

Utilization of Community-Based Resources and Youth Empowerment in Kolokuma Local Government Area, Bayelsa State

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Abstract: This study determined the relationship between utilization of community resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma in Bayelsa State. The research employed descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised of all youths from the local government. The sample size for the study is 347 respondents drawn from different communities in Kolokuma LGA. Purposive sampling was used to sample respondents for the study. This allowed the researcher to reach out to those in the villages and towns with direct knowledge and involvement in community development and local youth empowerment schemes. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained for study. A researcher made a questionnaire and was then used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts in the department of adult and community education, Rivers State University. Thereafter, the instrument was tested for reliability using the test-retest method. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to compute the reliability coefficient. This gave a value of .87. The researcher administered the questionnaire and conducted in-depth interviews for a period of eight weeks. The data obtained were coded for analysis using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson product moment correlation to answer the research questions and regression analysis to test for the hypotheses. Findings of the study weaken the positive but significant relationship between community natural resources, social resources, human resources, and youth empowerment. It was recommended that Community leaders should focus on building social awareness, meaningful participation, social connections, building entrepreneurial skills, and power sharing between youths and adults. This is essential for utilization of community resources. The exploitation of natural resources should be coordinated by the community and distributed with equity.

Keywords: Utilization, Community-Based Resources, Natural, Social and Human Resources, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

Resources are a very broad term; it is basically anything that can be considered a valuable addition. Resources are anything that has utility and adds value to life. In economics, a resource is defined as a service or other asset used to produce goods and services that meet human needs and wants (McConnell, et al, 2011). Community resources are resources that enhance or facilitate the lives of people in a community (Neely, 2019). These resources are an integral part of every individual's development. Community Resources are assets in a community that help meet certain needs of those around them. The resources are accessible to all the members of the community. There are different types of community resources and according to Soetomo (2012), community resources can be grouped into natural resources and human and social resources. Natural resources are the physical and mineral resources available in the community. This includes land, water, minerals resources and the environment. Human resources are the quality and quantity of people

in the community while social resources are the **support** or assistance available to a community member from family, friends, and neighbours as well as community organizations. The value of each community resource depends on its utility. For community resources to be deployed for youth empowerment, there must be systems and processes that help translate resources into capital. Social, human and natural resources must be consciously developed, applied and enhanced for effective youth empowerment. Youth empowerment programmes must effectively consider the three dimensions of community resources

Youth Empowerment Programs (YEPs) are interventions that regularly involve young people as recipients, partners and participants in the decision-making processes that determine program design, planning and/or implementation. Empowerment is a central concept within social work, particularly in enhancing the well-being and strength of all people by engaging individuals and structures in addressing life and societal challenges (Chang, et al, 2022). Empowerment in social work refers to both the desired state of being empowered through interventions for improving well-being; it is multidimensional and multifaceted but is often defined as having the means to control one's life situation in achieving personal and societal goals (Adams, 1996). It is also understood as a social action process in which community members have, assume, or expand their power and responsibility in creating desired societal changes (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2012). This implies that empowerment occurs at different and multiple levels, such as individual, family, organization, and community/collective (Jennings, et al, 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2012).

Youth empowerment and empowerment in general, occurs at individual and collective levels, in the form of, amongst others, psychological, social, economic and political empowerment. Youth empowerment emphasizes youth strengths instead of weaknesses. It enables and promotes greater active youth participation and influence in the settings in which they are involved and which affect their lives (Wiley & Rappaport, 2000). Variables associated with youth empowerment include "increased skills, critical awareness and mastery of the environment, higher levels of self-determination, shared decision-making, and participatory competence" (Rivera & Seidman, 2005, p. 403).

Akintayo and Adiat (2013) also opined if developing countries like Nigeria yearn for development and prosperity then they need to invest in their youth. Community youth empowerment has come in different forms, but mostly through harnessing local community resources to uplift youths. The utilization of community resources for youth empowerment is a scheme that is dated in cultural practice but becoming a national objective.

Finding opportunities for young people is a critical challenge for Africa, where 62 per cent of the population more than 600 million young people-is below the age of 25. Swaniker (2013) states that since population growth will not reduce in the decades to come, it is imperative that Africa leverages the talent and energy of its youth to create dramatically higher levels of prosperity and equality to avoid the latent risks of unemployment and social instability. This begins with communities, by empowering youths through the utilization of community resources. However, empowering and preparing Nigerian youths to thrive well in the unstructured and uncertain nature of today's community is not an easy task. This is because different communities have distinct characteristics, different administrations, and resources. As such, their response to youth empowerment is somewhat varied, even for those with similar resources and in the same location. This has also led to different levels of community resource utilization as well as different responses and approaches to community youth empowerment. Assessing the extent of utilization of community resources for youth empowerment becomes imperative.

As a matter of fact, young people are the main construct in the underpinnings of every social structure. To assess the condition of a society's development, a good place is to start with how well its young people are empowered (Global Wellbeing Index, 2013). On the contrary, any development plan, without taking into consideration the potential of youth, will not transport the desired results. UNESCO (1998) recognize youth as equal partners and actors for development and peace. Generating opportunities for young people and investing in their capabilities must be prioritized by community leaders. Youth's chance for contributing to communities' economic, social and cultural development is maximized through the process of empowerment (IRC, 2012). In Nigeria and kolokuma local government area inclusively, youth can contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of the community through the utilization of community-based resources. Hence, this study seeks to examine how utilization of community-based resources for youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area, Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem

Youth empowerment has been one of the strategies for mitigating youth restiveness. In recent times, however, it has been deployed as an effective method of youth and community development strategies. It has emerged as a method of resource control and a sustainable method of utilization of community resources. Community resources are mostly grouped into natural resources and human and social resources. Youth empowerment thus would comprise raising youths to take advantage of the natural resources in their community, develop skills and training as part of human resource development and empower youths to participate in community development as part of social development. The results of such efforts have however been mixed and in some communities, no research has been done to measure the utilization of community resources and youth empowerment. This is even burdensome for riverine areas like kolokuma in Bayelsa State, where accessibility and data collection are challenging. Therefore, this study intends to investigate the relationship between the utilization of community-based resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to predict the relationship between the utilization of community-based resources and youth empowerment in the kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State. The specific objectives of the study are

1. To determine the relationship between the utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.
2. To determine the relationship between the utilization of community-owned human resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.
3. To determine the relationship between the utilization of community-owned social resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State?

2. What is the relationship between community-owned human resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State?
3. What is the relationship between community-owned social resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between the utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma.
2. There is no significant relationship between community-owned human resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.
3. There is no significant relationship between community-owned social resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State.

Methodology

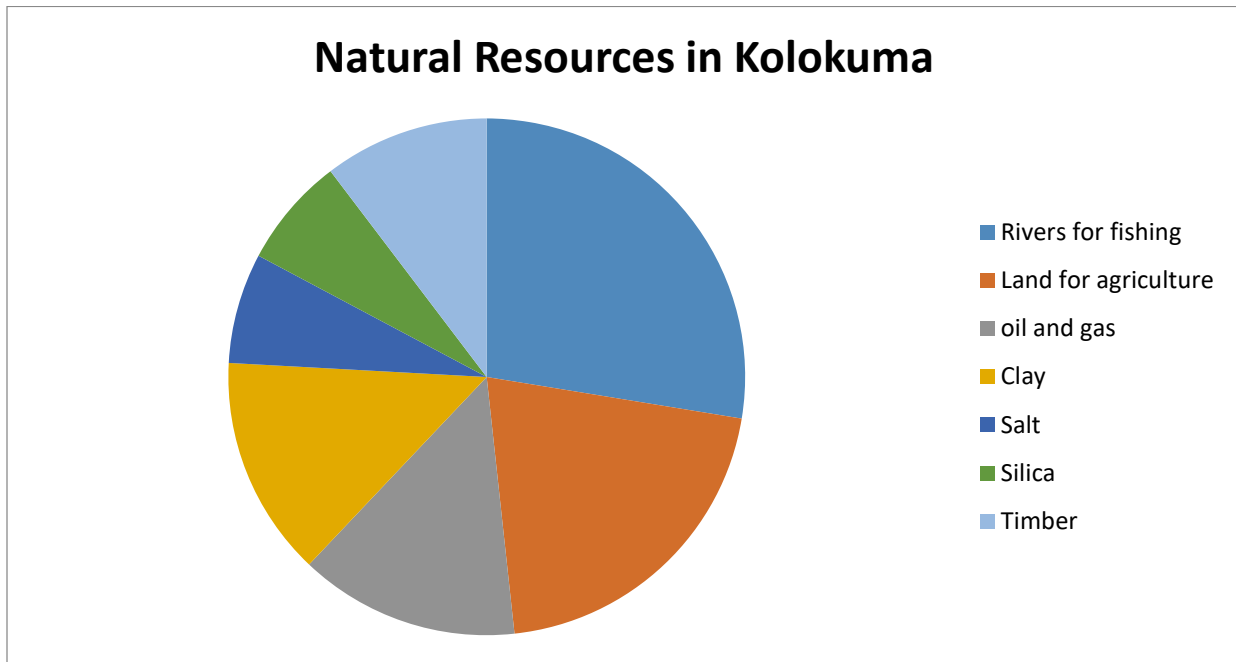
The research employed correlational research survey design. The study was carried out in kolokuma local government area which are riverine community of Bayelsa State. The population of the study comprised of all youths from kolokuma local government area. The sample size for the study is 347 respondents drawn from different communities in Kolokuma LGA. However, a purposive sampling technique was used to sample respondents for the study. This allowed the researchers to reach out to those in the villages and towns with direct knowledge and involvement in community development and local youth empowerment schemes. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained for the study. The researchers reviewed community documents on youth empowerment schemes and community resources. The researchers also conducted an in-depth interview with community stakeholders. Two researcher-made questionnaires were then used to collect quantitative data for the study. These instruments were tagged “Community-Based Resources Utilization Questionnaire (CBRUQ) and Youth Empowerment Questionnaire (YEQ)”. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Department of Adult and Community Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Thereafter, the instruments were tested for reliability using the test-retest method. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to compute the reliability coefficient. This yielded reliabilities coefficients of 0.87 and 0.80 respectively. The researchers administered the questionnaire and conducted an in-depth interview for a period of eight weeks. The data obtained were coded for analysis using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and regression analysis to test for the hypotheses.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		N	%
Gender	Male	186	146.46%
Age	Female	161	126.77%
	19-24	75	21.61%
	25-30	84	24.21%
	31-34	110	31.70%
	35-40	78	22.48%
Marital Status	Married	111	31.99%
	Single	187	53.89%
	Separated	47	13.54%
	Widowed	2	0.58%
Occupation	Fishing	40	11.53%
	Transportation	16	4.61%
	craftsman	103	29.68%
	Apprenticeship	117	33.72%
	Trading	39	11.24%
	Public/Private		
	Worker	32	9.22%
Educational Qualification	No formal education	21	6.05%
	Non-formal	121	34.87%
	Primary school	74	21.33%
	Secondary	97	27.95%
	Tertiary	34	9.80%

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2022*



Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2022*

The Pie chart shows the natural resources available in Kolokuma local government area of Bayelsa State. The chart indicates abundance of river for fishing and aqua, oil and gas, followed by land for agriculture. The chart also shows the availability of clay, salt, silica, and timber all in commercial quantities.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area?

Table 2: Summary of Relationship Between Utilization of Community-Owned Natural Resources and Youth Empowerment in Kolokuma

		Youth Empowerment	Community-Owned Resource	Natural Resource
CommReUti	Pearson Correlation	1		.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N	347		347
YouthEmp	Pearson Correlation	.513**		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	347		347

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2022*

Table 2 gives the summary of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test. The result shows that the correlation index between community-owned natural resource utilization and youth empowerment is .513. This indicates a moderate and positive relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between application of community-owned human resource development and youth empowerment in kolokuma?

Table 3: Summary of Relationship Between Utilization of Community-Owned Human Resource and Youth Empowerment in Kolokuma

		Youth Empowerment	Community Human Resource
YouthEmp	Pearson Correlation	1	.736**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	347	347
ComHumRes	Pearson Correlation	.736**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	347	347

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2022*

Table 3 gives the summary of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test. The result shows that the correlation index between community human resource and youth empowerment is .736. This indicates a high and positive relationship between utilization of community-owned human resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between application of community-owned social resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma?

Table 4: Summary of Relationship Between Utilization of Community-Owned Social Resources and Youth Empowerment in kolokuma

		Youth Empowerment	Community-Owned Social Resource
YouthEmp	Pearson Correlation	1	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	347	347
ComSocRes	Pearson Correlation	.540**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	347	347

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2022*

Table 4 gives the summary of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test. The result shows that the correlation index between community social resources and youth empowerment is .540. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between utilization of community-owned social resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Analysis on Significant Relationship Utilization of Community-Owned Natural Resources and Youth Empowerment in kolokuma.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	24.060	1.368		17.588	.000
	CommReUti	.175	.036	.251	4.825	.000

a. Dependent Variable: YouthEmp

Table 5 shows the summary of the simple linear regression table. The result shows that the coefficient value is .175, indicating that as community resource utilization increases by a unit, youth empowerment also increases (.175). The result reveals that the significance of t, the probability value is .000. since the p value is less than .05 ($p < .05_{.000}$), the result is statistically significant. Thus, there is a significant relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

2. There is no significant relationship between utilization of community-owned human resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Table 6: Summary of Regression Analysis on Significant Relationship Between Utilization of Community- Human Resource and Youth Empowerment in kolokuma.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	26.018	1.234		21.076	.000
	ComHumRes	.126	.034	.196	3.720	.000

a. Dependent Variable: YouthEmp

Table 6 shows the summary of the simple linear regression table. The result shows that the coefficient value is .126, indicating that as community human resources increases by a unit, youth empowerment also increases (.126). The result also reveals that the significance of t, the probability value is .000. Since the p value is less than .05 ($p < .05_{.000}$), the result is statistically significant. Thus, there is a significant relationship between community human resource development and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

3. There is no significant relationship between community-owned social resource development and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Table 7: Summary of Regression Analysis on Significant Relationship Between Utilization of Community-Owned Social Resource and Youth Empowerment in kolokuma.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	21.774	1.343		16.210	.000
ComSocRes	.250	.037	.340	6.725	.000

a. Dependent Variable: YouthEmp

Table 7 shows the summary of the simple linear regression table. The result shows that the coefficient value is .250, indicating that as community social resource increases by a unit, youth empowerment also increases (.126). The result also reveals that the significance of t, the probability value is .000. Since the p value is less than .05 ($p < .05_{.000}$), the result is statistically significant. Thus, there is a significant relationship between community social resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area.

Discussion of Findings

The result from Table 2 analysis shows that the correlation index between utilization of community-owned natural resource and youth empowerment is .513. This indicates a moderate and positive relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area. The related hypothesis test indicates there is a significant relationship between utilization of community-owned natural resources and youth empowerment in kolokuma. This shows that the utilization of natural resources in the community by youths is essential for youth empowerment. This findings in agreement with Chang, et al, (2022) who studied youth empowerment for sustainable development. It was found in the study that eco-resource utilization greatly impacts on youth empowerment.

The result from Table 3 shows that the correlation index between utilization of community-owned human resource and youth empowerment is .736. This indicates a high and positive relationship between utilization of community-owned human resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area. The hypothesis test reveals there is a significant relationship between community-owned human resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma. Community-owned human resources includes skills acquisition programmes, technical training, educational sponsorships all coordinated and supported by the community. This finding is in agreement with Oyebamiji and Ganiyu (2012) who examined human resource development as a tool for empowering grassroots communities. It was discovered that Human Resource Development (HRD) promotes the acquisition of skills for problem identification, planning, monitoring, implementation, and evaluation of community development programmes/projects by youths. That HRD provides the satisfaction and motivation for youths to handle community development projects as their own project for improved community development programmes in their communities.

The result of analysis from Table 4 reveals that the correlation index between utilization of community-owned social resources and youth empowerment is .540. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between utilization of community-owned social resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma local government area. The corresponding hypothesis test confirms that there is a significant relationship between utilization of community-owned social resource and youth empowerment in kolokuma. This implies that youth are actively involved in the social development of the community. From festivals to community leadership and being carried along in community administration. The cultural ties of passing tradition from one generation to the other have enabled community social resources to becoming an empowerment tool for young people. This finding is supported by Yanto and Shang (2017) who studied social enterprise as a mechanism of youth empowerment. The study identified building social awareness, meaningful participation, social connections, building entrepreneurial skills, and power sharing between youths and adults, which can be broadly categorized into social-capacity empowerment and entrepreneurial-capacity empowerment.

Conclusion

The outcome of this study is that community resources are often deployed for youth empowerment. However, they may not be actively coordinated by the community aside from social resources which are deliberate. The study concludes that the utilization of community resources greatly impacts youth empowerment. Natural resource utilization has huge economic empowerment potential for young people. Social and human resource empowerment enhances the self-esteem of youths by offering skills, training, and community integration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Community leaders should focus on building social awareness, meaningful participation, social connections, building entrepreneurial skills, and power sharing between youths and adults. This is essential for utilization of community resources.
2. Community leaders should also focus on developing the human capital of young people through employment generation, educational sponsorships, skills acquisition, and training in the form of human resources for empowerment.
3. Community leaders should build the capacity of youths by involving them as mentees and partners in community leadership and administration.
4. The exploitation of natural resources should be coordinated by the community and distributed with equity.

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