

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

LATOPA, Abdullateef Ayinde, (PhD)¹ & GENTY, Kabiru Ishola (PhD)².

Department of Local Government Studies, College of Administrative Studies & Social Sciences, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State Nigeria¹.

Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, Faculty of Management Science, Lagos State University, Ojo Lagos Nigeria²

lateeflatopa@gmail.com¹, ishola.genty@lasu.edu.ng²

DOI: 10.36108/ljerhrm/8102.01.0190

Abstract

This study explored the youth participation process in the agriculture empowerment program towards achieving the dimensions of empowerment. A qualitative case study approach was adopted using the Youth Integrated Training Farm, Malete, Kwara State Nigeria as a case. Thirty informants were purposively sampled and for the study. Multiple methods of data collection were employed namely in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion, field observation, and documents analysis. The findings revealed that nine steps are involved in the youth participation process. These steps were identified and themed into three groups; Planning, organization, and implementation. The participation process also achieved youth empowerment in economic, social and psychological dimensions. The result of the findings further revealed that despite the empowerment dimensions that were achieved, the vision of the program was not met due to some salient factors relating to the inability of the state government to record success in the last step of the participation process, which is the empowerment incentives.

Keywords: *youth participation, youth empowerment, youth agriculture, participation and empowerment*

1. Introduction

Participation and Empowerment are important key concepts in the community development discourse. The operation of these two constructs has been found to have the capacity to influence community supports to achieve development in the community (Hipilito-Degaldo & Lee, 2007). Various authors and writers have also identified different levels and degrees of relationships between participation and empowerment based on the conceptual abstractions for which they are intended, and how participation leads to empowerment (Asnarulkhadi & Aref, 2009; Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, & Green, 2003; Pettit, 2012).

It is important to mention that the historical development of empowerment in development theory and practice is linked to that of participation because the two constructs are products of social movement and struggle for liberation towards changing prevalent social structure (Pettit, 2012; Vago, 2000). This development enabled attribution of participation and empowerment to various spectrums of classes and categories of people in the society like youth, women, elderly, and programs like agriculture, health, capacity building and so on.

In this study, participation and empowerment are focused on the youth. The youth are important, vibrant and formidable group in every society, as well as agents of change and development drivers of the future. As a means of addressing the high rate of youth unemployment, the government of Kwara state in Nigeria introduced agriculture empowerment program with the aim to arrest youth restiveness, create employment and generate 'a new generation of modern commercial farmers' (KWSG, 2007). During the launching of the Youth Integrated Training Farm (YITF) in 2005, the state government stated the vision of the program;

I dream of a day when graduates of accounting or banking and finance would prefer to own and run their own farm rather than seek banking jobs; a day when young men and women who hold degrees in engineering or any other degrees in farming, not because they have options, but because they regard farming as a more lucrative enterprise.

To achieve this vision, the state government partnered with other stakeholders, particularly the Zimbabwean commercial farmers association to mentor and train the youth in the state. Accordingly, the YITF was equipped with modern agriculture equipment, accommodation, and recreation facilities and seasoned agriculture professionals as implementers, to ensure that the youth in Kwara state are grounded in modern agriculture practices (Latopa & Sherifah, 2015). Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the process of youth participation towards achieving empowerment dimensions at the Youth Integrated Training Farm, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are; to explore the process of youth participation in the

agriculture empowerment program; to describe how the process of youth participation leads to the dimensions of empowerment, and to determine the overall achievement of the empowerment program in line with the vision of YITF project.

1.1 An Overview of the Study Area

Kwara State was created in 1967 and it is located in the North-Central Nigeria. It has a land area of 32,500 sqm. km with a population of 2.73 million people and 80% in the rural area, and agriculture as the mainstay (NBS, 2005; NPC, 2006). Also, the state has 2 million hectares of uncultivated arable land and favorable climate, potent soil and economic viable and active youth population of over 1.2million, representing 77% of the population. The state is made up of sixteen (16) Local Governments. The local governments are also divided into three senatorial zones for equal political representation; Kwara North, Kwara south, and Kwara Central. The compositions of the local governments on zonal affiliation are; Kwara Central Senatorial District; Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Ilorin East and Asa local governments: Kwara North Senatorial District; Moro, Patigi, Edu, Baruten, and Kaima local governments: Kwara South Senatorial District; Offa, Ekiti, Oke ero, Ifelodun, Irepodun, Isin, and Oyun local governments. The location of YITF is in Moro Local Government in the Kwara North Senatorial zone.

However, little is known about the operational structures of the programme and therefore, the process of participation and how such process leads to empowerment dimensions in relation to the vision of the program is unclear. On this note, this study was embarked upon with the aim to explore the process of youth participation in the agriculture empowerment program and how empowerment dimensions are achieved through the process.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

2.1 Participation

The concept of participation can be traced to community strategy that emerged in 1950 and has received notable interests in the academic since the early 90s(Cornwall, 2006). Participation has been used in relation to the different fields of study, such as Sociology, Psychology, Political Science Education, Health Science and so on. In this regard, it describes development classification and categorization that are components of the reflections of community and by extension characterization of the community(Crow & Allan, 1994; Frazer, 1999; Vincent, 2009).

Accordingly, Charles (1971) conceptualized participation from a community view as a theory whereby the local community is given an active role in programs and improvement directly affecting it. Bank (1995) also defined participation as 'a process through which stakeholders influence the share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources that affect them'. From political science view, participation was perceived in relation to the people's involvement in the process of policy formulation, passage and implementation (Parry, Moyser, & Day, 1992; Stoker, 1997). In relation to empowerment, France (1998) defined participation as a process of empowerment that seeks to involve the local community in the process of identifying problems, decision making and implementing programs that can influence sustainability. Therefore, youth participation can be described as a process whereby young people contribute to and involved in activities that affect their lives and community (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006; Hart et al., 1997). Also, participation is an essential part of empowerment therefore, and the two concepts are key principles of community development.Lynne, (2008) theory of ladder of participation is used as a concept that belongs to the class of ladders of participation towards achieving empowerment. The theoretical birth of ladder of participation is traced to Arstein (1966) who propounded levels of the ladder of community participation. However, these ladders did not recognize the dimensions of power as an important factor in determining the process and stages of participation. This gap was the cause of manipulation, decoration and tokenism stages identified with those types of participation. In the contrary, each of the steps identified in this study contributes to the total knowledge acquired throughout the period of the youth's stay at the farm center.

2.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional concept that is used in many disciplines according to purpose because it has its core in power with the flexibility that can make it change or expand (Page & Czuba, 1999). In line with this, Rappaport (1984) suggested that it is easier to define empowerment from its opposite like powerlessness, oppressed, stigmatized and helpless than from positive. Zimmerman (1995) argued that single definition of empowerment from social science views contradicts the very concept of empowerment. Relatively, empowerment

is a tool for understanding what is to be changed with a view to improving the prevailing situation of the powerless (Rowlands, 2010). In line with these assertions, Page and Czuba (1999) prescribed a general definition for empowerment by viewing it as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their lives. In relation to this, therefore, the WHO (2002a) described empowerment as self-power, self-control, self-strength and self-reliance according to one’s value and capabilities. This view implies that empowerment from whatever viewpoint requires the psychology of the recipient (individual) as a driving force that will strengthen and enhance the empowering process. Empowerment can, therefore, be summarized as the ability of individual to gain control of social, political, economic and psychological abilities in their lives (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). This will be possible through participation in capacity building programs that will enable transformation which will address the fundamental challenges and structural conditions that will impact the youth. This definition indicates a large view of the empowerment dimensions from where this study was focused on the expected outcome. In order to achieve a standardized evaluation of youth empowerment, the Commonwealth Plan Action for Youth Empowerment (2007 – 2015) highlighted thirteen indicators as action points for member states. In the cause of this study, seven of the indicators that are most related will be considered as one of the indicators for evaluating the vision of this empowerment program.

3. Methodology

This study adopted qualitative case study approach departure from the previous studies that were based on survey and numerical strength. A qualitative case study is flexible and interactive with an open-ended framework which makes it a ‘knowledge development research’ that describes and analyzes participation experience rather than a ‘snapshot’ as in quantitative study (Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah & Aref, 2009; Thomas, 1980). Therefore, Youth Integrated Training Farm (YITF) in Kwara State was used as a case. The youth farm was established in 2005 and has graduated five batches of youth from 2006-2013. A criterion was set to determine the case to select for this study. As a result, the YITF was chosen among others because it met the entire criterion. Some of the criteria met are; human and material resources, multi-farming system, one-year duration of training with the residential principle and recommendations as a model for other youth training farm in Nigeria. Multiple methods of data collection were used as a case study and as recommended by Creswell (2010) and (Merriam, 2009). These include in-depth interviews, telephone interview, Focus Group Discussion (2 sessions), documents, and observations. The multiple methods of data collection process made the dependability of the instrument possible through cross-checking of information among and across the categories of informants. Member check and peer reviews were also used to improve the trustworthiness of the data, in addition to the triangulation that was enhanced by the FGDs.

Thirty-five informants were purposively sampled and categorized as A, B, C, & D. This was done to ensure that all stakeholders in the program were involved in the data collection process and to obtain dependable information for the tick-description of informants’ experiences. The informants include; the youth participants (at least 1 from each batch); the implementers (these are instructors and trainers); state government representatives (ministry of agriculture, SSA agriculture & SSA youth empowerment¹); and other stakeholders. These categories are presented in table 1 below;

Table 1 Categories of the informants

Category	Description of informants	Source of data	Number of informants
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Participants in the Empowerment Program. Same as above 	Interview	08
B	Implementers / Instructors	FGD (2 group)	14
C	Government appointees/worker (SSA, SA, MOA & NA)	Interview	03
D	Stakeholders	Interview	06
		Total	35

Source: field work 2018

¹ SSA means Senior Special Assistant to the Governor. The political office holders appointed by the governor to advise him on matters assigned them for.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1 findings on objective 1

The findings on the process of participation revealed nine (9) sub-themes as the steps of activities in the youth participation process. These sub-themes were verbatim quotes from the interviews, and the steps were grouped under three main themes; Consultation, Organization, and Implementation. This is presented in figure 1 below;

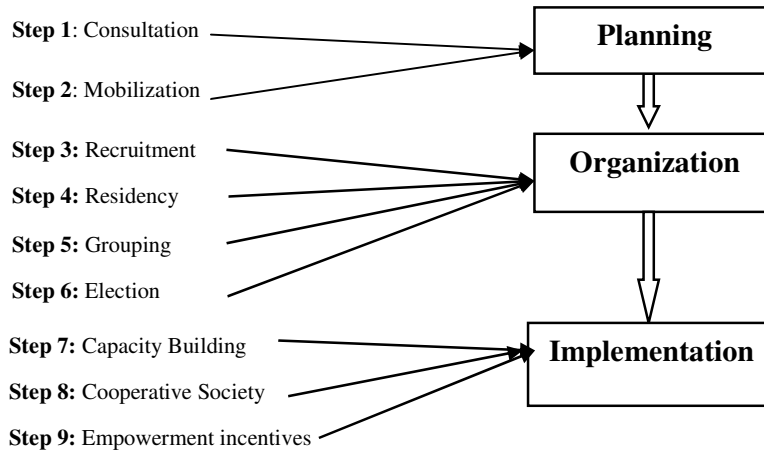


Figure 1. Participation process to youth empowerment dimensions

Source: *Fieldwork 2018*

4.1.1 Planning

Step 1 and 2 are found under this theme. The group involves the preliminary step of making consultations with the youth. This was carried out by the youth empowerment office which liaised with various youth groups through

each of the 16 local governments in the state. All the informants in categories A, B, & C agreed that the youth was consulted during the planning and mobilization stages.

4.1.1.2 Consultation

This is the first consultation stage which was carried out by the office of the SSA youth empowerment through its local liaison officers. The youth participant responded in affirmative that they were consulted before establishing the program. One of the informants stated that;

we have been able to create minimum of 100 openings for our youth yearly from the beginning of this administration and we divide them along the 16 local governments....we have youth empowerment coordinator for each of the 16 local government in the state that equally have the platform to interact with their local people in their various local governments, and these are the people that generated the list of intending participants from each ward in the state. (Informant C3).

The statement above represents the summary of the outcome of the consultation during the planning stage of the program. The government was able to generate the list of intending youth participants and other relevant information.

4.1.1.3 Mobilization

Mobilization is the step 2 of the consultation process. This was reaching out to the youth formally to enable them express interest in the program. The findings showed that there was a different method that was official and non-official. The informants mentioned the methods to include print media, electronic media, friends and relation, and local government offices across the state. Some of the verbatim statement from the informants to buttress this point are; ‘I heard through somebody. Somebody informed me that government is giving empowerment.....’ (Participant A1). ‘I heard about the program for the first time from the local government. Also, my sister took part in the program earlier, the fourth set..., she was the one that took me there’ (participant A2).

4.1.2 Organizations

The activities under this theme include the placing, fixing and arranging the man and material resources in preparation for the main activities of the program. The sub-themes under this grouping emerged from the category A, B & C. They are; recruitment, residency, grouping, and elections. This stage of the process is handled by the office of the SSA agriculture who is the coordinator of the program and directly responsible to the governor. Informant C3 stated that; ‘We forward the list of intending participants to the SSA agriculture who will coordinate further interviews and all the necessities before they take them to integrated youth farm for the one year program. So this is the synergy between my office and SSA agriculture’.

4.1.2.1 Recruitment

As a follow up to the consultation activities, recruitment takes place through a process of screening the certificate, oral and written examination, and interview. This is the step 3 of the participation process and it was meant to choose the best qualified among then youth applicants. One of the youth participants explained the recruitment process;

.....we obtained the form and filled, some people were screen out. They collected our certificates and asked us some questions on current affairs and names of some government officials. We also wrote the exam. Those that did not do well were dropped out while the remaining 100 among us continued. As we got there they made us understand that we were the fifth set, because the first and second sets have graduated... (Informant A2).

4.1.2.2 Residency

Residency is the step 4 and it is the activities designed to allocate the successful youth to the accommodation facilities at the YITF center. The accommodation facilities were sited during the data collection process and were found to be suitable for about 100 youth at a time. Finding revealed that the residency principle was a joint decision of the youth and the government. On the government, side to keep youth away from the street as a reformation process, but for the youth, to beat the stress of transportation due to the proximity of the farm center to the city. One of the government officials said;

..... Instead, of them going every day from Ilorin to Malete, they now become a permanent residence. It is only on the weekend that they are allowed to leave for Ilorin. This decision was made easy for the government because it made the government plan to keep idle youth out of the streets. (Informant B2).

From the statement above residency was made compulsory for the youth participant in the agriculture training program. ‘It is mandatory that our entire participant stays in the hostel.....it’s a prerequisite’ (informant B1).

4.1.2.3 Grouping

The step 5 of the participation process was found to be a grouping of the youth into a cluster of five or six members in a group. This is a means of encouraging group work, easy recognition and promotes competition among the youth. One of the implementers said; ‘We organize them in groups to learn from each other because they have different academic qualifications. This will teach them leadership and (informant B3). Another implementer explained further on grouping that;

The essence of the grouping is to make it easier for us to manage and communicate with them. Sometimes we engage them in a competition that each group will manage their individual farm because they are individuals. We allocate land portions for them individually, but we later put five or six of them in a group. In that way, they will monitor their farms and at the end, we see who has the best harvest (informant B2).

4.1.2.4 Leadership Elections

As part of the process, step six according to the findings, is the election of youth leadership. The youth are encouraged to conduct election which is monitored by the implementers. Those elected will become the representative of others on issues that requires representation. They also serve as the executive of the youth cooperative society. One of the youths explained during the FGD that;

We always conducted elections to appoint our leaders within one month of resumption at the farm. People that have interest will contest, and those elected will represent us on some issues that affect us..... we tell them if we don't like what they say or do and most time they understand with us, but there are some things they don't tell us.....like now they didn't tell us why we have not been empowered.....(a participant during FGD2).

4.1.3 Implementation

The last theme comprises of steps seven, eight and nine and sub-themed; capacity building, cooperative society membership, and empowerment incentives. Findings of this group represent the main activities of the program which the previous two groups of six steps were prepared to promote. Results of these findings were obtained from all the categories of informants because they play different roles to achieve this level. Participation in this step is determined by full involvement in the previous steps 1 -6.

4.1.3.1 Capacity Building

This is a process of engaging the youth in the training and other activities that are aimed to build the youth in the direction of achieving the purpose of the program and preparing them to meet the vision of generating 'new generation of modern commercial farmers'. The findings revealed that the activities involved are designed into theory and practical. A prominent member of the implementers stated; 'The training in Maleta is more of practical oriented. It's 80 percent practical oriented and 20 percent theory. So if any student misses out at any point in time, that fellow would not have gotten the whole tranche of the whole system' (informant B1). The statement was explained further by one of the key informants and implementers thus:

The main reason of our being here is to implement and this is the main thing to implement here, build their capacity. If the participants are not here, we don't have business here; I mean no implementation, the Capacity building is the implementation for us. As they are here that is why we are here. It is not easy, but we have to support them with advice and counselling. Few of them get frustrated and leave. Those are the lazy ones, but the majority stay and enjoy....look, we have those that left their previous paid job and come here. That is to tell you that it will be difficult to pass through here if you are not committed..... see...I will give you our timetable or syllabus (Informant B3).

The statement above justifies the importance of the implementation level of the process and the structure of the capacity building step as more practical oriented activities. From the document analyzed, it was found out that, all youth participants in the YITF must engage and participate fully in the capacity building process to be qualified. The course duration is 14 weeks each for three terms in a year. Each term of 14 weeks is approximately 42 weeks per session. (i.e. 1st term: January – April; 2nd term: May – August; 3rd term: August – November).

4.1.3.2 Membership of Cooperative Society

The step eight of the participation process according to the findings is membership of the cooperative society. All youth participants for each year as a matter of compulsion are to form a cooperative society. This is to prepare them for networking and eligibility to access funds in terms of loan or grant as a group. One of the implementers explained further during the interviews that;

..... They were graduated in batches and were encouraged to form a cooperative society. It is under the umbrella of the cooperative society that loan can be accessed from the bank? So they were encouraged to work together as a group and they were also encouraged to give some level of support to each other. So they accessed the money as a cooperative even though they had their own individual farms, but they had a communal approach to the acquisition of inputs like the seedlings, like fertilizers and every other thing and they saw how successful the inter-bonded and interwoven was. So even when one of them was sick as an example, the others will help him in maintaining the farm until he gets back. So there is team spirit built among the youths and quite a lot of them took it beyond here... (Informant C1).

4.1.3.3 Empowerment Incentives

This is the 9th and last step of the youth participation process. The findings showed that this step involves allocation of incentives which include hectares of land, money, motorbike and farm seedling amounting to about \$5600 as applicable to the first batch of youth. The findings further revealed that the government could not sustain the empowerment incentives beyond the first batch. The 2nd and 3rd batches had fewer incentives while the 4th and 5th batches were yet to receive the incentives as at the period of this study. Further findings also indicate a lack of transparency in the management of the finances which lead to loss of trust by the youth and also resulted in inability to properly manage the graduated youth towards meeting the vision. However, the result from the field observation and FGDs showed that some of the youths were employed and earn income through self-help, consultancy services to local farmers and seasonal chicken farming.

4.2 Findings on Objective 2

To describe how the youth participation process achieved empowerment dimensions, it is important to retrace the empowerment dimensions. Therefore, based on the conceptual framework of this study, the empowerment dimensions are identified as economic, social and psychological dimensions. Economic dimension connotes increased income, improved standard of living, and financially independent and so on; social dimension is the ability to relate with people, among the people and across different categories of people. It is social capital that is acquired to strengthen relationships across social strata based on trust; and the psychological dimension is the ability to create wealth and exhibit knowledge through self-efficacy, self-esteem and ability to make a choice beyond the acquired knowledge through self-confidence.

The findings on how the process achieves empowerment dimensions were determined with a model adopted from Jupp, Ali, and Barahona (2010). The youth participant informants’ verbatim responses on the impacts of the program on them and other responses on the participation process were carefully extracted and match with each dimension. This is presented in table 2 below;

Table 2 How youth participation process achieved empowerment dimensions

S/ N	Verbatim statement	Indicator statement	Dimensions of emp.		
			Economic	social	Psych.
1.	<i>Yes, land measurement is just a topic we were thought to understand the land distribution, sharing, and allocation. Fortunately or unfortunately, I started making money from land measurement in Abuja and that’s how I started my farms.....that’s where I make money always unlike seasonal nature of agriculture(informant A8)</i>	The informant creates wealth and makes income through relationship and self-efficacy. (bonding, bridging and linking)	√	√	√
2.	<i>We always conducted elections to appoint our leaders within one month of resumption at the farm. People that have interest will contest, and those elected will represent us on some issues that affect us.....(informant5)</i>	The youth relates and interacts through democratic leadership principles. (bridging and linking)		√	√
3.	<i>When we were there because I was one of the executives, I was the welfare director. We organized ourselves as cooperative body and registered it with the name: “Unique</i>	Relates across social boundaries through links and networking with people outside the community like engaging in agriculture	√	√	√

	<i>cooperative society". We were contributing so that the bank will know that we are ready for any assistance (informant A6)</i>	businesses, access loan and collaborate with others			
4.	<i>If I can raise some money or assistance from anywhere, I will not wait for government. What I learned from there is enough for me to stand on my own and to know what my input and outcome will be, provided I have buyers I don't have problems' (informant A2).</i>	Ability to create wealth, self-confidence, self-efficacy, income generation and foresight	√	√	√
5.	<i>'I don't think there is any area in farming that I won't be capable of handling. If am giving 300 hectares of land for cropping, I will be able to manage it well and properly'. (Participant A7).</i>	Self-confidence, self-efficacy, knowledge, & proud of worth	√		√
6.	<i>I gained from that training and I was able to start a mini poultry on my own. From December last year, I didn't buy fowl. I raised broiler by myself and after raising it, I can't eat everything I had to give to my mother, my aunt and then some of it were consumed for the Christmas. So I started another one now, cockerel, it's not for sale. It's for my household. So I think I learned a lot of things, I can produce for our own use in the house and as well I can produce for commercial purposes(Participant A1)</i>	Creativity, enterprising, care for relations and friend, confidence, create wealth and proud of self-worth and demonstrate self-efficacy. (bonding, bridging and linking)	√	√	√
7.	<i>If I can raise some money or assistance from anywhere, I will not wait for government. What I learned from there is enough for me to stand on my own and to know what my input and outcome will be, provided I have buyers I don't have problems.(Informant A2</i>	Self-confidence knows self-ability, creative and determined. Ready to generate capital through self-effort.	√	√	√
8.	<i>.....participation in the training itself is empowerment. The training has an impact, so if one can get assistance to start on his own, the knowledge is enough to stand alone. It is not compulsory for the government....the government is trying what they can do. (Informant A6).</i>	Self-belief, self-capability, and efficacy. Independent mind and can sort self. Networking ability/ (linking)		√	√
9.	<i>But you see me now, you met me</i>	Create wealth,	√	√	√

at the farm, I've been here since 6.30 am, I know this is my business. This is what I used to take care of my family. And you know we are coming from extended family and I thank God that as time goes on I think I'll be able to be one of the successful farmers in this country (Participant A3)

10 So we lost about, let's say, two million naira last year, no help from anybody. Even the bank, we went to the bank to borrow money for them to come back to farm this year, the bank just gave us the condition that we cannot meet. So that's why we dropped it and we went to friends, family.....so we gather it together and continued. You cannot start today and say that you want to grow up today, it's gradual if you fall today, don't say that you will not pass there again, try again. So we are still trying and trying. We want to turn this place into an integration farm, we have a plan to have poultry, we have a plan to have a fish pond, we have a plan to have irrigation, you know, but there's no any help from government (Informant A4).

√ √

Source: fieldwork, 2018

4.3 Findings on Objective 3

To determine the overall achievement of the empowerment program, the following items were used as indicators. Each of them represents key factors that support the philosophy of the program which was to generate 'new generation of modern commercial farmers'.

- i. Empowerment incentives: this is the last step of the youth participation process and the means to fully set up the youth after the capacity building.
- ii. The vision of the IYTF project: this is the background philosophy of the youth empowerment project as pronounced by the government.
- iii. CAPYE: this is the Commonwealth Action Point on Youth Empowerment (as referred in the literature).

These indicators are presented in Table 3 below to show the indicator point for each indicator;

Table 3 Indicators for findings on the overall achievement of YITF project

Indicators	Indicator points
1. Empowerment package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ agriculture loan ➤ allocated land for farming ➤ farm inputs and equipment supports
2. Vision of the empowerment program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ other benefits as applicable to batch A ➤ support, assist and sustain youth farmers ➤ keep the intact and mentored according to the batches ➤ Keep adequate records of performance through effective monitoring and evaluation. ➤ Celebrate their achievement to attract more youths and networking ➤ Having existed for five years should have an average number² of successor-generation of commercial agricultural farmers. ➤ Any other activities or role that portrays
3. CPAYE: Commonwealth Point of Action on Youth Empowerment indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ (1) Develop and implement measures to promote economic enfranchisement of young people ➤ (2) Strengthen social support systems and collaboration among stakeholders in Youth Empowerment ➤ (3) Strengthen ministries, departments and legal frameworks for youth affairs ➤ (4) Promote the participation of young people in decision-making ➤ (5) Promote positive role models and foster young people's self-esteem ➤ (9) Improve access to information and communication technology ➤ (13) Monitor and evaluate progress in youth development

Source: Author's construct 2018

From the Table 3 above, it can be summarized that the YITF project is not on the track to achieving its vision despite the achievement of empowerment dimensions as shown in table 2 above. To further buttress the summary of the overall achievement of the project, Table 4 below is the information on batches of youth beneficiaries from 2006-2013.

Table 4 Information on the achievement of YITF projects Kwara State 2006-2013

Batch	Year of participation	Names of cooperative society for each batch	Number of trainees	Capacity building	Empowerment incentives	(outcome) Active farmers		
1.	2006 – 2008	New Generation Commercial Framers New Face Cooperative Group Farmers		93	93	93	19	
	2009 - 2010	Real Image Commercial cooperative Farmers		64	64	64	11	
2.	2010 - 2011	Harmony Commercial Farmers Unique Commercial Farmers cooperative		74	74	74	14	
	2011 – 2012			90	90	None	07	
	2012 - 2013			97	97	None.	12	
TOTAL					418	418	324	63

Source: Author's construct 2018

From the table 4, the information about the youth participants, the year of participation, cooperative societies, the number of the trainee for each batch, number of beneficiaries of the empowerment incentives and the number of

² Representing above 50%

those who are currently practicing farming are shown. This information shed more light on table three and well as findings on the objectives 1, 2 and 3.

5. Discussion and Contribution of the Study

The first objective of this study is to explore the process of youth participation in the agriculture empowerment program. The results indicate that the process of youth participation in the empowerment program involves a nine steps program of activities. These steps start from the planning stage to the last step of empowerment incentives. As shown in the findings, the steps are grouped into three to identify the various activities in each grouping. This finding is a departure from previous studies where participation processes or levels are identified in ladder forms to include stages of manipulation, decoration, and tokenism (Arstein, 1968; Hart, 1992; Tammi 2008). Therefore, the process of participation was able to clarify the power relations between the youth participants and other stakeholders in terms of strategic and operational powers Steward and Taylor (1995). The government was involved in the strategic decisions that support the program while the youth participates fully in the operations to achieve the empowerment dimensions.

The second objective is to describe how the youth participation process achieves empowerment dimensions. The result of the findings of this objective indicates that the youth participation process led to economic, social and psychological empowerment dimensions (Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). The youth confirmed their various activities, engagement, and achievement as presented in table 2 to support this claim. The process was able to connect the mental ability of the youth with the physical support and the training acquired (WHO, 200a). That was why the informants described their personal efforts in generating income even when the financial and other logistics supports did not come from the government. The youth also established relationships across the batches and outside the groups to exercise their social capital towards exchanging services for income through personal and group contacts. Therefore, this finding is in agreement with the theory of learned hopefulness as postulated by Zimmerman(1990). The idea of learned hopefulness theory is to understand the connectivity between an intended ability and change as a result of participating in a change process as foundin this study and the positive outcome of the change. In another way, Zimmerman (1990) further explained that “learned hopefulness is the process of learning andutilizing problem-solving skills and achievement of perceived or actual control”.Perceived control is a multidimensional construct but it has been studied in relationto cognitive, personality and motivational domain which are components ofpsychological empowerment and the basis for understanding socio-economicenvironment.

From objective three, which sought to determine the overall achievement of the empowerment program in line with the vision, it can be noted from the findings that the program is not in line with meeting the vision as found in indicator points. Apart from its inability to fully provide the youth with empowerment incentives that was meant to establish each youth as a new generation of commercial farmers, the number of youth in active farming from 2006 to 2013 was below average as shown in Table4. Using the Commonwealth Plan Action for Youth Empowerment indicators, the program only met indicator 1, 4 and 5 which further justifies the non-achievement of the vision of the program within the period of about 10 years of its establishment.

6. Limitation and recommendation for further studies

As a qualitative case study, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other similar youth empowerment programs because of the dynamics of human nature. Therefore, a repeat of this study in another environment may not give the same result. However, the findings can be useful in developing a hypothesis for further studies on the subject. Since the subject is a case study, further studies can be focused on comparative studies on youth empowerment on agriculture as a strategy for youth empowerment.

7. Conclusion

Based on the above findings and discussion, it can be posited that the youth empowerment programme has not achieved its vision of generating future commercial farmers due to its inability to consistently provide the youth with necessary financial and technical supports to make them self-reliance. On the basis of individual youth participants, the program has achieved success by empowering individual youth socially, economically and psychologically as a result of their participation in the one year program at the Youth Integrated Training Farm, Kwara State. This achievement has contributed to a reduction in the rate of youth unemployment and keptsome youth out of the streets despite the shortcomings that were recorded in the disbursement of empowerment incentives. This was made possible by the combination of psychological and social ability that were acquired in

the process. The area of empowerment incentives can be overcome if the government partners with real stakeholders and formulate policies that will encourage agriculture friendly loans for the youth through micro-finance banks. This will create a platform for achieving future generation of commercial farmers.

References

- Arnstein, S. (1968). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah, & Aref, F. (2009). People's Participation in Community Development: A Case Study in a Planned Village Settlement in Malaysia. *Marsland Press World Rural Observations*, 1(2), 45-54.
- Bank, W. (1995). Working with NGOs: A Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration between the World Bank and Non-Governmental Organizations. from The World Bank
- Cargo, M., Grams, G. D., Ottoson, J. M., Ward, P., & Green, L. W. (2003). Empowerment as fostering positive youth development and citizenship. *Am J Health Behav*, 27 Suppl 1, S66-79.
- Charles, A. (1971). *The language of Cities: A Glossary of Terms*.
- Checkoway, B. N., & Gutierrez, L. M. (2006). Youth participation and community change: An introduction. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1-2), 1-9.
- Cornwall, A. (2006). Historical perspectives on participation in development. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 44(1), 62-83.
- Creswell, J. (2010). *Research Design; Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). California: SAGE publication Inc.
- Crow, G., & Allan, G. (1994). *Community Life: An Introduction to Local Social Relations*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- France, L. (1998). Local participation in tourism in the West Indian Islands. *Embracing and managing change in tourism: International case studies*, 222-234.
- Frazer, E. (1999). *The Problem of Communitarian Politics*. Unity and conflict. *Oxford University Community Development Journal* 25 (2-4)
- Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
- Hart, R., Daiute, C., Iltus, S., Kritt, D., Rome, M., & Sabo, K. (1997). Developmental theory and children's participation in community organizations. *Social Justice*, 33-63.
- Hipilito-Degaldo C. & Lee, C. (2007). Empowerment Theory for the Professional Counselor: A Manifesto for What Really Matters. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(4), 327-332.
- Jupp, D., Ali, S. I., & Barahona, C. (2010). Measuring empowerment? Ask them. *Sida Studies in Evaluation*.
- KWSG. (2007). *Kwara State Government Diary*. Ilorin, Kwara State: Kwara State Government.
- Latopa, A. A., & Sharifah, N. S. A. (2015). The Impacts of Integrated Youth Training Farm as a Capacity Building Center for Youth Agricultural Empowerment in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(5), 524.
- Tammi, L. (2008). Empower: empowering young ethnic minority women: Brussels: Salto
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research; A guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- NBS. (2005). National Statistical Information. Abuja, Nigeria: National Bureau of Statistics.
- NPC. (2006). Nigeria Population Census report. Abuja, Nigeria: National Population Commission.
- Page, N., & Czuba, C. E. (1999). Empowerment: what is it? *Journal of Extension*, 37(5).
- Parry, G., Moyser, G., & Day, N. (1992). *Political participation and democracy in Britain*: Cambridge University Press.
- Pettit, J. (2012). *Empowerment and Participation: bridging the gap between understanding and practice*. New York: United Nations.
- Rappaport. (1984). Studies in empowerment: Introduction to the issue. *Prevention in Human Services, Journal of Development Studies*, 3, 1-7.
- Rowlands, J. (2010). Empowerment examined Development in Practice <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cdip20> (Vol. 5, pp. 101-1077).
- Steward, M., & Taylor, M. (1995). *Empowerment and estate generation*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Stoker, G (1997), 'Local Political Participation' in Hambleton, R et al (1997) *New Perspectives on local governance: reviewing the research evidence*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, pp. 157-196
- Thomas, D. N. (1980). "Research and Community Work". *Community Development Journal*, 15(1), 30-40.
- Vago, S. (2000). *Social Change*. United States: Prentice Hall.
- Vincent, J. W. J. (Ed.). (2009). *Community Development Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.

- WHO. (2002a). *Community Participation in Local Health and Sustainable Development: Approaches and Techniques*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe
- Zimmerman, M. A. (1990) Toward a Theory of Learned Hopefulness: A Structural Model; Analysis of Participation and Empowerment. *Journal of Research InPersonality* 24, 71-86
- Zimmerman, M. A. (1995). Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23, 581-600.
- Zimmerman, M. A., & Rappaport, J. (1988). Citizen participation, perceived control, and psychological empowerment. *American journal of community psychology*, 16(5), 725-750.