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## STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING PARTICIPATION IN BUILDING INDUSTRY FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTHS IN OBIO/AKPOR, RIVERS STATE

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### Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the strategies for enhancing participation in building construction among youths in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State. The study was guided by three specific objectives and three research questions and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 149 persons comprising 66 youth leaders, 66 community leaders and 17 councilors from Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State. The sample for the study was 149 obtained through census sampling technique. Data for the study were obtained through a questionnaire developed by the researcher from literature review. It was validated by three experts and with an internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.89 obtained through Cronbach Alpha. A total of 149 copies of the instrument were administered and a total of 103 were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data gathered were analysed using frequency and mean. The result of the study showed that low wages, negative public perception, fear of

being seen as low class person among others contribute to low participation in building among the youths. The study also showed that organising community meetings to sensitize youth on the need for engagement in building industry would enhance participation among others are some possible strategies that could be taken by communities to enhance youth participation in building industry. Furthermore, organising professional training programmes could attract youth into the industry; providing incentives to practicing youths would encourage others to get involved among others were some of the strategies that could be taken by local government council to enhance participation in building industry among youths in the study area. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that community leaders should organize programmes to sensitize youths on the need and benefits of involvement in building construction industry.

**Keywords:** Building Industry, Socio-Economic Development, Youth Development, Enhancing Participation in Building Industry.

## **Introduction**

Building construction entails building of roads, dams, high-rise towers, bridges and houses. Typical activities involved in building construction for a typical building include: drawing of building plans, setting out the building plan to get foundation ready, excavating building foundation, casting mixed concrete at the base of building foundation, laying of brick/block work, plastering and rendering the walls, pipe-fitting/sanitary work, application of paints on wall surfaces (Rajput, 2020). This is similar to the list given by which include: planning phase of the construction work, site preparation, building foundation, construction of the building and them structure and site finishing (World Council of Associations for Technology Education, 2003). Building technology is the technical strategies and procedures employed in using tools, equipment and raw materials in constructing and maintaining buildings (Anaele & Okoro, 2014).

The building construction industry contributes immensely to socio-economic development of any nation. This is due to the fact that activities of the industry leading to achievement of national socio-economic development goals of providing shelter, infrastructure and employment (Oladinrin, Ogunsemi & Aje,

2012). According to Durdyev and Ismail (2012), the building construction industry contributes towards sustainable economic development by bringing satisfaction to some of the basic objectives of development such as employment creation, income generation and re-distribution. Durdyev and Ismail (2012) further added that the building construction industry also plays significant role in bringing satisfaction to the basic physical and social needs, such as production of shelter, infrastructure and consumer goods. The building construction industry contributes to erecting of structures such as hospitals, houses and other buildings used for schools, townships, offices, hospitals and other important services. The construction sector holds immense potential for stimulating growth through employment generating (Essilfie-Baiden, 2020). In Nigeria, the building construction industry contributes 1.98% of the Gross Domestic Product (Agwu & Olele, 2013).

Although the building construction industry has important role and contribution to national development, it is observed that participation in the industry among youth is poor (Mahmood, Awang, Kmeil & Jakada, 2021). It is often said that youths are the leaders of tomorrow. This implies that low participation of youths in the building

construction industry has adverse effect on the socio-economic development of a nation. It was against this backdrop that the present study was conducted to find out the probable factors responsible for how participation in building construction industry.

Youth participation is a way to provide opportunities for youth to take on greater responsibilities

and, through these real world experiences, to build competencies and develop into successful adults. Participation in social groups fosters a feeling of connectedness and belonging, helping young people to develop a sense of identity. The experience of contributing to a cause, a decision, and/or a group can be crucial part to the development of sense of responsibility, purpose and self-worth. Creativity and innovation are stimulated by challenging youths to take on clear tasks and then providing the coaching needed along the way as obstacles or unexpected results are encountered (United State Agency for International Development, USAID, 2006).

Youth participation is very vital in any meaning development particularly in developing countries of the world. This is because the youths constitute about 50 percent of the developing world population are youths (Udensi, Daasi, Emah, & Zukbee,

2013). Social integration, poverty alleviation and employment towards development lie at the heart of people's participation in their societies (Singh, 2020). Youth Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, education about and access to their civil rights (United Nations, n.d.).

Rivers state is one of the industrialized states in Nigeria. The state is host to most of the oil companies as well as other multinational companies in Nigeria. The presence of these companies attracts people from both within and outside of Nigeria to the state. Consequently, there is continual expansion of residential areas for individuals and also expansion of industries to accommodate industrial infrastructure. These expansion activities require the services of building construction industry. Obio/Akpor local government area is within the capital city of

the state and play host to majority of the developmental activities in terms of infrastructural development. Participation of youths from Obio/Akpor through involvement in building construction industry and activities could enhance their socio-economic lives individually and the community at large. There is therefore need to strategize for youth participation in building construction in Obio/Akpor local government area. It was in light of this background that the present study was embarked upon, to seek strategies towards enhancing youth participation in Building Industry for Socio-Economic Development among Youths in Obio/Akpor.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out the strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. find out the factors responsible for poor participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor.
2. find out the community strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-

economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor.

3. ascertain the local government strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. What are the factors responsible for poor participation in building industry for socio economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor?
2. What are the community strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor?
3. What are the local government strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun in Nwneh and Orikoha (2024). descriptive survey is used when the intention in a study is to collect data from a representative sample of

a large population to describe characteristics of the population. In the present study, it was the intention of the researchers to identify the strategies for enhancing youth participation in building industry for socio-economic development in Obio/Akpor. Consequently, descriptive survey was considered appropriate. The population of the study comprised 149 persons consisting of 66 youth leaders, 66 community leaders and 17 councilors from 66 communities and 17 wards in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State (Source: <https://placeandsee.com/wiki/obio-akpor> and <https://www.eduweb.com.ng/obio-akpor-wards-new-and-exsiting-polling-unit/>).

Because of the manageable size of the population, the entire 149 persons were used as sample for the study through census sampling technique. The instrument for data collection for the study was a structure questionnaire titled: Strategies Youth Participation in Building Industry Questionnaire (SYPBIQ) which was developed by the researcher based on literature review. It contains three sections. Section A sought information about the factors responsible for low participation in building industry. The youths provided answer to this section. Section B sought information about the community strategies for enhancing

participation in building industry among youths. Community leaders provided answer to this section. Section C sought information about the local government strategies for enhancing participation in building industry among youths. The councilors provided answers to this section. Each of the items on the instrument was rated on four point rating scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) with a score of 4. Agree (AG) with a score of 3, disagree (DA) with a score of 2 and strongly disagree (SD) with a score of 1, altogether, there are 18 items on the questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts. The instrument was administered once on 20 respondents. The result of data collected was subjected to internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach Alpha to get an overall reliability coefficient of 0.89. Administration of the instrument was done by the researcher with the help of research assistants from each of the communities to enhance high return rate. A total of 149 copies were sent out and 103 (44 from youth leaders, 42 from community leaders and 17 from the councilors) were retrieved and used for data analysis. The research questions will be answered using a cut off mean of 2.50.

## Result

**Research Question 1:** What are the factors responsible for poor participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youth in Obio/Akpor?

**Table 1: Mean Responses for Factors Responsible for Poor Participation in Building Industry**

S/N	Statements	Youth Leaders (N=44)						
		SA	A	D	SD	M	S.D	RMK
1	Low wages paid to building construction workers affect participation.	13	11	17	3	2.77	0.96	A
2	Negative public perception about a person doing labourer work or mason work hinder youth participation in building construction.	15	13	12	4	2.89	0.99	A
3	Fear of being seen as low class person hinder youth participation in building industry.	17	11	15	1	3.00	0.91	A
4	Unsatisfactory work environment hinder youth participation in building industry.	18	12	10	4	3.00	1.01	A
5	Strenuous activities associated with building industry hinder youth participation.	12	13	14	5	2.73	1.00	A
6	Unsafe work activities associated with building industry hinder youth participation.	7	4	10	23	1.89	1.13	D
7	Limited building construction skill among youth hinder participation in the industry.	4	11	13	16	2.07	1.00	D
8	Lack of tools for practice hinder youth participation in guiding industry.	1	11	14	18	1.89	0.87	D
	Grand Mean					2.53	0.98	A

Field Survey, 2023

The result from Table 1 shows that: low wages, negative public perception, fear of being seen as low class person; unsatisfactory work environment and strenuous activities associated with building industry are some of the factors responsible for poor participation of youth in building industry in Obio/Akpor. This is evident by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. They however disagreed that: unsafe work

activities associated with building industry; limited building construction skill among youths and lack of tools for practice contribute to poor participation in the industry among youths. This is evident by mean responses less than 2.50 for items 6, 7 and 8. A grand mean of 2.53 indicates that the respondents agreed that there are factors which contribute to poor participation in building industry among youths.

**Research Question 2:** What are the community strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youth in Obio/Akpor?

**Table 2: Mean Responses on Community Strategies for Enhancing Participation of Youths in Building Industry.**

S/N	Statements	Community Leaders (N=42)						RMK
		SA	A	D	SD	M	S.D	
1	Organising community meetings to sensitize youth on the need for engagement in building industry.	14	22	2	4	3.10	0.88	A
2	Organising training programmes for community youth would equip them with skills to participate in the building industry.	14	19	6	3	3.05	0.88	A
3	Recognizing hardworking youths in building industry who have contributed to community growth could enhance youth participation in the industry.	17	19	2	4	3.17	0.91	A
4	Collaborating to provide necessary support for youth in building industry to acquire professional skills in the industry could encourage youth participation.	17	17	5	3	3.14	0.90	A
Grand Mean						3.11	0.89	A

Field Survey, 2023.

The result in Table 2 shows the responses of community leaders regarding the community strategies for enhancing participation in building industry among youths in Obio/Akpor. As shown the respondents agreed that organising community meetings to sensitize youth on the need for engagement in building industry would enhance participation; organising training programmes for community youths would equip them with skills to participate in the building industry; recognizing; hardworking youths in building industry who have

contributed to community growths could enhance youth participation in the industry; collaborating to provide necessary support for youths in building industry to acquire professional skills in the industry could encourage youths participation. This is evident by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3 and 4. The grand mean value of 3.11 confirms that they agreed that the listed statements are community strategies for enhancing participation in building construction among youths in Obio/Akpor.

**Research Question 3:** What are the local government strategies for enhancing participation in building industry for socio-economic development among Youths in Obio/Akpor?

**Table 3: Mean Responses on Local Government Strategies for Enhancing Participation in Building Industry**

S/N	Statements	Councilors (N=17)						RMK
		SA	A	D	SD	M	S.D	
1	Organising professional training programmes to attract youth into the industry.	8	7	1	1	3.29	0.85	A
2	Providing incentives to practicing youths would encourage others to get involved.	9	3	2	1	3.33	0.98	A
3	Encouraging networking and collaboration among youths would enhance participation.	7	5	4	1	3.06	0.97	A
4	Providing sponsorship for higher degree for secondary school leavers in the industry would encourage youth participation.	7	4	4	2	2.94	1.09	A
5	Providing soft loan for youth in building industry who intend to enlarge their scope of work would enhance participation.	6	7	1	3	2.94	1.09	A
6	Formulating policies that will create good welfare package for workers would encourage youth participation in building industry.	8	3	4	2	3.00	1.12	A
	Grand Mean					3.09	1.01	A

Field Survey, 2023

The result in Table 3 shows the local government strategies for enhancing youth participation in building industry in Obio/Akpor. The result shows that: organising professional training programmes could attract youths into the industry; providing incentives to practicing youths would encourage others to get involved; encouraging networking and collaboration among youths would enhance participation; providing sponsorship for higher degree for secondary school leavers in the industry would encourage youth

participation; providing soft loan for youths in building industry who intend to enlarge their scope of work would enhance participation; formulating policies that will create good welfare package for workers would encourage youth participation in building industry. This is evident by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Also a grand mean value of 3.09 confirms that they agreed that the listed strategies could lead to enhancing participation in building industry among

youths in Obio/Akpor local government area.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The first research question sought to find out the factors that contribute to low participation in the building industry among youths in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State. The result shows that low wages, negative public perception, fear of being seen as low class person unsatisfactory work environment and strenuous activities associated with building industry are some of the factors responsible for poor participation of youths in building industry in Obio/Akpor. They however disagreed that: unsafe work activities associated with building industry; limited building construction skill among youths and lack of tools for practice contribute to poor participation in the industry among youths. This result agrees with the result obtained by Mahmood, Awang, Kmeil and Jakada (2021) who found that problem of low wages, negative public perception, class issues and unsatisfactory work environment were related problem causing low participation in building construction industry. The result also agrees with that of Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee (2013) who found that anticipated benefit was a factor

that contributed to youth participation in community development.

The second research question sought to find out the community strategies for enhancing youth participation in building industry in Obio/Akpor. The result shows that organising community meetings to sensitize youths on the need for engagement in building industry would enhance participation; organising training programmes for community youths would equip them with skills to participate in the building industry; recognizing; hardworking youths in building industry who have contributed to community growth could enhance youth participation in the industry; collaborating to provide necessary support for youths in building industry to acquire professional skills in the industry could encourage youth participation. The result agrees with that of Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee (2013) who found that education is a way of ensuring youth participation in community development.

The third research question sought to find out the local government strategies for enhancing youth participation in building industry in Obio/Akpor. The result showed that the respondents were in agreement that: organising professional training

programmes could attract youth into the industry; providing incentives to practicing youths would encourage others to get involved; encouraging networking and collaboration among youths would enhance participation; providing sponsorship for higher degree for secondary school leavers in the industry would encourage youth participation; providing soft loan for youth in building industry who intend to enlarge their scope of work would enhance participation; formulating policies that will create good welfare package for workers would encourage youth participation in building industry. This result agrees with the conclusion by Olatunji and Duruji (2021) that educating youth could enhance their participation in community development activities. The result further agrees with the recommendation by Mba and Onyesom (2020) that local government should establish innovative training programmes to promote youth participation in community development.

### **Conclusions**

The study focused on enhancing participation in building industry among youths in Obio/Akpor local government area. The result of the study has shown that there are factors facing participation in building construction industry among youths in the

study area. Based on this, it can be concluded that level of participation in building construction industry is low among youths in Obio/Akpor. The result of the also shows that both community youths leaders and councilors could take some actions towards enhancing youth participation in building construction industry in the study area. Typical examples of such actions include: provision of training, sensitization towards proper orientation for right perception on involvement in building construction industry.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

4. Community leaders should organize programmes to sensitize youths on the need and benefits of involvement in building construction industry.
5. Incentives by way of empowerment gestures (e.g. buying building tools) should be provided for already practicing youths. This will encourage them to continue and also attract other youths to the building construction industry.
6. Building practitioners willing to further their education in building related courses should be encouraged by sponsoring their

education. This would encourage other youths towards participation in building trades.

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