



Red Cap Title Holders' Participation in Education and Community Development in South East Nigeria: The Case of Selected Communities in Imo and Abia States

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Abstract. Town unions including age grades and title holders could assist in upholding peace, culture and other community needs towards the well-being of the society. This study investigated Red Cap Title holders' participation in education and community development in selected communities in Imo and Abia states. A descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was all the 1,340 red cap title holders in the 856 autonomous communities in Imo and Abia States. A total of 134 red cap title holders were randomly selected from 86 autonomous communities across the 3 senatorial districts to serve as respondents. Three research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Red Cap Title Holders Participation in Education and Community Development Questionnaire (REDCAPTEDCDQUE)" was designed, validated, pilot-tested (N=20, r=.77). Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research questions while Pearson r statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed high level participation in educational and community development programmes, high level participation in scholarship for indigent students. However, it also revealed low level support for women in governance. The study further revealed that there exists significant relationship between red cap title holders' activities and education development in the Imo and Abia state. The paper recommended among others that Red cap title holders should increase their support for women in governance towards progressive and sustainable national development.

Keywords: Red-Cap-Title, Education and Community Development

1. Introduction

Community development could be considered the process of uplifting and reshaping the economic, religious, socio-political, cultural and educational status of rural and urban settings. It has become a vehicle which encapsulates the ability of community members to act collectively towards enhancing their skills to achieve goals and improve their wellbeing. This is possible through the activities and achievements of stakeholders which includes among others, government, civil society groups, non-governmental agencies, philanthropic individuals, women and men associations, town unions, religious associations and particularly the age grades and title holders.

For instance, age grades and title holders have been reported to have played significant roles in the development of their communities (Okoronkwo, 2014).. Community development is a concept built on the praxis of social and intellectual life that supports others within the community. In realization of the community objectives, the structured roles of title holders in Igboland have become imperative to facilitate their activities which will be felt in the community. The flexibility of their roles enables challenges, solutions, and continuity for community development. The title holders and age grade as institutions, play prominent roles in upholding justice and community projects. They could maintain law and order, provide security and resolve conflicts within and among citizens which strengthens community growth and oneness.

The inexhaustibility roles and achievements of age grade system in Southeast and some part of south-south Nigeria gave rise to red cap title holders becoming another pathfinder in societal and community development. The closeness of the red cap title holders who are held in high esteem by their people might help to convince and mobilize support

for community development. They could make decisions on different issues affecting the community that requires coordinated approach, linking with government and non-governmental agencies, monitor and evaluate projects in the community (Madukasi, 2018).

Specifically, red cap titles in Igboland are bestowed on individuals considered to have excelled in their chosen careers, endeavors or live an impeccable life worthy of emulation in the society. They are respected and assist in upholding the culture, norms and values of the community. As elders, they could act as advisory body to leadership on education, political, economic, security and even peace (Ejjechi, 2020). The red cap title holders therefore could transmute as community and education development agents (Ezeoha and Ogba, 2015).

In recent time, the demands for good governance and general wellbeing of the community gave rise to the inevitability of age grades and red cap title holders in community development programmes particularly in Igboland. They could organize fund raising through levies, donations and launching to finance community development projects like constructing classrooms and libraries, granting scholarships to indigent students, upgrading existing health facilities etc. In many states of the southeast in Nigeria, the red cap title holders are the Ozo titles, Ndi-ichie, Ndi-eze, Igwe etc. Ozo title-taking among others is also an achievement that deserves respect. The title holders are seen with their red caps as important institutions in most towns of Igbo land. In the olden days, as well as today, to take the title is a mark of achievement (Ejjechi, 2020). It shows that the person has got wealth which he is using to uplift himself, family and his community in social rank and status. A red cap titled man in Igbo land is known as "Nze na ozo", Ichie, Ogbuefi, Igwe etc. It is a social rank of distinction, and to take the title traditionally requires a number of rigorous stages in every part where it exist. Red cap title has been depicted as a symbol of justice and titled men act as custodians and regulators of the customs and laws of the land (Ibemesi, 2014)

A close observation of the red cap title-taking ceremony across the states of South-east Nigeria gives an opportunity to see the slight variations in the way several communities organize and manage the auspicious event. This is because the Igbos believes in customizing and personalizing culture. That explains the variations you find in the way several communities handle the red cap title-taking event and the community development initiatives therein. Accordingly, for an Igbo man to become a red cap title holder, he must be seen to be wealthy. That is why the Igbos would say "Ichi ozo bu maka ndi ogadagidi" which literally means: taking the Ozo title or red cap is an affair for the high and

mighty. An aspirant for the red cap title has to perform several preliminary practices after which he must inform the head of all red cap title holders of his community that he intends to join the group (Madukasi, 2018). There are usually terms and conditions which most time are linked to the development needs of the community. The aspirants might have in several occasions performed some personal or even combined assistance towards the better living of members of his community. Upon his acceptance to the fold, he is required to continually contribute to the developmental desires of his community. Their roles in community development seems unreported.

However, in many communities in Igbo land, the red cap title holders appear to be so influential that they play prominent role in education development of their immediate communities. They could give scholarship to indigent young members of the community and see to the training of promising young individuals or talented members of their host community through payment of school fees, purchase of books, donations towards education of individuals etc.

The role of making available good infrastructure like adequate classroom, offices, library, staff quarters, laboratories and instructional materials for effective teaching and learning where they seem not enough from the government is quite an onerous task. Hence the urgent involvement of red cap title holders in alleviating the situation has become imperative in many communities in Igboland.

Education investment in many ways contributes to the expansion of human capabilities which is a key element of development in communities. It is believed that a person benefits from education "in reading, communicating, arguing, in being able to choose in a more informed way, in being taken more seriously by others and so on could be facilitated by members of his community. It is imperative to note that government alone cannot provide all educational programmes that could promote and improve community participations. The title holders in their localities could therefore be of great help in reducing illiteracy among members of the community by taking up the responsibilities of either paying salaries of specific subject teacher or even sponsoring the payment of salaries to teachers in their community.

The title holders could be of immense assistance to their people by embarking on renovation of dilapidated primary or secondary schools in their communities. In some cases, they could out rightly build schools, expand laboratory where it exists or build new ones for the students. This is in recognition that no science subject(s) could be taught

without well-equipped, adequate and functional laboratory.

The increasing number of pupils and students' enrolment in public schools have exposed the insufficiency and the need for the provision of more classrooms, offices and staff quarters to accommodate ever increasing school enrolments and staff members. These have brought to bear the inadequate government provided ones which are lagging and cannot meet the growing numbers of pupils, students and staff alike.

In addition, the dearth of library in most community schools should be areas of concern to red cap title holders. Most communities (rural or urban) have paucity library for students' academic work. The provision of quality library will not only increase quality teaching and learning but will help reduce the illiteracy level of the community members.

As elders, influential and are close to the community people, the red cap title holders could be members of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), the school board members and other decision-making organs of the school. In such areas they could help influence decisions that aids community development. They could be involved in organizing extracurricular activities like school inter house competitions, inter school sport competitions among other activities. Most school houses are named after some members of the red cap title holders in a community to gear up their active participation towards the well-being of the school and the community. Therefore, they could be involved in the day-to-day administration of the school, maintain discipline and promote quality learning among the students.

Deviant behavior has been and stills a burning issue in many societies today. It is manifested among school children who are young members of the community. The entire school system has been overwhelmed by unwanted and unexpected attitudes from learners in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The elders of the community who are most time title holders could use their influence to eradicate indiscipline among the students. As custodian of cultural values and morally upright, they could use their association to check mate truancy lateness, absenteeism, rap, cultism, drug abuse, human and drug trafficking, prostitution destruction of public goods among school children and even teachers and members of staff who may be found uncivil in the community.

Conflict in any nature is an ill-wind that does not contribute in development. Governments at all levels spend a lot of human, material and financial resource to maintain peace and harmony among the citizens of the nation. Ibeano (2011) sees peace as a process involving activities that are directly or

indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community. The red cap title holders could therefore help to ensure harmonious school community relationship for effective development. They should participate in maintaining peace among the school workers and the host community. They could adjudicate on issues of land encroachment by the community people and thereafter prevent community-school rancour. They could provide security of the school and the community through the community organized vigilante group and neighborhood watch. This practice increases peaceful coexistence among the citizens and fast track unhindered community development activity. This, could also reduce friction, bitterness and promotes oneness in the community.

The role and availability of instructional materials in the advancement of knowledge seeking population of any community cannot be undermined. It is therefore imperative that members of the community put up some efforts towards its provision. There are instances where community-based associations, age grades and even the titled holders come to the rescue of the scenario. It therefore appears that the red cap title holders could be one of those associations performing this role in advancement of community well-being. Even in the present circumstance of poor funding and misappropriation of funds in the school system, there exist some communities where some of these instructional facilities are made available. It might be possible that the title holders have taken up this responsibility of providing teaching and learning aids like chalks, blackboards, white maker boards, stools, benches books, journals, to their host community schools.

The unbiased participation of members of the society towards community development could be enhanced where reasonable numbers of adults are literate. It is a truism that many communities are in dire need of adult and non-formal education programmes aimed at reducing the illiteracy level of adults in the society. Achieving full and total literacy level among adults in Imo and Abia states is now an onerous task as government at all levels seems to have abandoned that responsibility. Consequently, many age grades and even titles holders in the south eastern Nigeria appears to have participated in reducing the illiteracy level by either sponsoring one adult education programme through various channels or getting themselves involved in knowledge facilitation for adult members of their communities. Title holders could explore the strength of the adults and reinvigorate adult literacy programmes, health education programmes, farmers' education and most essentially community

education which serve as vanguard for development. As Mbalisi and Oyebamiji (2015) noted that formal education alone cannot guaranty community development hence the need for adult education that make adult learners participate in solving community problems.

According to Buller (2000) emphasis on the development of the rural areas that will be self-sustaining through capacity building, community-based creativeness and partnerships should be the order. It has therefore become imperative to evaluate the impact of red cap title holders in community and educational development in some states in Igbo land. Brown and Wocha (2017) noted that the community development committees (CDCs) in the respective communities were effective in the dissemination of information with respect to projects embarked upon by the government to encourage community participation. These community-based committee could also be likened to the title holders in other communities in many parts of Nigeria. Nwangwu, Onuoha, Nwosu and Ezeibe (2020), interrogated how the Igbo petty bourgeoisie use ethnicity to mask the underlying differences in their material conditions in relation to the alienated masses. They also examined how these differences shape post-war Igbo nationalism and development. They argued that the intersection of ethnic and class discourses is underpinned by unequal distribution of rights and powers accruing from productive resources. Akabogu, Mbah and Agalamanyi (2014) examined the impact of modern civilization on the socio-political and religious development of the African people using Igbo community as an example and agreed with the position of Akude (1992) that in every society, there are institutions and agencies which act as instruments for coordinating various socio-political and economic activities including education within such a society.

Odoemene (2020) noted that the title holding and group performance in community development is indispensable in traditional life of the Igbos of Nigeria. It plays an intrinsic role in almost all segments of the people's cultural and developmental life. Osuji (1989) investigated the level of local community groups contributions towards the development of secondary education in Imo State and found that community contributions surpassed that of the government, there was also no significant difference in the community contributions before and after the war; the same applied to that of the government. With regard to the relevance of the curriculum to community needs it was found that despite the government's effort to satisfy the different needs and aspirations of the people, theoretical education still prevails, thus providing no solution to the unemployment problem. As noted by

Nwobashi and Itumo (2017), the Igbo society had 'varieties of community-based organization and each is completely capable in all ramifications of fulfilling all the functions of the society towards growth. Thus, control and socialization functions, most commonly designated

This study is hinged on the Social Capital and Impact (SCT) theory of community development by Bourdieu (1985). According to this theory, the social ties and groups in the community, take decision to network for the community development process of the immediate society. Here, Bourdieu (1985) refers to social capital as the catalyst that leads or facilitates the community development process. The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition within the community (Portes, 1998). It is a network of group of individuals with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups for the benefit of all stake holders. Here, the title holders being an association of conscious individuals towards the betterment of their communities has effect on the overall growth of the immediate society. The effects on the wider community of the association as a whole over an extended time period, and includes intended and unintended or spillover effects; material benefits but more importantly impacts of social cohesion and levels of wellbeing within the community.

The relevance of this theory to this study, is that red cap title holders are considered major stakeholders in the transformation of various progressive activities in the communities where they operate. They are title holders and as such respected members of the community who could be influential in decisions such as provision of adult and literacy programmes, peace education general education growth, provision of health facilities and the support for women in governance. In the south eastern states, as it were, community-based associations sometimes get involved in competitive engagement for the overall well-being of the members of the community.

Generally, the participation of age grades, town unions, women associations and most recently, the title holders in the development of their communities particularly in the south Eastern Nigeria appears to be numerous.

According to Ejiechi (2020), The 'red cap' is worn by chiefs in South-east which symbolizes authority, tradition, and culture; and it also represents the entire institution of leadership, authority, and power in Igbo culture. Putting on the red cap is not an all-comers affair in Igbo land as there are always a select number of individuals who are entitled to

wear this special cap (especially with eagle feather which in its own right signifies prominence). When one has been conferred a chieftaincy title in Igbo land, it is proper that he must wear the red cap when making appearances in formal traditional events or ceremonies or when he plays a formal traditional role in his family, clan or community. Over the years, they are seen like partners in community development process. They could assist the community in building of schools, construction of school buildings and classrooms, maintenance of peace through peace education programmes, provision of health facilities for members of the community, awarding scholarship to indigent members of the community for further studies, playing supportive roles toward women for community governance etc. Among the Igbo people, the red cap title is an indigenous institution that is regarded as a central aspect of African indigenous religious practice through which they engage questions about the meaning for life (Madukasi, 2018). The meaning for life is the pursuit of life changing activities for members of the community.

It is in the spirit of rapid economic growth both for the community and the larger society, that Aspin & Chapman (2007) postulated life-long education to refer to the activities people perform throughout their life time to improve their knowledge, skills and competence in a particular field, given some personal, societal or employment related motives. It literally means that the red cap title holders as a group of people who have achieved in their chosen carriers or professions, held in high esteem by the community members, looked upon for direction should not relent in the task of providing scholarship to indigent community citizens, skills for others that could not make it academically and literacy education and sensitization for the entire adult members of the community. They could understand that youth education is futuristic while adult literacy education, skill acquisition, sensitisation on the need for community development is immediate and problem solving.

Emejulu and Okafor (2020) investigated the contributions of Nzuko-Arochukwu to the socio-economic growth of Arochukwu communities. This umbrella body of the Aro has played a pivotal role in the infrastructural, economic, social and political transformation of Arochukwu, a society with rich historical and cultural narratives. Just like other towns in Igbo land, the impact of the Nigerian - Biafra war on Arochukwu was severe leading to massive infrastructural decay. The study appraises the concept of community development using the workings of Nzuko-Arochukwu to explore the prospects of town unions and their challenges in developing their communities. The evidence from these sources indicates that Nzuko-Arochukwu has

contributed to the socioeconomic growth of Arochukwu through construction of roads, provision of potable water, engaged in peace and conflict resolutions in Arochukwu and Aro settlements, educational projects, construction of health centres, completion of the age long Arochukwu civic centre, empowering the community with skills acquisition programmes including the disbursement of low interest loans through the Arochukwu microfinance bank and most importantly, the establishment of the Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu. It was observed that Nzuko-Arochukwu has contributed to the socio-economic growth of the town by mobilizing her people to engage in socio-economic projects. Poor finances, inadequate communication between the leaders and the people and unnecessary rivalry are some of the identified challenges militating against the performance of Nzuko-Arochukwu as a community-based association.

Nwobashi and Itumo (2017), examined the nexus between democratic governance and the contributions of town unions to provision basic education in rural communities in Ebonyi State and revealed that democratic governance has increased contributions of town unions in the provision of basic education in rural communities in Ebonyi State. The study equally revealed that lack of enlightenment, illiteracy, and poverty among the rural dwellers poses challenge to the contributions of town unions in the provision of basic education.

Ahanum (2009) investigated how community education in the form of rural development education programmes can be used as a tool for sustainable development in rural areas of three selected local government areas of rivers state and reported that there are rural development education programmes in the rural areas of the selected local government areas; that the citizens do benefit from participating in these programmes; that a lack of effective leadership was one of the major factors hindering the provision of rural development education programmes and that the absence of adequate facilities and improper organization of programmes also constitute major problems. Recommendations include training of local leaders to co-ordinate rural development activities as well as the provision of environmental education and the provision of agricultural extension services to the rural areas. Ossai (2017) investigated the influence of annual august meeting on women mobilization for the attainment of sustainable developmental goals in Imo state and discovered that the annual August meeting is a medium to encourage the economic empowerment of women, education of the girl-child, civic awareness, maternal healthcare, infrastructural development in the rural

communities and elimination of obnoxious practices against women.

These practices of community-based association could lead to new members of a community having high level of responsibility which will likely lead to development of shared values and a commitment to the purpose of the community. In particular they are likely to develop a sense of reciprocity, which is of giving as well as receiving the benefits that the organization provides. It is therefore the interest of this study to investigate the level of participation of red cap title holders in Education and community development in South east Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The inability of governments in developing nations at all levels to provide adequate, basic human amenities for rural and urban settlements is a call for concern. It seems government has failed in its core responsibility of bettering the lives of its citizens in some societies. In Nigeria for instance, citizens have consistently complained of poor infrastructural availability especially at the local levels. The community development standard seems ignored. Therefore, communities are worse off and are in dire need of development.

Consequently, community members appear to have strategized on how to improve their standard of living through self-efforts. In many states of the federation, particularly in the Igboland, members of the community through various associations and unions like the age grade, women associations, town unions and the title holders have become conscientious on the need to participate and see to the wellbeing of its community members. There are instances where community-based associations carry out specific projects towards advancing the educational development of the community. Specifically, the association of title holders that are sometimes referred to as “Ndi-Nze na ọzọ”, Ndi-Ichie, Ndi-Ogbuefi, Ndi-Igwe etc are influential members of the community who have excelled in their chosen careers and are commonly seen on their red caps during ceremonies and festivities. Being an association of people held in high esteem; they could be involved in uplifting the living conditions of members of their community which are sometimes unreported. The educational needs of providing educational infrastructure, ensuring peace education and provision of scholarships to indigent students of the communities have not been effectively performed by government at all levels hence the community-based associations like the red cap title holders could rise up to the challenge of performing these functions for the overall well-being of the community. It is therefore the intention of this study, to investigate the activities of red cap title holders

and their participation in education and community development in selected communities in Abia and Imo states of Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- What is the level of red cap title holders’ participation in educational development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria?
- What is the level of red cap title holders’ participation in community development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria?
- What is the level of red cap title holders’ participation in the award of scholarships to rural indigent dwellers in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria?

1.3 Hypothesis

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between the activities of redcap title holders and Education development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey research design with the population of all the red cap title holders in selected communities across the three senatorial districts in Imo and Abia states. There are 856 autonomous communities with 1, 340 red cap title holders in both states. A total of 134 red cap title holders were selected from 86 autonomous communities across the 3 senatorial districts to serve as respondents.

A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study titled: “Red Cap Title Holders Participation in Education and Community Development Questionnaire (REDCAPTEDCDQUE). The questionnaire contained items that dealt with participation of red cap title holders in educational and community development in Imo and Abia states on a 4-point Likert type rating scale coded as very high (VH), high (H), low (L) and very low (VL). A theoretical mean of 2.50 and above was considered high. The Red cap title holders were requested to access their level of participation in education and community development. Two experts in the Faculty of Education in Federal University Otuoke carried out face and content validity of the questionnaires. The Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics was used to test the reliability of instrument and the result indicated co-efficient value of 0.77. The researcher and his assistant visited the communities to administer the questionnaire during festive periods (New yam festival, August Meetings and Christmas of 2021). A total of 300 response

were received representing 94 percent. The data collected were descriptively analyzed using mean while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of red cap title holders' participation in educational development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria

To answer question 1, Selected Red cap title holders in the selected communities in Imo and Abia States were requested to rate their level of participation in educational development on a 4-point rating scale from very high extent (VH) to very low extent (VL). Their response was descriptively analyzed and result presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Analysis of Red Cap Tile Holders Participation in Educational Development in Selected communities in Imo and Abia States.

DESCRIPTION	N	MEAN (\bar{X})	REMARK
Scholarship for Indigent Students	130	2.79	High
Adult Literacy Education Prgrammes	130	2.59	High
Provision of Instructional Materials	130	2.99	High
Maintenance & Building of Classrooms/Libraries/Laboratories	130	2.89	High
Total Mean		2.82	High

Theoretical Mean = 2.50; N=130

The data in Table 1 revealed that the participation of red cap title holders in the development of education in Imo and Abia states is high with a mean score of (2.82). The item analysis shows that participation in scholarship arrangement for indigent students is high with a mean score of (2.79), adult literacy programmes was also high (2.59), provision of instructional materials in schools is the highest with a mean score of (2.99) while the maintenance and building of classrooms/libraries recorded high mean score of (2,89).

Research Question 2: What is the level of red cap title holders' participation in community development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria?

To answer question 2, red cap title holders also assessed the level of their participation in community development on a four-point rating scare and result presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Red Cap Tile Holders Participation in Community Development in Selected communities in Imo and Abia States.

DESCRIPTION	N	MEAN (\bar{X})	REMARK
Preservation of Cultural Heritage	130	3.22	High
Maintenance/ Building of Heath Facilities	130	2.59	High
Support for Women in governance	130	1.79	Low
Peace Building	130	2.89	High
Total Mean		2.67	High

Theoretical Mean = 2.50; N=130

The data in Table 2 revealed high level participation in community development by red cap title holders with a mean score of (2.67). However, the item analysis showed a very low-level support for women in governance as part of community development practice while the preservation of cultural heritage recorded high level participation with a mean score of (3.22). Peace building and maintenance of health facilities also recorded high level participation with a mean score of (2.89) and (2.59) respectively.

Research Question 3: What is the level of red cap title holders' participation in the award of scholarships to rural indigent dwellers in South-East, Nigeria?

To answer question 3, some red cap title holders were requested to rate their level of participation in terms of provision of scholarships on a 4-point rating scale from very high extent (VH) to very low extent (VL). Their response were descriptively analyzed and result presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Red Cap Tile Holders Participate in the award of Scholarships for Indigent Students of Selected Communities in Imo and Abia States.

DESCRIPTION	N	MEAN (X)	REMARK
Payment of Tuition fees,	130	2.51	High
Payment of Annual Bursary/ Stipends to Indigent Students	130	2.52	High
Endowment Fund/Youth Empowerment for Skills Acquisition	130	2.49	Low
Provision of Text Books & Writing Materials	130	2.88	High
Total Mean		2.60	High

Theoretical Mean = 2.50; N=130

The data in Table 3 revealed high level participation of red cap title holders in the award of scholarship to indigent students of selected communities in Imo and Abia State. The item analysis shows that provision of textbooks and writing materials is high with a mean score of (2.88), payment of annual bursary/stipends for indigent students and payment of school tuition fee recorded a high-level participation with a mean score of (2.52) and (2.51) respectively. However, Endowment fund/youth empowerment for skills acquisition recorded low level participation.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the activities of redcap title holders and Education / Community development in Imo and Abia State, Nigeria

The hypothesis was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The data analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of the Relationship Between the Activities of Red Cap Title Holders and Education Development in Imo and Abia States, Nigeria.

VARIABLE	N	r	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Red Cap Title Holders	130	.109	2	.000
Education/Community Development				

$p < 0.05$

The data in Table 4, shows the Pearson r value of (.109) with a p value of (.000) at an alpha level of 0.05. The p value of (.000) is less than the alpha value of (0.05). Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the activities of redcap title holders and education development in Imo and Abia states is rejected. The analysis therefore confirms that there is a significant relationship between the activities of red cap title holder and education development.

4. Discussion of Findings

The result of research question 1 revealed high level participation in education and community development by red cap holders in Imo and Abia States. This study has validated the respect accorded to the red cap title holders in South East Nigeria as an association of respected individuals who had

attained success in life. It therefore collaborates the assertions of Ejiechi (2020), Ezeoha and Ogba (2015) that red cap title holders are community and education development agents. The study further correlates the reports of Nwangwu, Onuoha, Nwosu and Ezeibe (2020) that the Igbo petty bourgeoisie use ethnicity to mask the underlying differences in their material conditions in relation to the alienated masses. The study has revealed high impact of red cap title holders in support of adult literacy programmes, provision of instructional materials and building of classrooms/libraries as community-based association which affirms the findings of Okoronkwo (2014), that age grades and title holders have played significant roles in the development of their communities.

Analysis from research question 2 revealed high level participation in community development by

the red cap title holders which confirms the assertion of Odoemene (2020) that title holding and group performance in community development is indispensable in traditional life of the Igbos of Nigeria. However, the item analysis showed a low-level support for women in governance as part of community development activities. This could be described as the emerging challenge to the red cap title holders and even other responsible adults of Igbo land. A situation where women are not supported by men to lead and even participation in governance is a call for concern and could lead to a decline in growth rate among communities. Women who play vital roles in sustenance of the family tides, a microcosm of the society could change the narrative of poor governance for better when adequately supported by men. This study has revealed the views and some practices against women including not allowing them to hold political positions. The findings, quite disagreed with the report of Ossai (2017) that the support from men influences women annual august meetings for the attainment of sustainable developmental goals in Imo state. Meanwhile, Ossai (2017) had noted that the annual august meeting was a medium to encourage the economic empowerment of women, education of the girl-child, civic awareness, maternal healthcare, infrastructural development in the rural communities and elimination of obnoxious practices against women. It is therefore imperative that the red cap title holders support the women annual august meeting and other gatherings in south East Nigeria as a way of upgrading women to participate in community governance.

Question 3 revealed high level participation in the award of scholarships to indigent students by red cap title holders in Imo and Abia states. These findings specifically revealed the concern for youth empowerment and growth by the red cap title holders as respected members of the community. It is therefore penitent to mention that the red cap title holders could play significant role in maintaining peace and limiting youth restiveness in the south east Nigeria. If their involvement in the provision of scholarship can be well structured to integrated peace and other young people programmes towards pursuing community and societal peace. This study is a confirmation of the findings of Nwobashi and Itumo (2017) that there exists a nexus between democratic governance and the contributions of town unions to provision basic education in rural communities in Ebonyi State and that town unions has increased the provision of basic education in rural communities in Ebonyi State.

The hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the activities of red cap title holder and education development in Imo and Abia states. This is a conformation of the believe that red

cap titles in Igboland are bestowed on individuals considered to have excelled in their chosen careers, endeavors or live an impeccable life worthy of emulation in the society. They are respected and therefore assist in upholding the culture, norms and values of the community. Ejiechi (2020) reported that as 'elders, they act as advisory body to leadership on education, political, economic, security and even peace in many communities of Igbo land'. It is a confirmation that red title holding and group performance in community development is indispensable in traditional life of the Igbos of Nigeria (Odoemene, 2020); (Ejjechi, 2020); (Nwobashi and Itumo, 2017); (Emejulu and Okafor, 2020).

5. Conclusion

Red cap title holders from this study have become existent education development agents through the award of scholarships to indigent members of their community, construction of classrooms and libraries, provision of instructional materials, preservation of Igbo cultural heritage, peace building and other community development activities. It is therefore important that they are recognized as education and community development partners towards expanding their activities.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation are made:

- Red cap title holder should be recognized as development agents and incorporated into the development agenda of each community in the Imo and Abia States.
- Red cap title holder should increase their support for women in governance towards progressive and sustainable national development.
- The government as a matter of urgency should recognize the red cap title holders as community development agents for national development.
- The Red cap title holders' activities in scholarship should be expanded and structured towards pursuing peace in the south East Nigeria.

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