

**DECENT WORK, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WORK
PRACTITIONERS' INVOLVEMENT AS CORRELATE OF QUALITY LIFE AMONG
YOUTHS WORKING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Perpetua I. EMEME^{1*} and Babatunde Ayoola FAJIMI²

Department of Adult Education

Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria

^{*1} **Corresponding Author:** Email: pememe@unilag.edu.ng | Tel: +2348033010058

² Email: babatundefajimi@yahoo.com | Tel: +2348068887102

Abstract

The study examined decent work and the involvement of community development and social work practitioners as correlate of quality life among youths working in rural communities. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of the 900 youths working in Gbara Village, Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. The sample size was 280 participants comprising 270 youths and 10 Community Development and Social Work practitioners. The sample size for the youths was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) at 95% level of confidence and 5% margin of error. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique and simple sampling technique were used to select the participants. The research instrument was validated by subject experts. The test-retest reliability was analyzed and a correlation coefficient 'r' of 0.85 was obtained. The study answered four research questions. Three null hypotheses were tested through inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study showed that decent work was not available among youths working in rural communities because they were engaged in non-standard work. The study showed that there was a low positive significant between two variables at ($r = .185, p = 0.002$) implying that decent work influenced quality of life among youths in rural communities. There was a low positive significant relationship at ($r = .131, p = 0.028$) between the involvement of Community Development and Social Work practitioners and decent work for youths in rural communities. There was also a low positive significant relationship at ($r = .124, p = 0.038$) between the involvement of Community Development and Social Work practitioners and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities. The study recommended that the relevant agencies of government should strengthen labour legislations and engage Occupational Social Workers as a part of the government inspection directorate to implement decent work in companies in the informal sector. Stakeholders in the social sector and higher education should collaborate to prioritize occupational social work and build the competencies of social workers to advocate for the employment rights of youths working in rural communities.

Keywords: Decent Work, Quality of Life, Youths, Rural Communities, Community Development and Social Work practitioners.

Introduction

The Nigerian youths want to work and improve their quality of life in the community where they live through gainful employment. The youths are hardworking, enterprising, and always striving to make progress anywhere they find themselves. Contrary to popular belief and debate in some quarters that the youths are lazy, they are relentless in their pursuit of opportunities to work (Ogundipe, 2018a; Ogundipe, 2018b; Jonathan, 2018). Ajibade (2016) stated that the traditional African society values work and extols hardwork among the youths because work is a portal for human self-expression and self-realisation with economic, social, and spiritual significance in the community. Ideally, the youths have a right to work and this assertion is the philosophical cornerstone of the International Labour Organisation (2020a) which posits that the youths make valuable contributions to society as productive workers and should receive equal treatment and be afforded rights at work (Corbanese & Rosas, 2016). The right to work is an inalienable right of every human being.

The International Labour Organisation (2022a) said that decent work reflects the aspirations of people in their working lives because it offers opportunities for productive work and equitable remuneration on one hand and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on the other. The four pillars of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Decent Work agenda are employment creation, social protection, rights to work, and social dialogue. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 intrinsically establishes a correlation between decent work and quality of life for people and governments all over the world with its theme, 'Decent Work and Economic Growth'. The SDG8 underscores the importance of decent work which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". The International Labour Organisation (2022b) asserts that this global goal addresses issues of youth employment, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and skills development whilst creating the framework for the provision of social protection, eradication of forced and child labour, and increase in productivity.

The United Nations Youth Strategy (2018) stated that lack of access to decent work constitutes one of the incredible and life-threatening challenges that young people face, particularly in developing countries. The Nigerian youths are unable to acquire decent work in the country because of the growing unemployment crisis as decent jobs and wages have become a mirage in the labour market. Heidi, et al (2019) surmised that the youths cannot enter the labour market and they

also find it difficult to find either decent jobs or decent working conditions when they get jobs. Petrosky-Nadeau and Zhang (2014) said there is an unemployment crisis when unemployment rates are higher than or equal to 20%.

The unemployment crisis in Nigeria, particularly among the youths in rural communities has worsened over the last four years. This submission is based on the statistics of unemployed and underemployed youths in rural communities from the National Bureau of Statistics (2020). The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) states that there are 34.9% unemployed and 28.2% underemployed youths from ages 18 to 35 years in quarter two (Q2), 2020 when compared to 29.7% unemployed and 25.7% underemployed youths in Q3, 2018, respectively. In rural communities, youth unemployment and underemployment rose from 23.9% and 22.8% in Q3, 2018 to 28% and 31.5% in Q2, 2020. The youths want to work but are constrained because of socio-economic uncertainties and the unemployment crisis that alienate them from limited opportunities in the formal sector. Adesugba and Mavrotas (2016) argued that the average youths may not be able to secure decent work in Nigeria because of the way the economy, like most of the economies in developing countries in Africa, is structured.

The Nigerian economy is largely informal. According to the World Bank (2019), 80.4% of employment in Nigeria is in the informal economy (Adenuga, 2021; Ohnsorge & Shu, 2021). The informal economy comprises heterogenous business ventures and occupational activities with low entry barriers in the manufacturing, agriculture, construction, commerce, and trade predominantly in the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that are unregulated by the government (Fasanya & Onakoya, 2012). The sector not only serves as a major source of employment but also accounts for over 90% of the employment aggregate in most developing countries in the world (Nnabuiife, Okoli, & Anugwu, 2020). The informal economy has been described by Onwe (2013) as an alternative source of employment and income generation for a larger percentage of the population, particularly the labour force in rural communities.

There is a nexus between decent work and quality of life. Kantor, Rani, and Unni (2006) said that work either through paid or self-employment is the basis for most livelihoods in developing countries whose economies are informal-driven. Countries that are largely driven by their informal economy like Nigeria cannot guarantee decent work in today's competitive economy (Barford, Coombe, & Proefke, 2020). Nigeria is a country of young people with the single largest cohort of

youths in the world where 35% of its population are between the ages of 18 and 35 years old (Nevin, Omosomi, & Ogunremi, 2020). Among this youth population, there is a high rate of poverty in rural communities because of unabated year-on-year unemployment and underemployment which make the youths susceptible to non-standard work that devalues their dignity of labour, overwork and underpay them (Olusanya, 2014). There have not been frameworks and regulatory laws for development policies and national accounting for the informal economy hence employment opportunities in the sector do not correlate with access to decent work resulting in the prevalence of non-standard work that breeds underemployment and its consequent socio-economic problems that negatively impact the quality of life of youths in rural communities (Onwe, 2013; Olusanya, 2014).

Community development and social work practitioners are concerned that unless there is standardization based on the SDG8 philosophy on decent work, the youths may not be able to attain the quality of life derivable through decent work because of the intrinsic characteristics of the informal economy. The informal economy is characterised by unrecorded, unprotected, and unregulated economic activities outside the purview of the public sector. The nature of participants in the sector includes but is not limited to low entry barriers for new entrants, non-standardized small-scale operations, non-technical skills without formal education, and labour-intensive production. The informal economic activities are labour-intensive and prone to non-standardized work. Ohnsorge and Shu (2021) argued that this constitutes a phenomenon that poses potentially serious policy challenges for the social and material well-being of workers in the economy.

Whilst human services practitioners, scholars, and policy makers have focused on the reduction in youth unemployment, less attention has been paid to the ability of these youths to acquire decent work in line with the ILO framework and SDG8 targets on decent work. Consequently, different policies of the government geared towards creating youth employment have faltered because the emphasis has been skewed in favour of employment opportunities and job creation and not the creation of decent work for the youths to enhance their quality of life. Nigeria is a signatory to the International Labour Organisation's framework on decent work and United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

There have been renewed interest in the study of the relationship between employment and quality of life in literature (Seubert, Hopfgartner, & Glaser, 2021). In recent times, scholars have examined non-standard work, non-standard employment relations, job creation, youth employment, women employment, and implications for decent work deficits in Nigeria following the works of Okafor (2012), Fapohunda (2012), Olusanya (2014), Olusanya (2015), Ikeije and Ekwoaba (2018), Akinsanya, et al (2020) and Okuwa (2020). However, there has been relatively limited academic research work carried out to find the nexus between decent work and quality of life among the youths in rural communities in Nigeria. The study sought to ascertain the relationship between decent work and quality of life among youths working in rural communities and determine whether the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contribute to improved quality of life among these youths.

Research Questions

The study raised the following four research questions:

1. Is decent work available among youths in rural communities?
2. What is the relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities?
3. To what extent are community development and social work practitioners involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities?
4. How does the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contribute to improved quality of life among youths in rural communities?

Hypotheses

The study formulated and tested three null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance:

- H_0^1 : There is no significant relationship between decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.
- H_0^2 : There is no significant relationship between the involvement of community development and social work practitioners and the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities.
- H_0^3 : There is no significant relationship between the involvement of community development and social work practitioners and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted the 900 youths working in Gbara Village, Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. The sample size for the study was 280 participants comprising 270 youths and 10 Community Development and Social Work practitioners. The sample size for the youths was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) at 95% level of confidence and 5% margin of error. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique and simple sampling technique was used to select the participants. The self-developed questionnaire titled *Decent Work as Strategy for Improving Quality of Life among Youths in Rural Communities Scale* (DWIQLYRCS) has eight sections and 50 items on four-Likert scales rating of TGE - To a Great Extent, S - Somewhat, VL - Very Little, and NAA - Not at all. The face and content validity of the survey instrument were confirmed by experts in the fields of Adult Education, Community Development, and Measurement respectively. The test-retest reliability was analyzed and a correlation coefficient 'r' of 0.85 was obtained. The 280 copies of the questionnaires were administrated through physical contacts by means of face-to-face during the lunch hours and weekends to the youths working in the rural communities. All the 280 responses were received from the participants and considered valid for data analysis. The data for the study were coded and analysed using descriptive with frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the participants in Section A of the questionnaire and inferential statistics to analyze the variables in research questions and hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance covering the Sections B, C, D, E, F, G, and H using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Findings

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 – 21 years old	123	45.56	45.56	45.56
22 – 26 years old	48	17.78	17.78	61.07
27 – 30 years old	13	4.81	4.81	65.71
31 – 35 years old	86	31.85	31.85	100
Total	270	100	100	
Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	56	20.74	20.74	20.74
Male	214	79.26	79.26	100
Total	270	100	100	
Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No formal education	45	16.67	16.67	16.67
Primary school	125	46.30	46.30	62.96
Secondary school	94	34.81	34.81	97.78
Post-secondary school	6	2.22	2.22	100
Total	270	100	100	
Nature of Work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Collar Worker	27	10.00	10.00	43.93
Blue Collar Worker	236	87.41	87.41	61.07
White Collar Worker	5	1.85	1.85	65.71
New Collar Worker	2	0.74	0.74	100
Total	270	100	100	

Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Table 1 shows that youths in rural communities were aged 18 – 21 years old (n=123, 45.56%), 22 – 26 years old (n=48, 17.78%), 27 – 30 years old (n=13, 4.81%), and 31 – 35 years old (n=86, 31.85%). The largest number of youths in rural communities being 45.56% of the respondents were aged between 18 – 21 years old, followed by 31.85% who were aged between 31 – 35 years old. There were more male than female among youths working in rural communities. There were (n=56, 20.74%) female and (n=214, 79.26%) male among these working youths in the rural communities. The information confirms that (n=45, 16.67%) of youths working in rural communities have no formal education whilst (n=125, 46.30%) have primary school education, (=94, 34.81%) have secondary school education, and (n=6, 2.22%) have post-secondary school education. There were 81.11% of these youths in the rural communities with primary and secondary education. The respondents were no collar workers (n=27, 10.00%), blue collar or pink collar worker (n=236, 87.41%), white collar workers (n=5, 1.85%), and new collar workers (n=2, 0.74%) in the rural communities. The 87.41% of these youths working in rural communities were engaged in blue collar or pink collar jobs and this is the largest presentation of the nature of work that the youths were involved in rural communities.

Research Question 1: Is decent work available among youths in rural communities ?

Table 2: Summary of participants’ responses on availability of decent work among youths in rural communities.

Items	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
Youths in rural communities are engaged in non-standard work because of limited employment opportunities	216 (77%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	63 (23%)	1.68	1.25
Working youths in rural communities are able to combine work, family, and personal life	74 (26%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	204 (73%)	1.80	1.32
Working youths in rural communities have adequate earnings and productive work	71 (25%)	0 (0%)	4 (1%)	205 (73%)	1.78	1.31
Working youths in rural communities have stability and security of work	71 (25%)	0 (0%)	4 (1%)	205 (73%)	1.78	1.31
Working youths in rural communities have equal opportunity and treatment in employment	72 (26%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.1%)	205 (73%)	1.78	1.31
Working youths in rural communities have safe work environment and are able to join labour union	73 (26%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	205 (73%)	1.79	1.32
	Weighted Mean				1.77	

Key: 4= To a Great Extent; 3=Somewhat; 2=Very Little; 1=Not at all; SD=Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey (2023)

Table 2 reveals the availability of decent work available among youths in rural communities. The weighted mean (1.77) was determined and set as bench mark for decision making to answer the research question. The table shows that five out of six items corroborated the fact that decent work was not available among youths in rural communities, and they are having means above the set bench mark of 1.77. Consequently, it can be construed from the finding that the result implies that decent work is not available among youths in rural communities.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities?

Table 3: Summary of participants' responses on relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.

Items	4	3	2	1	Mean	SI
Working youths in rural communities lack life satisfaction because they are engaged in non-standard work	203 (73%)	74 (26%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	3.71	0.51
Working youths in rural communities cannot access qualitative infrastructural services for their families because they do not have equal employment opportunity	203 (72%)	75 (26%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	3..71	0.48
Working youths in rural communities do not have enough money to afford good life because they do not earn enough salaries	203 (72%)	74 (26%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	3.71	0.48
Working youths in rural communities do not enjoy perceived mental health because they lack work-life balance	203 (72%)	75 (26%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	3.71	0.48
Working youths in rural communities do not have satisfaction with their local environment because they do not have security of work	211 (75%)	68 (24%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3.75	0.46
Working youths lack civic engagement because they are unable to join labour union.	211 (75%)	68 (24%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3.75	0.46
Weighted Mean					3.72	

Key: 4= To a Great Extent; 3=Somewhat; 2=Very Little; 1=Not at all; SD=Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Information from Table 3 shows the relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities. The weighted mean (3.72) was determined and set as bench mark for decision making to answer this research question. The table reveals that the six items reinforced the fact that relationship existed between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities as the items have means above the set bench mark of 3.72. It can be deduced from results that there is a relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.

Research Question 3: To what extent are community development and social work practitioners involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities?

Table 4: Summary of participants’ responses on the extent to which community development and social work practitioners are involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities.

Items	4	3	2	1	Mean	S
Community development and social work practitioners should be actively engaged in training, counseling, and facilitation of skills development, youths entrepreneurship, rural youths employment for youths in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
advocacy for implementation of labour standards and good working conditions and wages for youths in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
person-focused intervention therapy for social work services and welfare-to-work programmes to working youths and their families in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
organisation-focused intervention to implement health and safety policies, industrial democracy, and collective bargaining for working youths in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
social welfare administration for promoting the rights and dignity of working youths in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
collaboration with collective bargaining agreement actors to monitor compliance with labour standards for working youths in rural communities	280 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.0
Weighted Mean					4.00	
Key: 4= To a Great Extent; 3=Somewhat; 2=Very Little; 1=Not at all; SD=Standard Deviation						

Source: Researchers’ Field Survey (2023)

Evidence from Table 4 shows the extent to which community development and social work practitioners should be involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities. The weighted mean (4.00) was determined and set as bench mark for decision making to provide answer to this research question. The table confirms that the six items had means above the set bench mark of 4.00. It is crystal clear from the result that community development and social work practitioners should be involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities as all the items have coefficient equal to the weighted mean.

Research Question 4: How does the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contribute to improved quality of life among youths in rural communities?

Table 5: Summary of participants' responses on the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contribute to improved quality of life among youths in rural communities?

Items	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
The involvement of community development and social work practitioners in provision of decent work among youths in rural communities enhances the ability of youths to achieve life satisfaction, sense of meaning and purpose in life, work-life balance, and hope of a bright future in rural communities	84 (30%)	192 (69%)	3 (1.1%)	1 (1%)	3.28	0.49
earn enough money to afford good life, mobility, culture, and leisure in rural communities	84 (30%)	193 (68%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3.29	0.48
derive satisfaction with local environment and raise their families in safe, serene and beautiful home locality devoid of noise, pollution, and crime in rural communities	84 (30%)	193 (68%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3.29	0.49
enjoy perceived health and perceived mental health in rural communities	84 (30%)	193 (68%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3.29	0.48
have civic engagement and a sense of belonging and participation in their local community without threats to their personal security in rural communities	84 (30%)	193 (68%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3.29	0.48
access qualitative infrastructural services such as education, housing, and healthcare facilities for their families in rural communities	84 (30%)	193 (68%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0%)	3.29	0.48
Weighted Mean					3.28	

Key: 4= To a Great Extent; 3=Somewhat; 2=Very Little; 1=Not at all; SD=Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Information from Table 5 shows the contribution of involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work to improve the quality of life among youths in rural communities. The weighted mean (3.28) was determined and set as bench mark for decision making to answer this research question. The table reveals that the six items had means above the set bench mark of 3.28. It can be deduced from the result that the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contributed to improve the quality of life among youths in rural communities as all the items had a coefficient equal to the weighted mean.

Hypothesis Testing

H_0^1 : There is no significant relationship between decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.

Table 6: Correlation between decent work and quality of life among youths in rural communities

Variables	No	(r)	P	Remark
Decent work	280			
Quality of life among youths in rural communities	280	.185	.002	Significant

Significant at 0.05

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.3.2 shows low positive significant relationship between the two variables at ($r = .185$, $p = 0.002$) implying that decent work influenced quality of life among youths in rural communities. The null hypothesis one is, therefore, rejected.

H_0^2 : There is no significant relationship between the involvement of community development and social work practitioners and the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities.

Table 7: Correlation between involvement of community development and social work practitioners and decent work for youths in rural communities.

Variables	No	(r)	P	Remark
Influence of community development and social work practitioners	280	.131	.028	Significant
Decent work for youths in rural communities	280			

Significant at 0.05

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Table 7 reveals low positive significant relationship between the two variables at ($r = .131$, $p = 0.028$). This means that there is a correlation between the two variables. Consequently, the null hypothesis two is rejected.

H_0^3 : There is no significant relationship between the involvement of community development and social work practitioners and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities.

Table 8: Correlation between involvement of community development and social work practitioners and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities

Variables	No	(r)	P	Remarks
Involvement of community development and social work practitioners	280	.114	.038	Significant
Quality of life among youths in rural communities	280			

Significant at 0.05

Source: Researchers' Field Survey (2023)

Table 8 indicates a low positive significant relationship between the two variables at ($r = .124$, $p = 0.038$) to show that there is a correlation between the two variables. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

Discussion

The result of the study reveals that decent work is not available among youths in rural communities. Youths were engaged in non-standard work. They did not earn equitable remuneration. They lack work stability and work security. These youths did not have equal opportunities and treatment at work. They could not join labour unions and there was no safe work environment for them in rural communities. This corroborates the works of Okafor (2012), Olusanya (2014), and Akinsanya, et al. (2019) that decent work was not available in the informal sector in Nigeria. This is in line with Olusanya (2015) who concluded that majority of the informal workers worked under unfavourable conditions. Olayiwola (2019) found that decent work deficits were prevalent among domestic workers. Bello and Fagbemi (2023) that decent work is not available in Nigeria because the existing labour legislation is weak. The result confirms Okuwa (2020) who found that the Social Investment Programme addressed graduate unemployment through the N-Power programme in Oyo State but the jobs lacked job security, right to work, and social dialogue which were the pillars of decent work.

The result of the study shows that there was a relationship between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities. Youths lack life satisfaction because they were engaged in non-standard work. Their satisfaction with the local environment was affected by the lack of security at work. They could not engage in civic activities in the

communities because they were unable to join labour union. This agrees with Barford, Coombe, and Proefke (2020) who argued that there is a nexus between decent work and improved quality of life. It also supports Okuwa (2020) who found that youths in Oyo State could not enjoy improved quality of life because of the absence of pillars of decent work in their employment. The work of Kabir, Gunu, and Gwadabe (2022) found that decent work environment promoted work-life balance because hostile work environment which is symptomatic of non-standard work lowered the work-life balance and negatively impacted the quality of life among 379 employees in four banks in Nigeria. Again, it confirms Bello and Fagbemi (2023) that decent work enhanced the quality of life among people in Nigeria. The result is consistent with Adetunji, et al. (2019) and Okafor (2012) who posited that when the quality of life of employees are enhanced when they are exposed to decent work in employee-friendly environment that induces industrial democracy.

The result of the study indicates that community development and social work practitioners should be involved in the provision of decent work among youths in rural communities. Their involvement will offer person-focused intervention therapy for social work services and welfare-to-work programmes to the working youths and their families in rural communities. They will be engaged in social welfare administration to promote rights and dignity of youths working in the rural communities. These practitioners will collaborate with collective bargaining engagement actors to monitor compliance with labour standards among organisations in the rural communities. This is in tandem with the studies of Ajala (2009) and Fajimi (2022) that occupational social workers are involved with employees to ensure their psychosocial well-being in the workplace. The result also concurs with the position of Andersson (2022) that community development and social work practitioners play important role in promoting improved quality of life for youths in rural employment. Liang, et al (2016) have posited that the involvement of practitioners in the provision of decent work among rural youths working in the communities was emerging but missing hence the need to accelerate the practice of occupational social work and its influence on youth employment and rural development.

Furthermore, the result of the study confirms that the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contributed to improve the quality of life among youths in rural communities. Their involvement improve the youths' access to civic engagement, qualitative infrastructural services, and satisfaction with the local environment. This

corroborates Olaleye (2018) who examined the influence of social workers' participation in vocational training programmes on economic wellbeing of rural dwellers and found that clients of social workers are better served when social workers have competences to support them. It also agrees with Dhavaleshwar (2016) that individuals in the community desire to stay safe, healthy, and wealthy and social services and social workers play an important role in helping people improve their quality of life. The result validates the studies of Miller, et al (2007), Rosenberg and Holden (2008), Olaleye (2016), Udeani (2019), and Okoye (2019) that drew a parallel between the involvement of community development and social work practitioners and improved quality of life among clients in the community. However, the focus of these scholars is more on medical and community social work interventions at micro, macro, and mezzo levels rather than interventions in occupational social work. It implies that there has been less attention paid to occupational social work practice among professionals and policy makers.

Conclusion

The study has established that decent work is not available among youths in rural communities. It has also been found that there is a relationship between decent work and quality of life among youths working in rural communities. The study has further shown that the involvement of community development and social work practitioners in the provision of decent work contributes to improved quality of life among these youths. Youths access limited employment opportunities available in rural communities. These employment opportunities lack all the criteria for decent work and this is the reason the youths are engaged in non-standard works in rural communities. There is a correlation between the availability of decent work and improved quality of life among youths in rural communities. It is evident that community development and social work practitioners should be involved in the process of ensuring that youths working in rural communities have decent work opportunities in their employment experience to enhance their quality of life. Consequently, the involvement of community development and social work practitioners contribute to the provision of decent work opportunities among youths working in rural communities. The involvement of community development and social work practitioners contribute to improved quality of life among youths working in rural communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- The government should strengthen Labour Laws and International Labour Organisations conventions with respect to the Decent Work Agenda to regulate non-standard work in the informal sector and enable youths have access to decent work in the rural communities.
- The Ministry of Labour and Employment should enforce the provisions of labour legislations with regards to Decent Work and engage community development and social work practitioners as a part of the inspection directorate for structured and regular visitations to companies in the informal sector engaged in non-standard work to promote decent work.
- The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) should partner with the civil society organisations and other stakeholders to promote adult literacy and youth empowerment among youths in rural communities.
- The Federation of Informal Workers Organisation of Nigeria (FIWON) should collaborate with the Nigeria Association of Social Workers (NASoW) and practising Community Development and Social Work practitioners, particularly Occupational Social Workers in the private sector to advocate for the rights of youths working in the companies in rural communities to form and join labour unions.
- The university administrators and academics in the field of Social Work Education should rethink the curriculum of Social Work and Adult Education to prioritize Occupational Social Work in the Community Development and Social Work ecosystem.
- The Nigeria Association of Social Workers (NASoW) should collaborate with the academics to develop continuous professional development programmes to enhance the practice of Occupational Social Work in the informal sector toward promoting decent work in youth employment in the rural communities.

References

- Adenuga, A. (2021). *80.4% of Nigerian employment in informal sector, says World Bank*. <https://punchng.com/80-4-of-nigerian-employment-in-informal-sector-says-wbank/>.
- Adesugba, M. & Mavrotas, G. (2016). *Youth Employment, Agricultural Transformation, and Rural Labour Dynamics in Nigeria*. Discussion Paper 01579. Abuja: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Adetunji, B., et al. (2019). Decent Work and Employee Performance in Nigeria: Adopting an Integrated Programmatic Approach. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Statistics Management and Finance*, 7(1), 207-213.
- Ajala, E. M. (2009). Attainment of Individual and Organisational Goals in Industries: Implications for Occupational Social Worker. *Nigerian Journal of Social Work Education*. 8. 20-29.
- Ajibade, E. A. (2016). *African Traditional Work Ethics and the Challenges of Decent Work Agenda*. Ogbomosho: Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary. https://www.academia.edu/6139384/African_Traditional_Work_Ethics_and_the_Challenges_of_Decent_Work_Agenda.
- Akinsanya, A. O., et al. (2020). International Labour Organisation Decent Work Agenda for Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges. *Kampala International University Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 115-124.
- Andersson, L. (2022). *Addressing youth unemployment: what role for social work? Policy responses to youth unemployment in Sweden and Europe*. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1652043/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Barford, A., Coombe, R. & Proefke, R. (2020). Youth experiences of the decent work deficits. *Geography*. 105. https://restlessdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GEOGRAPHY_vol105_part2_BARFORD-ET-AL.pdf.
- Bello, K. M. & Fagbemi, F. (2023). *Unemployment and Decent Work in Nigeria*. In Filho, W. L., et al (eds.). *SDGs in Africa and the Middle East Region, Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals – Regional Perspectives*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91260-4_83-1.
- Corbanese, V. & Rosas, G. (2016). *Rights@work for youth: Decent work for young people*. Geneva: International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_310206.pdf.
- Dhavaleshwar, C. U. (2016). The Role of Social Worker in Community Development. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(10), 61-63.
- Fajimi, B. A. (2022). Promoting Occupational Social Work Practice in Nigerian Organisations. *Rivers State University Journal of Education*, 25(1), 166-179.

- Fasanya, I. O. & Onakoya, A. B. O. (2012). Informal Sector and Employment Generation in Nigeria: An Error Correlation Model. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(7), 48-55.
- Fapohunda, T. M. (2012). Towards Improved Access to Full Employment and Decent Work for Women in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(8), 104-112.
- Heidi, et al. (2019). *Preparing and Accessing Decent Work amongst Rural Youth in Cambodia: Case Study*. Berlin: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. <http://hdl.hanlde.net/11159/3650>.
- Ikeije, U. U. & Ekwoaba, J. O. (2018). Incidence of Non-Standard Work Arrangements and Workers' Rights in Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry. *Journal of Business and African Economy*, 4(2), 63-72.
- International Labour Organisation (2022a). *The ILO's Decent Work Agenda*. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang—en/index.htm>.
- International Labour Organisation (2022b). *Employment, Decent work for all and social protection*. [Employment, decent work for all and social protection. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/knowledgeplatform).
- Jonathan, Z. (2018). *Our youths are hardworking, intelligent, Atiku, Fayose, Bruce tell Buhari*. <https://punchng.com/our-youths-are-hardworking-intelligent-atiku-fayose-bruce-tell-buhari>.
- Kabir, I., Gunu, U., & Gwadabe, Z. L. (2022). Decent Work Environment and Work-Life Balance: Empirical Analysis of Banking Sector of Hostile Environments. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 44(6). DOI:10.1007/S10834-022-09843-2.
- Kantor, P., Rani, U., & Unni, J. (2006). Decent Work Deficits in Informal Economy: Case of Surat. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(21), 2089-2097.
- Liang, et al (2016). Youth unemployment: Implications for social work practice. *Journal of Social Work*, 17(5), 560-578.
- Miller, J. J., et al. (2007). Role of a medical social worker in improving quality of life for patients with advanced cancer with a structured multidisciplinary intervention. *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology*, 25(4), 105-119.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2020). Labour Force Statistics: *Unemployment and Underemployment Report: Abridged Labour Force Survey under Covid-19*. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/856>.
- Nevin, S. A., Omosomi, O. & Ogunremi, M. (2020). *Nigeria Economic Alert: Unemployment rate expected to hit 30% amid the effect of COVID-19 on the economy*. <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/economic-alert-september-2020.pdf>.

- Nnabuife, E. K., Okoli, I. E., & Anugwu, C. C. (2020). Informal Sector and Nigerian Economic Prospects: The Covid-19 Experience. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 5(4), 1-5. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2020.5.4.397>.
- Ogundipe, S. (2018a). *What I meant describing Nigerian youth as lazy – Buhari*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/266869-what-i-meant-describing-nigerian-youth-as-lazy-buhari.html>.
- Ogundipe, S. (2018b). *Buhari criticizes Nigerian youth as lazy, uneducated*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/265484-buhari-criticises-nigerian-youth-as-lazy-uneducated.html>.
- Ohnsorge, F. & Shu, Y. (2021). *The Long Shadow of Informality: Challenges and Policies*. Advance Edition. (Ed.). World Bank: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- Okafor, E. E. (2012). Nonstandard Employment Relations and Implications for Decent Work Deficits in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 6(3), 93-108.
- Okoye, U. (2019). *Health Care Social Work in Nigeria*. In *Health Care Social Work: A Global Perspective*. Oxford University Press, 149-161.
- Okuwa, O. B. (2020). Job Creation and Decent Work in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Modern Economy*, 11, 1752-1770.
- Olaleye, Y. L. (2016). Community Social Work Practice in Nigeria: An Innovative Approach to Skills Need. *African Notes: Journal of the Institute of African Studies*, 40(1), 49-57.
- Olaleye, Y.L. (2018). Influence of Professional Social Workers Participation in Vocational Training Programmes on Economic Well-Being of Rural Dwellers, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Work Education*, 17, 46-62.
- Olayiwola, P. (2019). ILO's Decent Work Agenda and Domestic Workers in Nigeria: Challenges and Complexities. *Labour, Capital, and Society*, 49(1), 161-186.
- Olusanya, O. A. (2014). Decent Work Deficits in the Nigerian Informal Economy. *African Journal of Microfinance and Enterprise Development*, 4(1), 1-18. <https://ir.unilag.edu.ng/handle/123456789/10950>.
- Olusanya, O. A. (2015). *Non-standard Work in the Nigerian Informal Economy*. Paper presented at the European Business Management Conference. <http://ir.unilag.edu.ng:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2851>.
- Onwe, O. J. (2013). Role of the Informal Sector in Development of the Nigerian Economy: Output and Employment Approach. *Journal of Economics and Development Studies*, 1(1), 60-74.
- Petrosky-Nadeau, N. & Zhang, L. (2014). *Unemployment Crises*. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/imports/fileManager/UnempCrises2014Jun.pdf>.

- Rosenberg, G. & Holden, G. (2008). The Role of Social Work in Improving Quality of Life in the Community. *Health Policy and Social Work*, 25(1-2), 9-22.
- Seubert, C., Hopfgartner, L., & Glaser, J. (2021). Living Wages, Decent Work, and Need Satisfaction: An Integrated Perspective. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 30(6), 808-823.
- Udeani, C. C. (2019). Social Work in Contemporary Nigerian Society: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Social Work in Developing Societies*, 1(1), 1-16.
- United Nations Youth Strategy (2018). *Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People*. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf.
- World Bank (2019). *The Changing Nature of Work*. World Development Report. Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. DOI: 10.1596/978-1-4648-1328-3.