, Delta State
Oyibo Rita Uzezi
Dept. of Physical and Health Education, College of Education, Warri, Delta State. 85
11. Knowledge and Abuse of Psychoactive Substances among Commercial Drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
O. Z. K. Amao and J. O. Odelola
Dept. of Human Kinetics and Health Education University of Ibadan, Ibadan. 96
12. Economic Recession as a Precursor to Mental Disorders among Adult Men in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State
D. Walker
Dept. of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. 105

13. **Mental Illness: Nature, Causes, Characteristics and Need for Mental Health Education**
O. Olojoba
Delta State College of Health Technology, Ofuoma-Ughelli. 117
14. **Influence of Demographic Factors on Attitude Towards Personal Hygiene Among Secondary School Students in Mbaitoli Local Government Area, Imo State**
A. Ibhafidon¹, O.D. Ibhafidon, N.M. Onuzulike, and E.O. Ogueri,²
¹Dept. of Health Education, ²Dept. of Agricultural Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri 127
15. **Domestic Violence and Marital Stability among Couples in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria: Implications for Mental Health**
Oladipupo, B. O. Abiola, Molayoto J. Olufemi-Sodipe, T. and Oniyide Kudirat O. 138
Dept. of Human Kinetics, Sport and Health Education, Lagos State University, Ojo.

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ASSESSMENT OF CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SELF-HELP INITIATED PROJECTS IN AKINYELE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

There is need for community members to participate in development of areas where they reside as no government no matter how benevolent can meet all the needs of the people. The descriptive survey research design was employed. Male and female adults who were members of Landlords Associations in their respective communities in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State constituted population of study. Through convenience sampling technique, 310 landlords in four wards (30%) out of 12 wards in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State were sampled. Copies of validated questionnaire with a reliability 0.75 were used as research instrument. Trained research assistants who were also landlords in the Local Government Area were utilised to help in data collection exercise. The data collected were described and analysed using simple frequency counts, percentage for descriptive data and t-test to test hypotheses.

Introduction

Citizen participation is a community development oriented democratic process in which community members individually and collectively involve their resources (time, presence, materials, influence, skills, physical structures, knowledge, money etc) without coercion to take decision or engage in activities that will or make life worthwhile or meaningful to them as individuals or groups. It is essential for effecting change in community development efforts among citizens. Citizen participation in developmental activities is important especially in developing countries like Nigeria where government at all levels are not proactive in meeting up with developmental aspirations and needs of the citizens. Therefore, it is essential community development efforts through citizens participation be popularised. Community development projects include projects related to health, education, road, water, agriculture etc which often times have direct or indirect bearing on the lives of people especially women and children.

In the Nigeria, the belief of most communities is that the development of each community is the sole responsibility of the government and people see government as being responsible for inadequate development. Whereas, no government can meet the needs of each community. Also, all the problems of development are beyond the capacity of any government. Some of the problems of development are believed to be poverty, illiteracy, inadequate knowledge and information, about diverse issues of life, poor attitudes of citizens toward development etc. To address these problems, communities must develop mechanism of citizen participation in their development efforts. Laah, Adefila and Yusuf (2014) argued that community participation has long been associated with rural development and that regional developers are of the opinion that for project to succeed, communities need to actively engage in designing, implementing and sustaining projects that affect their conditions of living. Also Danladi and Adefila (2014) affirmed

that self-help groups have been seriously viewed in contemporary times as potent means of socio-economic development in rural communities as government cannot meet the needs of all the people in a country. Abatena (1995) reasoned that self-help activities are capable of being instrumental in mobilising available community resources like talents and skills, leadership, human energy and capital and material resources. Local participation facilitate the process of need identification and sound-decision making regarding goals to be pursued, and the feasible programme design and implementation. This also ensure acquisition of leadership skills and effective ways of tackling local problems. In community development citizens mobilised to improve their community through collective efforts in mobilizing various resources to ensure citizens have better quality of life. Samah and Aref (2009) contended that people participation in community development activities may be viewed as a process of individuals getting involved in initiating, deciding, planning, implementing and managing the group activities. Steve and Williams (2012) noted that community self-help projects are known to play a significant role in the improvement of the quality of life of rural dwellers. The role however, depends on the extent to which community self-help scheme is adopted as a relevant strategy for rural development. Also Saliu (2014) asserted that community development is an essential instrument for sustainable development of communities especially in developing country like Nigeria.

Also, Steve and Williams (2012) noted that SumitraBithiKachari and DukhabandhuSahoo in 2008 contended that self-help is a new paradigm in the field of rural development, whose main goal is rural development and that self-help enables the local people to exploit to their advantage, their resources which would otherwise lie dormant and thereby perpetuate the ignorance and poverty of their community, which results in raising their standard of living. Onyenemezu (2014) noted that the success of any community development task in any community is not in doubt, but this depends on right planning, implementation, utilization and sustenance of the task in progress. Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) discussed the difficulty facing citizen participation in community development as follows: understanding the policy-making process, lack of resources, reliance on volunteers and lack of access to information, absence of rural representation in decision-making process, time and policy timeline restrictions. This study therefore, was on assessment of citizens participation community development in self-help initiated programmes in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Research Questions

Answers were found to the following research questions:

1. What are the self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State?
2. What are the forms of citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State?
3. What are the challenges that serve as obstacles to citizens participation in community self-help initiated occupation?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be no significant gender difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State.
2. There will be no significant difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to religion.
3. There will be no significant difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to occupation.

Methodology

The survey type of descriptive research was used in this study as it identify characteristics, situation, phenomenon and outcome of a study without any manipulation, cause and effect relationship is not establish in descriptive research, also large population of study participants is involved. The population of this study consisted of inhabitants of Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State. Specifically, they were male and female adults who were also members of Landlords Associations in their respective communities. According to 2006 population census, it has 211,811 inhabitants residing in 12 political wards. In the 12 wards identified by Oyo State Independent Electoral Commission (OYSIEC) ,through convenience sampling technique, landlords in four wards consisting of Ward 3with Arulogun, Eniosa and Araro communities, Ward 8 with Ojo-Emo and Moniya communities, Ward 9 with Ojoo, Ajibode, Laniba and Ward 11 Olode, Amosun and Onidundu constituting 30% of the communities in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State were sampled. Snowball sampling was used to get actual participants in the study area. Trained research assistants who were also landlords in the area also identified others landlords, who in turn identified others who were contacted to participate in the study. Through this, a total sample of 310 participants were got.

The instrument used for data collection were copies of questionnaire tagged "Assessment of Citizens Participation in Community Development in Self-help Initiated Projects" consisting Section A which was on demographic characteristics of the respondents and Section B was on variables studied related to citizens participation in community development in self-help projects. Experts in the areas of community development validated the questionnaire for face, content and construct validity before the instrument was finally developed and copies were administered. A test-retest reliability test yielding 0.75 was obtained for the questionnaire. Trained research assistants who were members of Landlords Association in each sampled communities were utilised to help in data collection exercise. The data collected were described and analysed using simple frequency counts, percentage for descriptive data and t-test to test hypotheses. Respondents participated voluntary throughout the data collection exercise and respondents were told that results will be used strictly for academic purpose.

Results and Discussions

Profile of Respondents

Respondents were aged less than 25 years, 16.0% respondents were within the age range of 25-29years years, 11.1% respondents were within the age range of 30-34years,

19.7% were within the age range of 35-39years, 15.7% respondents were within the age range of 40-44years, 19.0% respondents were within the age range of 45-49years, 6.2% respondents were aged 50years and above. The findings show that most of the respondents were young adults which reflect that many of them were vibrant members of their communities. Majority [61.6%] of the respondents were males while 38.4% respondents were females, 43.6% respondents were Christians, 50.1% were Muslims while 6.2% respondents were traditional worshippers. The findings shows that small percentage of the respondents were other worshippers apart from the two main religions in the communities. 14.7% of the respondents had no formal education, 14.0% had primary school leaving certificate, 28.2% had secondary school leaving certificate, 18.7% were NCE/OND holders, 14.4% were HND or University graduates while 9.4% had higher educational qualifications. As regards occupations, 25.9% were farmers, 27.9% were artisans, 6.2% were businessman, 10.5% were civil servants, 16.1% were retirees while 13.4% were in others categories. The findings show that majority of community members were not civil servants. Also, 182 (59.7%) of the respondents had stayed in the communities less than five years and 123 (40.3%) respondents stayed more than 5 years which means majority of respondents were new in the area and 56 (18.4%) were in executive positions in landlords associations.

Research Question1

What are the self-help initiated projects carried out by community members in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 1: Frequency distribution table showing the self-help initiated projects carried out by community members in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State

Projects	Frequency	Percentage
Electricity supply	35	11.5
Drainage	42	13.8
Health services	46	15.1
Education e.g building classroom, sponsoring students	25	8.2
Provision of security	49	16.1
Construction of road	40	13.1
Construction of bridge	25	8.2
Construction /repair of markets	33	10.8
Financing a candidate for political office	10	3.3
Total	305	100

Table 1 reveals that there were many self-help initiated projects embarked upon by community members in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State with provision of security (16.1%), being the topmost and financing a candidate for political office (3.3%) being the least. In general, findings show that the self-help initiated projects carried out by community members in Akinyele Local Government Area were electricity supply, drainage, health services, education, building classroom, sponsoring students, provision of security, construction of road, construction /repair of markets and

financing a candidate for political office. Abatena (1995) noted that local self-help programmes have significant role to play in ensuring promotion of local and regional government as well as improving the living conditions of people. Nekwaya (2007) observed that community participation is the bedrock of rural development. In other words, limited community participation in the implementation and management of infrastructures means that the infrastructures have few chances of survival. Experience from the developed economies has shown that rural development policy must be sustainable, efficient and affordable. The World Bank (2004) asserted that the present era is largely dominated by efforts towards promoting citizens' participation in community development, which would require a fundamental shift in attitudes and techniques, thereby encouraging planning with the communities at the grass-root. In Saliu (2014) study, construction of community culverts had 29% responses, town hall and water projects had 14% responses each, electricity 13% while schools construction, market stall provision, mosque construction and others had 30% responses on self-help initiated projects.

Research Question 2

What are the forms of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 2: Frequency distribution table showing the forms of citizen participation in self help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State

Items	Agree	Disagree	Total
Labour/service provision	185 60.7%	120 39.3%	305 100.0%
Money/finance	175 57.4%	130 42.6%	305 100.0%
Advocacy/selling ideas to others	179 58.7%	126 41.3%	305 100.0%
Planning/supervision	168 55.1%	137 44.9%	305 100.0%

Table 2 above shows that 185 or 60.7% respondents agreed that labour/service provision was a form of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 120 or 39.3% respondents disagreed, 175 or 57.4% respondents agreed that money/finance was a form of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 130 or 42.6% respondents disagreed, 179 or 58.7% respondents agreed that advocacy selling ideas to others is a form of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 126 or 41.3% respondents disagreed, 168 or 55.1% respondents agreed that planning/supervision is a form of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 137 or 44.9% respondents disagreed. The findings shows that forms of citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State were labour/service provision, money/finance, advocacy/selling ideas to others and planning/supervision. In line with this finding. Samah and Aref (2009) noted

that people's capabilities in thinking about their problems and needs as well as acting them by establishing themselves in community groups, and do all to solve their problems and meet their needs is part of process of gaining control over their lives. Saliu (2014) noted that community development needs to be seen as a process whereby local communities become aware of their needs and realistically organise themselves and resources to meet the needs. Laah, Adefila and Yusuf (2014) found community members level of participation in community projects thus; assume control 5.7%, delegation of authority 14.4%, joint plan 6.3%, pieces of advice 6.3%, constitution 23.6%, enlightenment 26.4% while 17.2% did not participate. Akinwalere and Ajibola (2016) found also that level of community contribution and participation in their study were; project identification, planning, implementation, location of project which all ensure sustainability.

Research Question 3

What are the hindrances to success of self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 3: Frequency distribution table showing hindrances to success of self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State

Hindrances	Agree	D	Total
Lack of confidence in the leadership	184 60.3%	121 39.7%	305 100.0%
Corruption	192 63.8%	113 37.0%	305 100.0%
Ethnicity	175 57.4%	130 42.6%	305 100.0%
Religion differences	142 46.6%	163 53.4%	305 100.0%
Poor leadership style	148 48.5%	157 51.5%	305 100.0%

In table 3, 184 or 60.3% respondents agreed that lack of confidence in the leadership was a hindrance to success of self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 121 or 39.7% respondents disagreed, 192 or 63.0% respondents agreed that corruption was a hindrance to success of self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State while 113 or 37.0% respondents disagreed, 175 or 57.4% respondents agreed that ethnicity was a hindrance to success of self-help initiated projects while 130 or 42.6% respondents disagreed, 142 or 46.6% respondents agreed that religion differences is a hindrance to success of self-help initiated projects while 163 or 53.4% respondents disagreed. 148 or 48.5% respondents agreed that poor leadership style was a hindrance to success of self-help initiated projects while 157 or 51.5% respondents disagreed.

The findings shows that hindrances to citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State were lack of confidence in the leadership, corruption, ethnicity, religion differences and poor leadership style. In

line with the finding, Abatena (1995) noted that grassroots contribution to the design and implementation of development projects are not appreciated due to the low esteem in which ordinary folk are usually looked at by development technocrats and policy makers alike despite the fact that active participation in development activities is essential. Laah, Adefila and Yusuf (2014) in their study found constraints to community participation as inadequate awareness 13.2%, poor and inefficient leadership 19.0%, illiteracy 13.8%, insufficient funds 16.7%, lack of encouragement from government 29.9% and others 7.5%. Saliu (2014) also found financial constraints, political/social constraints, lack of cooperation, mismanagement of project funds among others as problems of self-help community projects efforts in his study.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant gender difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area.

Table 4: T test table showing gender difference in citizens participation in self help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Male	117	22.1018	14.162	1.96	1.079	303	.281
Female	188	23.2123	15.626				

The above table 4 shows that there was no significant gender difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 1.079, df = , P > .05 level of significance). This implies that the male citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State was similar to that of the female. The two categories of gender were actively working and participating in self-help initiated projects almost at the same level in the area of study. In line with this finding, Haque (2003) noted that there is a growing emphasis on women's participation and representation in political parties, legislative bodies, public agencies, trade unions, local institutions and grassroots organisations in various regions.

Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to religion.

Table 5: T test table showing difference in citizens participation in self help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area according to religion

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Christian	133	19.451	10.314	1.96	3.21	303	.281
Muslim	153	18.271	11.478				

Table 5, shows that there was a significant difference in citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to religion (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 3.21, df = , P > .05 level of significance). This implies that

the Christians participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State was not similar or at the same level to that of the Muslims. The two categories of religion did not engage in participation in self-help initiated projects at the same rate. Abetana (1995) noted that through literature review, open communication, constructive dialogue among people, refraining from activities that others perceive as threat to them, mutual interdependence and coexistence as well as seeking pertinent information to clarify issues and reduce misunderstanding and tension among community members are essential for community self-help activities and in the promotion of social development. Theodori and Mayfield (2008) in a study found that increased attendance at religious meeting is positively associated with increased level of community involvement.

Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant difference in citizen participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to occupation.

Table 6: T test table showing difference in citizens participation in self help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State according to occupation

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Self employed	183	17.351	10.035	1.96	2.99	303	.281
Civil servants	122	16.720	9.109				

Table 6 shows that there was a significant difference in citizens participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area according to religion (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 3.21, df = , $P > .05$ level of significance). This implies that the participation in self-help initiated projects in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State was not similar across respondents' occupations. Findings also have shown that citizen participation in community development are influenced by socio-economic status (Dresbach, 1992) and Defee, Schultz and Pasewark (1974) contended that participation in organisations was disproportional to the upper occupational categories.

Conclusion

It is obvious that governments at all levels and development partners have not really succeeded in mobilising and creating desired awareness on how community participation should be addressed and achieved which prompted citizens in community to initiate and embark on self-help projects for improving their livelihood with any approach they like. Understanding the fact that participatory models have neither imposed any task upon governments nor other development agency but effective community participation is unlikely to occur without serious attention from the government. Proper channels towards implementing necessary community participation strategies should be strictly adhered to in order to deal with the prevailing challenges.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. There is need to mobilise and create more awareness through mass media, seminars and workshops about the need for community participation in Akinyele Local Government Area in Oyo State.
2. There should be concerted efforts towards strengthening community participation in self-help projects now that it is realised that it could be yet another strategy to transform many communities.
3. Community leaders in the area of study needs to be developed more to ensure effective community participation in self-help projects by ensuring nobody is discriminated against either by tribal, religious, political affiliation etc. This is to ensure that local projects will not suffer due to the above mentioned primordial sentiments that often lead to abandonment of essential projects (infrastructural facilities) that may contribute to quality of life and social development of the people.

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