



Influence of Non-Formal Girl-Child Education Programmes on Community Development in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on Perceived Influence of Non-formal Girl-Child Education Programmes on Community Development in Port Harcourt Metropolis Rivers State. The study was guided by three research objectives, questions and three hypotheses. The descriptive survey design was adopted in the study with a population of 240 beneficiaries and leaders of Community Development Committees (CDC) in Port Harcourt metropolis. The entire population was studied as a census without sampling. The instruments for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Influence of Girl Child Education Programme on Community Development Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by two experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Reliability indexes of 0.81, 0.84, and 0.76 were obtained for the various clusters of the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analyzed using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that health advocacy, entrepreneurship education and environmental education programmes for the girl child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Government at state and local levels should establish entrepreneurship training centres where girls can access skills that would enable them establish their own businesses and become self-reliant.

Keywords: Non-Formal Education, Girl-Child, Community Development

INTRODUCTION

The Girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to 18 years of age. During this period, the young girl is totally under the care of the adult who may be parents, guardians, or older siblings. It is also the stage when the Girl-child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on others on who she models her behaviour, through observation, repetition and imitation.

According to a recent report, more than 41,000 girls under the age 18 marry every day. Her physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional development starts and progresses to its peak at the young adult stage. The development of any society would be grossly lopsided if the girl child is not given quality education.

However, there are predicted assumptions that vocational and technical education acquisition is closely related to economic empowerment of the rural populace. The programme as well as the curriculum could be designed to take care of the needs of our young learners in order to acquire skills necessary for employment, self-reliance and economic development. Acquiring these vocational skills will greatly help to empower and transform our girls into self-reliant women and make them economically viable. This economic empowerment will greatly help to curb and as well ameliorate the incidence of youth restiveness, kidnapping, militancy and other social vices that are prevalent in our communities. (Dokubo & Dokubo 2014).

In Nigeria, the development of women was brought about by modernization including education, growth of cities, migration but to mention a few. Some of the known programmes are Safe Motherhood

Campaign, Better Life for Rural Women, Child Care Programme, The Adolescent Project and Empowerment Support Initiative. Girls' education is a strategic development priority. The better educated women tend to be more informed about nutrition and healthcare, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and their children are usually healthier, should they choose to become mothers.

Educating a nation remains the most vital strategy for the development of the society through the developing world (Grant, 2016). Since education is regarded as a means of making individuals understand their society and its structure, there is need for all and sundry irrespective of where they live to be educated (Haruna & Liman, 2015).

In the past, the Girl-child in Nigeria were neglected to the background and however the girls seen as future housewives. However, since the liberation of women, there have been conscious efforts to explore and harness the full potentials of women, besides every community and nation will develop greatly with the help of the female folks. Community Development is a process where community members come together to take collective actions and generate solutions to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at a grass root level.

According to Kobani and Alozie (2019), it is proven that the overriding objective of a Community Development programme is to improve the living standard of individuals in a community to the extent that the community's resources which are their human and material resources can accommodate them. They stressed further that community development involves changing the relationship between ordinary people in positions of power so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It states that from the fact that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge, experience and creativity which can be harnessed and channeled into collective action to achieve the community's desired.

The twentieth century is making a significant turn towards Community Development as well as the value for community social work. The community is of critical importance to the lives of the people, which fundamentally promotes the needs of having skill, abilities and knowledge of community practices. Community Development is essentially the most practical framework of the social worker who is seeking for a change of the community and individuals in a given society (Kitchen, 2018).

However, in Rivers State, empowerment programmes such as the adolescent project (TAP) and the Empowerment Support Initiative (ESI) are some of the conceptualized programmes with so much benefits on the feminine gender which were initiated by the Offices of the Wives of past Governors of the state. There are a few other non-formal education programmes that could enhance the girlchild's contributions to community development. These programmes entrepreneurial training programme, health care advocacy training programmes and environmental training programmes among others.

Entrepreneurial Training on the other hand is aimed at developing entrepreneurial competence in potential individuals. It involves knowledge on investment opportunities, deciding what opportunities to exploit for profit, promotion and establishment of business expertise, pooling of various scarce resources for production and distribution of goods and services, organization and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprises, risk bearing and innovation.

Health care advocacy is the process of constantly aiding the voices and practices of community change agents on progressive enhancement of the health status of a population. Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

This study, however, sought to find out the influence of these various nonformal education programmes for girls on community development in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Women play an indispensable role in nation building. It is said that if you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation. This is because of the integral role women play in educating of their children if they themselves are educated. Unfortunately, there has been an age

long narrative in most parts of Nigeria and Africa of unequal opportunities for educational opportunities of the girl-child in comparison to the boy child. Most parents see the education of the girl-child as a waste since they are expected to get married and bear the names of their husbands. Parents prefer educating their male children who they believe will carry the name of the family.

It is worthy of note, however, that though this narrative is changing in recent years, it has been observed that some girls are still out of school in Port Harcourt metropolis. With little or no opportunities for schooling. This incapacitates them and make them unable to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities. The question, however, is that will the provision of out-of-school (non-formal) education opportunities for the girl-child enhance their ability to contribute to community development? Proffering answer to this question is the problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of non -formal girl-child education programmes on community development in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which entrepreneurship training programmes for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.
2. Investigate the extent to which health care advocacy programmes for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.
3. Determine the extent to which environmental education programmes for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurial training programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?
2. To what extent does the health care advocacy programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?
3. To what extent does environmental education programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of beneficiaries of girl child education programmes and community leaders on extent to which entrepreneurial training programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of beneficiaries of girl child education programmes and community leaders on the extent to which health care advocacy programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response of beneficiaries of girl child education programmes and community leaders on the extent to which environmental education programme for the girl-child influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis.

METHODS

This study adopted the descriptive survey design with a population of 240 people. This comprises, 220 beneficiaries (girls) of non-formal education programmes in various training centres and 20 leaders of Community Based Organizations in Port Harcourt metropolis. The sample of the study was 240 respondents comprising 220 beneficiaries from non-formal training centres and 20 community leaders in Port Harcourt metropolis. The entire population was taken as a census without sampling due to the small and manageable size of the population.

The instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire tagged “Influence of Non Formal Girl Child Education Programme on Community Development Questionnaire (INFGCEPCDQ)”. The questionnaire was structured in two sections A and B. The questionnaire items were designed on a four-point summated rating scale of agreement of Very High Extent (VHE) with 4 points, High Extent (HE) with 3 points, Low Extent (LE) with 2 points, Very Low Extent (VLE) with 1 point. The instrument was validated by two experts in Adult Education and Community Development. The internal consistency

of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha statistics. Reliability coefficients of 0.81, 0.84, and 0.76 were obtained for the various sections of the instrument respectively. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the Extent to which Entrepreneurial Training Programme Influence Community Development

S/N	Statement	Beneficiaries N=210			Community Leaders N=20		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Entrepreneurial training for girls empower them to set up small businesses of their own and thereby contribute to their family's socio-economic well-being.	3.28	0.95	High Extent	3.47	0.77	High Extent
2	Through entrepreneurship trainings, girls are empowered so they don't depend on men and this reduces sexual abuse.	3.16	0.95	High Extent	3.27	0.85	High Extent
3	Through entrepreneurship trainings girls who are unable to go to formal schools can be empowered to be self-reliant and this reduces their exposure to social ills.	3.22	0.98	High Extent	2.99	1.01	High Extent
4	Entrepreneurship education equips girls with skills that makes them gainfully employed and this reduces poverty in communities.	3.13	1.12	High Extent	3.30	0.97	High Extent
5	Entrepreneurship education for girls reduces the rate of unemployment among youths.	3.46	0.85	High Extent	3.40	0.63	High Extent
	Grand mean	3.25		High Extent	3.29		High Extent

The analyzed data on Table 1 above for questionnaire items 1 – 5 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis. Beneficiaries had mean scores of 3.28, 3.16, 3.22, 3.13 and 3.46 while community leaders have mean values of 3.47, 3.27, 2.99, 3.30 and 3.40 respectively. With grand mean scores of 3.25 and 3.29 respectively, the answer to research question one is that entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent.

The analyzed data on Table 2 above for questionnaire items 6 – 10 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which health. The analyses revealed that all the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Beneficiaries had mean values of 3.31, 3.03, 3.39, 3.22 and 3.31 while community leaders had mean scores of 3.12, 3.31, 3.28, 3.00 and 3.21 respectively. With grand mean scores of 3.19 and 3.08 for beneficiaries and community leaders respectively, the answer to research question two is that health care advocacy development programme influences community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does the health care advocacy development programme and its benefits influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?*

S/N	Statement	Beneficiaries N=210			Community Leaders N=20		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
6	Sex education programmes encourages safe sex among girls in Port Harcourt metropolis.	3.31	0.81	High Extent	3.12	0.70	High Extent
7	Sex education would discourage early marriage practice among young girls.	3.03	0.63	High Extent	3.01	0.70	High Extent
8	Sex education helps in the reduction of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).	3.19	0.74	High Extent	3.20	0.67	High Extent
9	Health education improves the wellbeing of the girls and enables their activity participation in community activities.	3.12	0.80	High Extent	3.00	0.79	High Extent
10	Health education on family planning for girls will reduce cases of unwanted pregnancy thereby controlling population growth	3.31	0.78	High Extent	3.11	0.61	High Extent
	Grand mean	3.19		High Extent	3.08		High Extent

The analyzed data on Table 2 above for questionnaire items 6 – 10 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which health. The analyses revealed that all the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Beneficiaries had mean values of 3.31, 3.03, 3.39, 3.22 and 3.31 while community leaders had mean scores of 3.12, 3.31, 3.28, 3.00 and 3.21 respectively. With grand mean scores of 3.19 and 3.08 for beneficiaries and community leaders respectively, the answer to research question two is that health care advocacy development programme influences community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does environmental education programme influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis?*

Table 6 above shows that the calculated z-value of 1.74 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 238 degree of freedom, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which environmental education programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the Extent Environmental Education Programme Influences Community Development

S/N	Statement	Beneficiaries N=210			Community Leaders N=20		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Knowledge of environmental education discourages indiscriminate waste disposal among girls.	2.87	0.76	High Extent	3.06	0.73	High Extent
12	Environmental education equips girls with knowledge on the need to avoid deforestation.	2.88	0.75	High Extent	3.03	0.66	High Extent
13	Environmental education will discourage littering of waste among girls in Port Harcourt.	3.11	0.90	High Extent	3.26	0.87	High Extent
14	Awareness creation on the environmental will increase girls' participation in monthly clean up exercises in the state.	3.20	0.85	High Extent	3.19	0.74	High Extent
15	Environmental education will encourage tree planting among girls in Port Harcourt.	3.18	0.84	High Extent	3.03	0.80	High Extent
16	Environmental education will improve girls' personal hygiene practices.	2.83	0.91	High Extent	3.01	0.87	High Extent
	Grand mean	2.99		High Extent	2.67		High Extent

Test of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As

Table 4: Z-Test Analysis on Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of Beneficiaries and Community Leaders on the Extent to which Entrepreneurship Training Programme Influence Community Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Beneficiaries	210	3.25	0.77	238	0.05	-0.25	1.96	Accepted
Community Leaders	20	3.29	0.69					

Note: LS Level of significance; z-cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 4 above shows that the calculated z-value of -0.25 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 238 degree of freedom, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which health care development programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As

Table 5: Z-Test Analysis on Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of Beneficiaries and Community Leaders on the Extent to which Health Care Advocacy Programme Influence Community Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Beneficiaries	210	3.19	0.80	238	0.05	0.71	1.96	Accepted
Community Leaders	20	3.08	0.65					

Note: LS Level of significance; z- cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 5 above shows that the calculated z-value of 0.71 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 238 degree of freedom, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which healthcare advocacy programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean response of benefactress and community leaders on the extent to which environmental education programme influence community development Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As.

Table 6: Z-Test Analysis on Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of Beneficiaries and Community Leaders on the Extent to which Environmental Education Programme Influence Community Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Beneficiaries	210	2.99	0.85	238	0.05	1.74	1.96	Rejected Significant Difference Exists
Community Leaders	20	2.67	0.78					

Note: LS Level of significance; z- cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 6 above shows that the calculated z-value of 1.74 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 238 degree of freedom, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which environmental education programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the findings for research question one revealed that Entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent with grand mean value of 3.25 and 3.29 for beneficiaries and community leaders respectively. From the analyzed table, it was revealed that entrepreneurial training for girls empower them to set up small businesses of their own or get paid employment. This reduces their dependence on men which exposes them to sexual abuse and also help them contribute to their family's socio-economic well-being. In the same vein, the corresponding hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which entrepreneurial training programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. This finding is corroborated by the findings of Sanchez-Garcia (2015) who revealed that entrepreneurship education was set up in Nigeria as an instrument that to impart students with knowledge, skills and motivation required to realize an opportunity for social change in the community by creating jobs and

adding economic and social values to the nation. Entrepreneurship in the Port Harcourt metropolis has equipped individuals with skills that have created jobs and reduce the rate of unemployment.

The result of the findings for research question 2 revealed that health care advocacy programme influences community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent with grand mean values of 3.19 and 3.08 for beneficiaries and community leaders respectively. The analyses revealed that health education improves the wellbeing of the girls and enables their active participation in community activities. It helps encourage safe sex practices among these young girls which reduces the rate of unwanted pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted diseases among them. Similarly, the corresponding hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which healthcare advocacy programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. This finding was supported by the findings of Ajah (2017) which revealed that health education for girls equips them with basic knowledge on hygienic practices, safe sex practices and general wellbeing. In the same vein, Adeniyi (2012) revealed that health education in the form of sex education is very important for the girl child during her puberty age to help her deal with the changing biological realities and their attendant consequences on the girl child.

The result of the findings in research question three revealed that environmental education programme influences community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent with grand mean values of 2.99 and 2.67 for beneficiaries and community leaders respectively. The analyses revealed that Knowledge of environmental education discourages indiscriminate waste disposal and littering of the environment among girls. It also enhances their participation in monthly clean up exercises in the state. Similarly, the corresponding hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of beneficiaries and community leaders on the extent to which environmental education programme influence community development in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt L.G.As. This finding is in line with the findings of Kurubo (2009) which revealed that environmental education gives set of understanding skills, attitudes and habits of mind that compares individual to relate with their environment in a positive fashion and to take day-to-day and long term actions to maintain or restore sustainable relationship with other people and the biosphere. Eheazu in Korinaki (2018) also revealed that basic knowledge components is based on the idea that before an individual can act on an environmental problems, he/she must first understand the problem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was concluded that some of the girl child education programmes available in Port Harcourt metropolis are entrepreneurship trainings, health care advocacy and environmental education. These programmes influence community development in Port Harcourt metropolis to a high extent. They imbue right values in the girl child and this reduces social vices among them. They always create avenues for the girls to acquire relevant skills for self or paid employment and this empowers them to be self-reliant. This ultimately increases their capacity to contribute meaningfully to the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Government at state and local levels should establish entrepreneurship training centres where girls can access skills that would enable them establish their own businesses and become self-reliant.
2. The Ministry of Health should partner with primary health centres to carry out periodic health advocacy programmes for young girls to give them necessary information to prevent unwanted pregnancy and other related health issues.
3. The state government through the relevant parastatals and the National Orientation Agency should carry out periodic environmental education programme to equip the populace with necessary information to maintain good environmental practices.

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