

Abstract

This study analyzed mentoring as a strong pathway to child and youth development in Oyo State. A sample of 110 respondents was purposively selected for the study. Data collected were described with frequency, percentage and mean. The mean age of the respondents was 10 years. Males were predominant (62.7%), moderately educated and with household size of the ($x=7$). The study revealed the highest mean of ($x=3.40$) to the environmental resource control as the highest perceived needed mentoring areas while the least need had mean ($x=2.83$) that is, knowledge transfer and continuity. The respondents' most frequently source of mentoring skills and motivation usually comes from friends, parents, and relations with the highest mean value ($x=2.55$). The study showed that child and youth development is the most important reason for mentoring ($x=1.46$). The study further revealed that the major factor affecting mentoring development and its processes is mentee background ($x=1.71$). The study concluded that mentoring is a potent tool needed to groom young people so as to witness a meaningful paradigm shift in Nigerians.

Keys Words: Mentoring, Pathway, Child and Youth, Development

Introduction

Children in any society are members of the society; and they should be treated as successors. The fact is that children are the one that will grow to take over when the elders of today are gone (Adebola, Moses and Olalekan (2014). It is a well-known fact that scientific and technological advances are transforming lives; they are even helping poorer countries close the gap with rich countries in life expectancy. But, poorer countries still face tremendous challenges, as almost a quarter of children are underdeveloped and under-utilized, and 60 percent of primary school children are failing to achieve even a rudimentary education. In fact, more than 260 million children and youths in poorer countries are underdeveloped receiving no education at all. The World Bank (2018), and Aderinoye and Adebisi (2016) remarked that children contributions to the national development cannot be over-emphasized. They are

involved in varieties of economic activities ranging from land cultivation, fishing, trading, hawking, agricultural production, contributions to other legal economic activities even in many developing countries. It is to be maintained that children who are the future of tomorrow are to be exposed and made to learn valuable skills, build self-esteem and contribute to the generation of household income in terms of cheap labor, menial services performance among others.

Youth in addition, contribute a formidable force for sustainable economic development of any nation particularly, the agrarian countries in which Nigeria is included. This is because youths possess a lot of energies (human resources) and other inestimable assets for productivity and general sustainable socio-economic development (Iwala, 2006). Aromolaran, Ademiluyi and Itebu (2013) expressed that youth possessed innovative

skills which can be engaged in adaptive studies such as research works. The findings further stated that youths have desirable potentials that can boost country's economic morale. Based on this, there is needed for more emphasis to be placed on the roles and responsibilities youth can play in the country's economic development.

While analyzing these significant contributions of children and youths in the African society, it worth mentioned the positions occupied by mentors. Young people's innovativeness should be matched with the right culture, skills and capital to realize the much needed dividends of being productive. Training young people with reasonable and sufficient skills is a key issue in the development of sound human capital requirement for national development hence African countries (Ocho, 2005).

David (2007) contributed that the emotional, social and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and even the type of adult they will become. For these reasons, there is need to broadly understand how urgent is it to invest in the very young children so as to maximize their future well-being. If this is considered, young people will have the understandings that their future is secured and earn them commitment to progress therapeutic which invariably lower stress and build confidence in them. Early Childhood Development (ECD) expressed that access to new knowledge, techniques and promising avenues for research through the young people depends on the interaction on a number of factors which are capable of bringing in multiplicatively human capital development in the later years which are necessary to produce 'success' as measure of readiness to learn even on admission to school.

Good health (of both mother and child), good nutrition, parenting, strong social supports and stimulative interactions with others

outside the home all combined to provide the best chance of success. Since neglecting investing in anyone of these areas reduces the value of investment in other areas, investments to improve pre and post-conception health of the future parents are crucial inputs to Early Childhood Development. Thus, support of all types to improve parenting during this period is crucial. It was however, highlighted that this support includes development of parenting skills, social support, employer and government support to increase the amount of time parents can spend with their children and in some cases, direct income support.

Bell (1998) and Zachary (2009) significantly expressed that 'Mentoring is a developmental partnership through which one person usually an experienced person called the mentor shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of someone called the mentee. Although, mentoring is a reciprocal learning relationship in which mentees engage actively in their own learning and critically reflect on young people experiences.

Murray and Owen (1993) added that mentoring is a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a less skilled or experienced ones with the agree-upon goals of having the less experienced person grow and develop specific competencies, this later yields people (child and youth) the opportunity to share their professional personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process. Mentoring therefore strengthens and creates a-one-of-a-kind opportunity for collaboration, goal achievement and problem solving. It is effective when it is offered to someone in the early stages of children and youths: the probation period.

According to Philips Jones (2000); Shea (1999) and Zachary (2009), the benefit of mentoring relationship includes greater charity of life and career choices and their

own career goals, new insight on the African culture and social structure, exposure of mentee to different perspectives and cultural African values, assessment of new resources, identification of areas for professional growth, planning of career more strategically finding new ways or new ideas to approach old problems, increased a self-confidence, job environment satisfaction and job contentment among others.

For Africa to overcome the shackles of under development, the human element there in, must be mentored and developed to the taste of time. Thus the availability of skilled manpower is a fundamental tool for growth, and national development of any nation in the world. Nigeria for example may have employees of ability and determination with appropriate equipment and managerial support yet far from development. By and large, the deficiencies are lack of adequate skills, poor investment in human capital, lack of talents, knowledge and techno-scientific where with all which are required to propel the African nation's economy from the situation of underdevelopment to a developed (Halidu, 2016).

The need to analyze mentoring as an integral tool for African children and youth's development in agriculture is the basis for this study. The specific objectives of the study are to: identify respondents' socio-economic characteristics, examine skill chains needed to influence mentoring, identify available sources of mentoring skills and motivational sources, assess determinants affecting children and youth development in agriculture, and suggested practicable tools for improving mentoring processes towards sustainable agricultural productions.

Methodology

Description of the study area

Oyo State covers approximately 27, 249 square kilometers in land area with a population of 4.5 million (NPC, 2006) or more by now. The state is bounded by Kwara, Osun, Ogun and Republic of Benin in the North, East, South and West respectively. Oyo State is sub-divided into twenty-seven agricultural extension blocks with 84 Extension Agents (who were used to collect relevant information from farm family children and youths within their respective agricultural extension cells; each of the blocks has eight cells. Major towns and cities in the study area include Ogbomosho, Oyo, Iseyin, Oke-Iho, Lanlate, Sepeteri, Igbo-Ora, Igbeti, Otu among others.

One hundred and ten (110) respondents were purposively selected for this study. The variables were measured using descriptive statistic; Likert type scales, Frequency, Counts, Percentages, Mean Scores, Standard deviation and mean rank.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Result on Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents were at the mean age of 10.73 years; (62.7%) of the respondents were male, with an educational level of with an average household size of 6-10 (M=7. The result is supported by Leadership and Practice (2002) who contributed that mentoring is effective when it is offered to someone in the early stages(of children's and youths); the "probation period". That this will allow mentee to learn and develop with minimal expenditure of resources, time, money and efforts.

Perceived Mentoring Areas for Child and Youth Development

Table 2 featured on perceived mentoring syllabus for child and youth development. It

showed the following responses: mentoring be prepared, staged and centered on environment resources control (M = 3.40), management skills identification (M = 3.23), life and career choices (M = 3.23), Leadership development skill, organization based Self-Confidence Building (M = 3.15), Techno-Scientific discovery and social investment (M = 3.12), child parenting and parenting skill development (M = 3.08), conflict resolution strategies (M = 3.03), culture and social structure skill (M = 2.83) well as on knowledge transfer and continuity (M = 2.83). The study result is in support of Halidu (2016) who identified that, to overcome the shackle of underdevelopment, the human element must be mentored and developed to the taste of time. Also, Philips – Jones (2000); Shea, (1999) and Zachary, (2009) added that, greater charity of life, career choices and career goals, new insight on the Africans culture, social structure, exposure of mentee to different perspectives and cultural African values among others will strategically find directions and new ways to approach old human mentoring problems.

Perceived Mentoring Origin and Source for Child and Youth Development

Table 3 identified that, personal discovery or intuition had (M = 2.45), accumulated experiences from friends and relations (M = 2.55), social participation (M = 2.45), imitation and mimicking strategies (M = 2.16), Resource persons (at seminars, workshops, lectures and meetings) (M = 2.14), Social media devices usage (M = 2.03), participation in religion and other social activities (M = 1.79), participation in structural and organization programs (M = 2.90) in their environment were the origin and sources of perceived mentoring skills. The result is in support of Aderinoye and Adebisi (2016) who remarked that children's contributions to the national development cannot be overemphasized especially if they are exposed and made to learn from a

carefully structured, strategically arranged, on a well balanced scheme and curriculum for the young people productivity. An education which enables children to think outside the box can only be increased in human capital if planned in a way that “Rote Learning” be displaced and an impressive accumulation of facts put in place may (Tejuan, 2019). “Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital that is in substantial on a part of product of deliberate investment (Theodore in Tejuan, 2019)

Significance of Mentoring on Child and Youth Development

Results presented in Table 4 expressed that mentoring will serve as an avenue for building new skill in child and Youth (M = 10.46), prefers practical panacea approach to continental problems (M = 10.35), improves interpersonal skills for new contact formation (M = 10.02), serves as weapon for fighting disunity among states and nations of the world (M = 9.91), widens deep sense of innovation among young people (M = 9.69), pipelines talent ability and potential development (M = 9.37), fosters new career plan and development among children and youths (M = 8.93) while the least (M = 7.41) went to broaden knowledge for institutional and organizational expansion. The outcomes have indicated that mentoring is significance to child and youth development. Murray and Owen (1993) opinion supported this result in that mentoring strengthens and creates a - one - of - a - kind opportunity for collaboration, goal achievement and problems solving when offered to children at their “probation period”. It is on this keynote that Ogujiuba (2013) reiterated that investments on human capital development is to be targeted at ensuring the nation's human resource endowment is knowledgeable, skilled, productive and healthy to enable the optimal exploitation and

utilization of other resources to engender growth and development. He added that, no country can attain economic growth and development without having a well talented, competent, and skillful workforce that can exploit, utilize, accelerate and propel the available resources of the nation optimally without mentoring. Atiomo (2000) as cited in Halidu (2016), asserts further that if the country has people of vision, energy and experience to direct the force and facilities, then the other requirement for success and development should follow.

Factors Affecting Mentoring Process for Child and Youth Development

Evidence in Table 5 shows that, in case of factors affecting mentoring process for child and youth development in the study area, great majority of respondents expressed that mentee background (M = 1.71), too much risk and little reward (M = 1.70), poor mentoring programme succession and continuity plan (M = 1.57), emergence of ill-treatment and un-healthy relationship (M = 1.54) system and culture mis-match (M = 1.51), role conflict and delayed feedback (M = 1.47) among others formed the bottleneck to an effective and continued child mentoring procession the study area.

Conclusion

The conclusion from the findings indicated that young people lack mentoring skills needed to build self-esteem in the world of diverse opportunities. And to successfully confront the challenges rocking children and youths development in agriculture, there must be a paradigm shift, re-organization and redirection of the Nigerian wards (young people) development system to undertake these three major tasks: acquire and adapt global knowledge; create knowledge locally,(to invest in human capital and to increase the ability to absorb and use knowledge); and adopt capacity building programme through mentoring skills, principles and practices

which should be organized from time to time at all levels of child development and also to order and abreast the academics of the changing trends and circumstances in the young people children, and to increase higher productivity and by extension sustainable child growth and development

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TABLE 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

VARIABLES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE	MEAN = M
Age			
1-5	16	14.55	10.73
6-10	39	35.55	
11-15	34	30.91	
16 and above	21	19.09	
Sex			
Male	69	62.7	
Female	41	37.3	
Educational Level			
Primary School	04	3.64	
Junior Secondary School	09	8.18	
Senior Secondary School	12	10.91	
Tertiary Institution	85	77.27	
Household Size			
1-5	48	43.64	7.14
6-10	33	30.00	
11 and above	29	26.36	

Sources: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2: PERCEIVED MENTORING AREAS ON CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

S/N	VARIABLES	MEAN (M)	MEAN RANK
i.	Environmental resources control	3.40	1st
ii.	Identification of management skill	2.23	2nd
iii.	Life and career choices	2.23	2nd
vi.	Leadership development, skill and knowledge	3.20	4th
vi.	Building self-esteem and self-confidence	3.15	5th
v.	Techno-scientific discovery and social investment	3.12	6th

vii.	Child parenting and parenting skills dev.	3.08	7th
viii.	Conflict resolution strategies	3.03	8th
ix.	Culture and social structure skills	2.83	9th
x.	Knowledge transfer and continuity	2.83	10th

Source: Field Survey, 2019

TABLE 3: PERCEIVED SOURCES AND MENTORING METHODS

S/N	VARIABLES	MEAN (M)	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN RANK
i.	Intuition/Personal discovery	2.45	0.90	2nd
ii.	Exposure to social activities	2.45	0.90	2nd
iii.	Accumulated experience from friends, parents and elders	2.55	1.04	1st
iv.	The use of social media devices	2.03	1.11	6th
v.	Participation in religion activities	1.79	1.05	7th
vi.	Through resource person	2.14	1.04	5th
vii.	Imitation and mimicking strategies	2.16	1.07	4th
viii.	Through structural programme participations	1.40	1.22	9th
ix.	Others	1.58	1.03	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2019

TABLE 4: SIGNIFICANCE OF MENTORING ON CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

S/N	VARIABLES	MEAN (M)	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN RANK
i.	Offers deep knowledge and understanding of African Culture	81	8.82	8th
ii.	Prefers practical panacea approach to continental problems	95	10.35	2nd
iii.	Avenue for building new skill in child and youth	96	10.46	1st
iv.	Fosters deep sense of innovation among young people	82	8.93	7th
v.	Facilitates leader skill development and succession plans in young people	89	9.69	5th

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vi.	Pipelines talent, ability and potential development	72	7.54	11th
vii.	Fosters organization commitment for self-discovery	86	9.37	6th
viii.	Improves interpersonal skills for new contact formation	80	8.71	9th
ix.	Broaden knowledge for institutional and organizational expansion	78	8.50	10th
x.	Improves interpersonal skills for new contact formation	92	10.02	3rd
xi.	Broaden knowledge for institutional and organization expansion	68	7.41	12th
xii.	Others (such as weapon for unity among nations of the world etc.)	91	9.91	4th

Source: Field Survey, 2019

TABLE 5: FACTORS AFFECTING MENTORING PROCESS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

S/N	DETERMINANT FACTORS	U.S FREQ (%)	S FREQ (%)	N.S FREQ (%)	SCORE	WMS	MEAN RAKING
i.	Mentee background	52(47.3)	38(34.5)	20(18.2)	188	1.71	1st
ii.	Role conflicts and delay feedback	68(54.6)	32(36.4)	10(9.1)	162	1.47	8th
iii.	Emergence of ill-treatment and un-healthy relationship	65(59.1)	30(27.3)	15(13.6)	170	1.54	6th
iv.	Poor program succession continuity plans	60(48.3)	37(47.3)	13(4.3)	173	1.57	4th
v.	System and culture mis-match	57(51.8)	29(26.4)	17(15.5)	166	1.51	7th
vi.	Too much risks and little reward	60(48.3)	23(20.9)	27(24.6)	187	1.70	2nd
vii.	Nature of mentor-mentee	6(58.2)	30(27.2)	16(14.5)	172	1.56	5th
viii.	Others	55(50.0)	35(31.8)	20(18.2)	185	1.68	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2019

V. S. = Very Severe, S = Severe, N. S = Not Severe, WMS = Weighted Mean Score

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