

Global Patterns of Youth Development and the Key Challenge for Sustainable Growth - A Stake Issue of the 21st Century: The Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

This paper focused on global patterns in youth development and accounted for the variant experience in the developed and developing societies using the Nigerian experience. Global patterns in youth development are varied in developed and developing economies of the world. Developmental consideration affecting the youth of today are broad based: educational, material, health care, socio-cultural, political, socio-economic, emotional and psychological. These variants shape the attitudes, behaviour, measure of self-confidence, mental development, economic independence and the reservoir of knowledge, which enhances the resourcefulness and versatility of today's youth. When these indices are missing or incomplete of a high degree in a youth, underdevelopment becomes an apt word in describing the state of the youth. This paper is both descriptive and empirical and the researcher reflected on the key developmental problems facing the youth in Nigeria. As a result of the emphasis placed on the global patterns of youth development, the researcher accounted for the indices of youth development in a concise manner as much as possible using 40 students in the Cross River University of Technology as a study. The study concluded that enormous contributions to education, social welfare and economic development must be provided through adequate resource management and allocation. These activities necessarily expose the youth population to winds of change from the outside world. Rigid political structures should be abolished and self-interest banished if our youths must take over the older generation in piloting the affairs of our developing societies.

Keywords: Technical Education, Apprenticeship, mentorship, job creation, skill acquisition sustainable development, specialized skill, productive.

1. Introduction

A global pattern in youth development is vast, complex and constantly changing. Short of descending to platitude, there is no way of reducing the study of global patterns in youth development to a matter of simplicity.

Usually easy explanations accounting for the variant experiences in developed societies and developing societies are plausible. The presenter feels strongly that it is not enough merely to learn the facts concerning the variant experiences of developmental pattern in youths or even to appreciate the basic causation of such patterns, it is the consequences of such distributions that the presenter wishes to reflect on, to comprehend many of the developmental problems facing the youth.

As a result of the emphasis placed on the global patterns of youth development, the researcher would account for the indices of youth development in a concise manner as much as possible.

2. Objective of study

The objective of the study was to find out if developmental consideration affecting the youth in Nigeria such as education, psychological, socio-cultural, political and socio-economic factors shape the behavior, measure self confidence, mental development, economic independence and the reservoir of knowledge which enhances the resourcefulness and versatility of the Nigerian youth.

3. Literature and conceptual review of developmental patterns

To develop is to make or become more mature, organized, complete, more detailed, to become transformed from a simple structure to a much more complex one; usually by passing through a number of stages. Development therefore connotes a positive advancement in or of elements, structures and persons in a series of stages to become more complete.

Youth development is therefore the various stages or facets or process of changes which the young adult must pass through or inculcate to become more complete or mature and as such considered as developed enough to face societal phenomena or realities in order to sustain themselves now and face the challenges of tomorrow in an ever dynamic world of today.

Developmental consideration affecting the youth of today are broad based: educational, psychological, socio-cultural, emotional, political and socio-economic. These variants shape the attitudes, behaviour, measure of self-confidence, mental development, economic independence and reservoir of knowledge, which enhances

the resourcefulness and versatility of today's youth. When these indices are missing or incomplete of a high degree in a youth, underdevelopment becomes an apt word in describing the state of the youth.

Proper and adequate education of the youth is first and foremost the bedrock of his development, because mental training and awareness is the illumination of the inner self and consciousness adding to the youth to become more aware of his immediate environment and the antecedent influences. A good information consciousness is the first step to exterminate ignorance considerably and becoming aware of ones inherent abilities and using it to emancipate man from the clutches of isolation, poverty, over dependence, depravity, degradation, abuse, insecurity, fear, injustice, marginalization, and timidity.

Psychology, emotional and socio - culture variants are symbolisms of environmental influences such as peer pressure, culture and ethnic diversity, and forms of civilization. Religious affiliations positively or adversely affect our thinking patterns thus affecting the youth's state of development. The socio - economic indices of development simply refer to those aspects of social behavior, which significantly relate to economic activity, especially activity related to changes in the production of goods and services by a society. Adequate allocation of resources for economic empowerment is the bane of socio economic development.

Because we are interested in the ingredients of different social systems, each of which corresponds to a particular level of economic advancement, we may attempt to classify the appropriate relationship in terms of several sets of behavior which societies may choose to follow in certain conditions. This would be discussed later in detail. Political awareness puts the youth in an advantage position to know societal governance and what part he should or stands to play in the polity of a country, and how well a country's political structure is, makes it easier to create a harmony between the governed and the governing class where social injustices and marginalization are addressed and human rights issues adequately upheld.

4. Accounting for the variant experience in youth development in developed and developing societies

Differences in the social, political, economic, educational and cultural superstructures erected on the frame work provided by societies helps to explain the contrast and dissimilarities in global youth development, which in varied ways is accounted for based on the activity of humans at various points of time.

To account for the variant experiences in youth development the points under listed would be discussed:

4.1 Level of material welfare:

The level of material welfare, of "the material requisites of well - being" attained and used, is closely dependent on the general way of life. There is overwhelming evidence that the traditional way of life of the great majority of the world's population involves a low and static or even declining productivity per worker, and this leads to low income and deplorable standards of living. Grinding poverty is the inevitable lot of most developing countries and it is only even recently that citizens of the world's developed countries have escaped from penury.

Most aspects of material welfare, employment opportunities, working hours, expectations of life, food, education and housing are expensive in the average developing societies. Comparatively western poverty must be judged modest opulence by the standards of much of the developing societies.

4.2 Socio - economic development

In developed societies, resources are allotted in the most efficient way to insure maximum production. The youth class are properly trained in rational planning which is based on standard of values, because resources represent the application of technological, managerial and financial skills to the handiwork of nature and while some resources are being used up or destroyed, many new ones are continually being created.

In certain economic areas of developing societies, youth productivity is low. Because the upper groups have self - interest against collective interest and requires increased services from the lower group but with low income. Developing societies have rigid structural relations and are dominated by an elite group, which enjoys a monopoly of wealth, political power and education being the most desirable elements of social status.

In advance societies however, the achievement has become the standard for assigning economic benefits. Emphasis is placed on learning specialized skills so that each job will be more productive.

To conclude the above issues, we may say that in the social structure of developed societies, we find strong tendencies toward community interest, in assigning economically important responsibilities. Economic roles are well defined according to their function.

In developing societies, particularism, diffused economic functions, and the principle of assigning economic tasks according to status characterize social relations. The main problem in relating social and cultural factors to economic variables is to determine how the fiscal structure of a less developed country changes into that of an economically advanced society.

4.3 Political awareness

Most developed societies have a good political structure and awareness; hence youths are well informed about their political rights and privileges in their country's polity.

However, the case is different in developing societies where political structures are suppressive and where the youths are not politically active and aware but only cast their votes to governments which at the end of the day would not allow the youth populace to be heard properly or even form political opposition groups or pressure groups which in a developed society is healthy for socio political growth. In developing societies, political transitions are characterized with political unrest, arson, thuggery, assassinations and threat to life and property, hence the youth develops a malformed political ideologies built on myopic propensities and misdirected energies; this development, in itself crumbles the very political structure it intends to build. This is very evident in our immediate Nigerian society where the governing class makes political utterances capable of dividing the polity and where politically, differences are expressed by physical attacks in public gathering and settled in law courts.

4.4 Level of education/standards

Learning is a product of informed human relations emanating first from the family and then to the formal school environment or natural environment. Sociological alliances are prominently significant in our socio political, socio-cultural and economic environment. Learning thus has a long lasting effect on the youth of today. Education is the primary tool for enhanced youth development morally, psychologically, materially, financially and otherwise, building up the youth for self sustenance and economic independence. Education in the developed societies are well structured and managed with adequate incentives and infrastructures for qualitative learning; for an informed mind is a liberated mind that is able to use available resources optimally to satisfy insatiable needs. It is shameful to state that the present educational standards in developing societies, such as ours has grossly fallen and inadequate physical structures/equipment to cater for the teeming population of undergraduate youths in our various institutions of higher learning; this is an experienced fact.

The problem is not that there is no education, but how well is it delivered? And what impact has it on the mind of the so called educated and what valuable inputs can he/she offer in transforming the society for enhanced living? Our youths, due to peer pressure all over the world form habits, attitudes from each other as a form of social acceptance.

However, youths in developing countries sometimes copy blindly cultures and mannerisms alien to them thus creating a concocted mixture of varied influences.

The said blending of cultures has both positive and negative effects on youth development where certain societal norms are termed superior to others and are thus copied or transmitted.

The mass and electronic media has also played a vital role in youth development. Advanced societies have effective information technologies, hence the youths are well predisposed to information and learning. The electronic media - the internet is a typical example of information dissemination or transfer. Developing societies should improve on their information technology for an informed youth development.

Suffice it to say that, certain information should be censored to reduce the negative influences of negative information in both the developed and developing world. Education is also achieved through religious and cultural beliefs; in many respects are responsible for good moral standards in our youths. However, it is needful to point out that certain religious and cultural belief in certain developing countries are anti developmental such as the caste system, female circumcision, depriving of the female folk from formal education and sidelining of women in matters that affect the state. All these informed judgment hinder youth development in developing society.

4.5 Health care delivery

Health is popularly said to be wealth. Varied differences in youth development in the developed societies and developing society's stems from a good health care delivery evidently provided for in advanced societies. The reverse is the case in developing societies where health care delivery is inadequate. All these account for mental and physical growth of the youth and as such a marked differences in sociological attitudes in youths and physical differences comparatively.

5. Research methodology

This study employs the survey research design. The data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources, where the data analyzed were collated using the questionnaire instrument administered on a sample size of 40 respondents randomly selected. The sample size was divided into three groups using age characteristics: group one was drawn from 18-25, group 2 consisted of respondents within the age bracket 26-35 while the last group consisted of individuals between 35- 40. To verify the reliability of the measuring instrument (questionnaire) developed for the purpose of this study, it was subjected to pre-trial tests. The reliability of the questionnaire instrument was revealed by the accuracy of the questions formulated and the degree to which different respondents give consistent answers.

The data collected were presented in tabular forms after summarizing and classifying them. The tabulated data was then analyzed using the simple percentage method to compare the responses. A higher percentage mean acceptance while a lower percentage means rejection and the formulated hypotheses tested using the Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) statistical method at 5% level of significance.

6. Data presentation and analysis

Hypothesis one

The level of material welfare of the Nigerian Youth is not a function of employment opportunities, working hours, expectations of life, food, education and housing.

Table 1: ANOVA computation table

OPTIONS	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	TOTAL
SA	20	10	10	40
A	15	10	5	30
D	15	5	10	30
SD	10	5	5	20
$\sum X$	60	30	30	120
$\sum X^2$	950	250	250	

Source: Computation from responses to Questions 1-3

Table 2: F-ratio values (calculated and critical)

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F-Ratio	F- Critical
Between Group Treatment	2	150	75	6.75	4.26
Within Groups Treatment	9	100	11.11		
Total	11	350			

F- Critical value of 5% level of significance with degree of freedom 2 to 9 is 4.26

Source: Researcher's computation.

Decision/ inference:

Since the F- calculated value of 6.75 is greater than the F- critical value of 4.26, we reject the Null hypothesis (Ho). It is therefore upheld that the level of material welfare of the Nigerian Youth is a function of employment opportunities, working hours, expectations of life, food, education and housing

Hypothesis two

Socio-Political Structures of Nigeria does not determine a particular level of economic advancement of the youth

Table 3: ANOVA computation table

OPTIONS	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	TOTAL
SA	18	8	10	36
A	15	10	7	32
D	15	7	7	29
SD	12	5	6	23
$\sum X$	60	30	30	120
$\sum X^2$	918	238	234	

Source: Computation from responses to Questions 4-6

Table 4: F-ratio values (calculated and critical)

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F-Ratio	F- Critical
Between Group Treatment	2	150	75	16.89	4.26
Within Groups Treatment	9	40	4.44		
Total	11	350			

F- Critical value of 5% level of significance with degree of freedom 2 to 9 is 4.26

Source: Researcher's computation.

Decision/ inference:

Since the F- calculated value of 16.89 is greater than the F- critical value of 4.26, we reject the Null hypothesis (Ho). It is therefore asserted that Socio-Political Structures of Nigeria does determine a particular level of economic advancement of the youth

Hypothesis three

Socio-Cultural factors do not determine the level of youth advancement in Nigeria.

Table 5: ANOVA computation table

OPTIONS	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	TOTAL
SA	19	9	10	38
A	14	9	8	31
D	14	8	8	30
SD	13	4	4	21
$\sum X$	60	30	30	120
$\sum X^2$	922	242	244	

Source: Computation from responses to Questions 7-9

Table 6: F-ratio values (calculated and critical)

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F-Ratio	F- Critical
Between Group Treatment	2	150	75	11.65	4.26
Within Groups Treatment	9	58	6.44		
Total	11	350			

F- Critical value of 5% level of significance with degree of freedom 2 to 9 is 4.26

Source: Researcher's computation.

Decision/ inference:

Since the F- calculated value of 11.65 is greater than the F- critical value of 4.26, we reject the Null hypothesis (Ho). It is therefore upheld that Socio-Cultural factors does determine the level of youth advancement in Nigeria.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

In concluding this paper, self- interest will deter countries from their chance of attaining higher living standards; hence there should be considerable responsibility for improving the living standards of our youths who are tomorrow's leaders. The interest has sometimes had political overtones, which have rendered aid much less effective than it might have been enormous contributions to education, social welfare and economic development must be provided through adequate resource management and allocation. These activities necessarily expose the youth population to winds of change from the outside world. Rigid political structures should be abolished and self -interest banished if our youths must take over the older generation in piloting the affairs of our developing societies.

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Appendix

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Dear Respondents,

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to aid the researcher to conduct an investigation into the “**Global Patterns of Youth Development and the Key Challenge for Sustainable Growth- A Stake Issue of the 21st Century: The Nigerian Experience**”.

I therefore, solicit your co-operation in providing responses to the questions herein.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Section B: Questions

1. Do you agree that the level of education that you have acquired affects your level of material welfare? (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
2. Skilled education is a panacea to curb the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria? (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
3. To have a sustainable youth growth and advancement in Nigeria, entrepreneurial and technical education should be fully implemented in the country? (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
4. Socio-economic conditions in Nigeria such as economic activity relating to changes in the production of goods and services, allocation of resources for youth empowerment has not been favourable. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
5. An efficient policy of infrastructural development, such as equipment provision and information technology are keys to emancipate the youth from the clutches of isolation, poverty, over dependence, depravity, degradation, abuse, insecurity, fear, injustice, marginalization and timidity. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
6. The rigid political structure of Nigeria is a strong impediment to youth empowerment and development. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
7. Socio-political governance and the role a youth stands to play in the polity of Nigeria makes it easier to create harmony between the governed and the governing class where societal injustice and marginalization are addressed and human right issues adequately upheld. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
8. The socio-cultural system in Nigeria corresponds to a particular level of economic advancement. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA
9. Socio-cultural differences; such as ethnic diversity, forms of civilization, religious affiliations and geo-political agitations in Nigeria has affected your ability to gain or obtain opportunities for growth. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA.
10. To an extent the provision of health care delivery in your environment /society affects your general well-being. (a) SA (b) A (c) D (d) SDA.

Responses to research questions

Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	20	10	10	0	40
2	10	10	10	10	40
3	10	10	10	10	40
Total	40	30	30	20	120
4	12	11	9	8	40
5	12	11	10	7	40
6	12	10	10	8	40
Total	36	32	29	23	120
7	13	11	10	6	40
8	13	10	10	7	40
9	12	10	10	8	40
Total	38	31	30	21	120