Household poverty effects and youth's life aspiration in Kwara state, Nigeria

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Abstract: The poverty experienced by youth is commonly linked to childhood deprivation and parental poverty which have implications across an individual's life-course including life aspiration. This study therefore investigated the effects of household poverty on life aspiration of youth in Kwara state. Systematic sampling technique was used to select 180 respondents for the study. Data was collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages mean Chi-square, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and T-test. Results revealed that 50.0% of respondents were male and female, with mean age of 22.2±3.5. and mean household size of 7± 2.6 people, while the primary occupation of most of the respondents' parents was trading (27.2%). Prayer ($\bar{x}$=1.08), ranked first as the coping strategies against poverty. Household poverty was high (51.1.4%) likewise life aspiration (54.4%). Aspiration categories such as personal growth ($\bar{x}$=14.07), wealth ($\bar{x}$=13.0) community contribution ($\bar{x}$= 10.8) were the most important life aspirations of the respondents. Parents' Primary occupation (χ^2= 25.415, p=0.000), Age (r=-0.153, p=0.041) and household poverty (r=0.338, p=0.000) had significant relationship with level of aspiration. There was also a significant difference in life aspiration of urban and rural youth (t= 3.218, p=0.003). The study concluded that household poverty had significant effect on life aspiration of youth. Governmental interventions should encourage a mentorship programme that will target young people from poor households.

Keywords: Youth poverty, Household poverty, Life aspiration, Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty in Nigeria remains pervasive, chronic and multifaceted (Omonona, 2010). It is viewed metaphorically as an elephant and complex to define as it is more easily recognized than defined. The United Nations Economic and Human Development Index suggested that any person in a community that is living below two US dollars a day is assumed to be poor, it is estimated that about 90% of young people in Nigeria are under this situation (United Nations World Population Prospects, 2011). Moore (2005) affirms that, poverty experienced by youth is linked to childhood deprivation and parental poverty and can have implications across an individual's life-course, and across the life-course of her or his household. In many cases, children who are born to young persons experiencing poverty may be especially susceptible to persistent poverty resulting into inability to afford adequate housing, unhygienic living conditions, low quality public services, isolation, social insecurity, lack of employment, inability to have regular job, economic stagnation, inability of household to meet up their required and necessary food need (Sijuade, 2008).

Today's youth generation face a much longer and more complex transition to adulthood (Honwana, 2012). Widespread poverty limits the material and emotional support young people receive at the household-level. It places pressure on them to be financially independent and, in alignment with cultural norms and values, to be contributors to the household, too. Also, the problems young people face in securing sustainable livelihood do not just adversely impact them in terms of limited incomes and delaying their ability to get married and start a family. It also impacts on them socially, they are not awarded the respect given to adults since they are unable to reach the social markers of adulthood, they are considered dependent and cannot contribute to household needs thus bringing shame and unhappiness to young men and women across the continent.

Furthermore, poverty creates internal psychological barriers that prevent individuals from breaking out of poverty. The experience prevents young people from developing self-confidence and the capacity to have a very clear vision of how they could achieve a reasonable living standard (Boateng and Lowe, 2018). Poverty reproduces itself by limiting aspirations, thereby creating a psychological poverty trap. It has negative influence on aspirations through material limitations such as limited incomes, less influential contacts, and limited access to relevant information (Dalton *et al*, 2015).

Aspiration is essential in ensuring sustainable livelihood. It is the platform through which young people strive to enhance their skills and knowledge in order to have more financial resources, assets and better social relationships thereby leading to successful future lives which is the anchor of sustainable livelihood. Where young people have grown up in environments that did not encourage hope or meaningful aspirations, they may not believe that they should aspire to much and may lack the courage or skills to invest in their dreams (Boateng and Lowe, 2018). Aspirations motivate people to work harder and achieve more according to Tafere (2014). Appadurai (2004) opined that poor people may lack the capability to aspire and to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty.

Youth's aspirations in relation to poverty however remains a relatively unexplored area for researchers and is struggling to find its place in

sociological or socioeconomic research. Understanding the specific context of youth is critical to developing appropriate and effective strategies and programmes. With these viewpoints it becomes pertinent to empirically ascertain the influence of household poverty on life aspirations of youth in Kwara state of Nigeria. The general objective of the study ascertained household poverty effect on life aspiration of youth in Kwara State.

The study's specific objectives were to:

i. determine the personal/family characteristics of youth in the study area;
ii. describe the characteristics of youth poverty in the study area;
iii. identifie the coping strategies for poverty by youth in the study area;
iv. determine the household poverty status of youth in the study area;
v. ascertaine the life aspirations of youth in the study area.

The following hypotheses were tested for the study;

H_01: There is no significant relationship between the family characteristics of respondents and their life aspirations.

H_02: There is no significant relationship between household poverty level of youth and their life aspiration.

H_03: There is no significant difference in life aspiration of rural and urban youth.

METHODOLOGY

The area of study for this research was Kwara state. Kwara is a state in Northern Nigeria. Its capital is Ilorin. The population of the study constituted both urban and rural youth residing with their parents within the ages of 18-30years in Kwara state. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. The state was stratified into rural and urban dichotomy. In stage one: 10% of the urban and rural Local Government Araes (LGAs) was randomly selected. Ilorin west was selected out of 10 urban Local Government areas, while Moro was selected out of 6 rural Local government areas in the state. In stage two, 15% of wards in Ilorin west (Adewole and Baboko) and Moro ((Bode-saadu and Shao) were randomly selected to give a total of 4 wards. One community was randomly selected from each ward to give a total of 4 communities.i.e Bode-saadu and Shao; Adewole and Baboko). Stage 3: A systematic sampling was used to select 180 households. A youth within the age of 18-30 in the household was sampled for the study.

Strategies for coping with poverty was measured by asking the respondents to indicate their coping strategies for poverty using a ten-item scale with response options of Yes and No, which was assigned score of 1 and 0 respectively.

Household poverty was measured using fuzzy supplementary multidimensional poverty index. Indicators of poverty comprising housing, economic condition, goods of comfort, equipment and assets, education, energy, health were generated. These indicators were ordered categories. Items under each indicator were assigned the highest score of 4 and least score of 1. Poverty index was obtained and was used to categorize into high and low household poverty status...

The dependent variable of the study is youth life aspiration. Aspiration index scale developed by Kasser & Ryan (1996) was adapted for the study. Six categories of aspiration which include the extrinsic aspiration of wealth, fame and image and the intrinsic aspiration of meaningful relationships, personal growth, and community contribution were used for the study. These categories have a list of specific goals. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each goals and the likelihood of attaining the goals. Three-point scale of 'very important', important and not important with a scoring of 2,1 and 0 respectively was used to determine the importance of the goals while a three point scale of very likely, likely and not likely with a score of 2,1 and 0 respectively was used to determine the likelihood of attaining such goals. The scores were pooled together and mean was generated which was used to categorize respondents' aspiration into high and low. Data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Personal characteristics of respondents

Result in Table 1 indicates a proportionate distribution of male (50.0%) and female (50.0%). This implies that both genders were equally represented in the sample. Age distribution of the respondents shows that 100% of respondents were within the age range of 18-35 years, which is the recommended age category for youths by the United Nations. The mean age of 22.2 ± 3.5 implies that most of the youths were still very active, agile and strong in their productive years which will positively influence their capability to have high life aspiration.

Table 1 further shows that majority (95.0%) of the respondents were single, while 5.0% were married. This implies that majority of the respondents were being guided by their parents or guardian and were not attached emotionally to anyone which might make them concentrate more on aspiring and achieving their life goals.

Majority (71.1%) of the respondents were secondary senior school certificate holders. This implies that majority of youth in the study area were educated. This might increase their life aspiration goals. This is in line with Tafere (2014) study, who stated that as the grade levels increase, the aspirations of students also become higher, and vice versa.

As reflected in Table1, 55.1% of the respondents were between first to third born of the family. The position an individual occupies within the family may likely influence their level of aspiration. For instance, the first born of the family might have high level of aspiration more so as to take care of their younger ones and also to be a good role model for their siblings.

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that majority (54.4%) of the youth sampled had between 5 to 7 persons in their household, The mean household size was 7±2.6which indicates that the household size of respondents in the study area was large. This implies that with large household size, the respondents are likely to aspire more so as to have enough to take care of their family.

Also, 27.2% of the respondent's fathers were into trading, 26.1% were civil servant, 25.6% were famers, 10% were logistic manager, 8.9% were teachers and lecturers, and 2.2% were accountant. This implies respondents had parents who are engaged in one occupation or the other in order to fend for the family. Banks (2016) in his study opined that youth aspirations are being influenced by the background and occupation of their parents.

Table 2: Distribution of the personal characteristics of respondents (n= 180)

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean score
Sex			
Male	90	50.0	
Female	90	50.0	
Age			
18-21	90	50.0	22.2
22-25	63	35.0	
26-29	14	7.8	
30-33	13	7.2	
Marital status			
Single	171	95.0	
Married	9	5.0	
Educational attainment			
Primary education	3	1.7	
Secondary education	128	71.1	
Tertiary Education	49	27.2	
Position in family			
$1^{st} - 3^{rd}$	99	55.1	
$4^{th} - 6^{th}$	65	36.2	
7th and above	16	8.9	
Household size			
2-4	18	10.0	7±2.6
5-7	98	54.4	
8-10	50	27.8	
11-13	9	5.0	
14-16	1	0.6	
17-19	4	2.2	
Primary Occupation			
Trading	49	27.2	
Logistic Manager	18	10.0	
Civil service	47	26.1	
Farming	46	25.6	
Lecturing/teaching	16	8.9	
Accountant	4	2.2	
Total	180	100.0	

Source: Field survey (2018)

Coping strategies for poverty by youth

Coping strategies refer to those things that youth do in order to adjust to poverty or leave the poverty cycle. From the result in Table 3 coping strategies employed by youth against poverty in the study area included prayer (x̄=1.08), courage to move on (x̄=0.96), hope/imagining a better future (x̄=0.92), talent display (x̄=0.90), skills learning (x̄=0.85), street vendouring/hawking (x̄=0.77), livelihood diversification (x̄=0.76), stamina (x̄=0.72). Hansen (2010) posited that street knowledge, stamina, ingenuity and innovation are critical attributes youth are forced to acquire as a

form of tactical agency to cope with the concrete, immediate conditions of their lives, where such tactics do not exist, hardship can lead to criminality.

Table 3: Coping strategies for poverty by youth

Coping strategies	Yes	No	Mean	Rank
Livelihood diversification	76.1	23.9	0.76	7th
Street vendouring/hawking	69.4	30.6	0.77	6th
Learning of new skills	85	15	0.85	5th
Marrying early	52.8	47.3	0.52	
Using street knowledge	66.7	33.3	0.66	9th
Having stamina to withstand stress	71.7	28.3	0.72	8th
Engage in corporate begging	60	40	0.60	
Ingenuity	53.9	46.1	0.54	
Hope/ Imagining a better future	92.2	7.8	0.92	3rd
Building courage	96.7	3.3	0.97	2nd
Use of talent	90	10	0.90	4th
Praying	97.2	2.8	1.08	1st

Source: Field survey (2018)

Household poverty

The result on Table 4 shows a slightly high household poverty level (51.1%). This suggests that a moderately high proportion of respondents were unable to care about their basic needs and meet social and economic obligations. This can limit the capacity of young people within this household and dampen their aspirations.

Table 4: Household poverty status

Level	Frequency	Percent
High	92	51.1
Low	88	45.6

Source: Field survey (2018)

Life aspiration of youth

The result on Table 5 reveals that aspiration for personal growth ($x = 14.07$) was considered the most important goal to achieve, this implies that respondents' goal of learning new things, having a well -paying job, working hard to get ahead and having a happy life is more important to them. The result further reveals that the likelihood of achieving this goal was high. Aspiration for wealth (13.03) was considered next important to personal growth, this suggests that young people aspire to be very wealthy, have many expensive possessions and have enough money to buy everything they want, particularly if they are coming from a deprived household. Aspiration to be wealthy is expected to motivate young people to engage in sustainable livelihood that is capable of enriching their lives and not express desperation by engaging in crime and criminal activities. Respondents also aspired to contribute to community development ($x = 10.80$), it was also very important to them and the likelihood to achieve it was equally high ($x = 10.62$). Aspiration goals such as image ($x = 8.5$) and fame ($x = 4.8$) were the least important to the respondents and the likelihood of achieving them was similarly low.

Furthermore, categorization of life aspiration of youth as shown in Table 6 indicates that respondents had high aspiration (54.4%). This implies that respondents had goals and target that are ambitious, therefore, they are likely to move out of household poverty as result of their high aspiration. Narayan et al (2009) reported that aspirations for the future had a statistically significant impact on a household's ability to move out of poverty. Appadurai (2004) also opined that it is only through capacity to aspire that individuals can find the internal and material resources they need to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty.

Table 5: Life aspiration of youth

	Aspirations	Importance				Likelihood			
		VI	I	NIAA	Mean	VL	L	NLA	Mean
A	**Wealth**								
1.	To be a very wealthy person	78.3	20.5	1.1		88.9	11.1	0.0	
2.	To have many expensive possessions	38.9	59.5	1.7	13.0	65.6	33.4	1.2	13.7
3.	To be rich	71.1	28.9	0.0		80.6	9.5	0.0	
4.	To have enough money to buy everything I want	71.1	28.9	0.0		67.2	32.8	0.0	
5.	To save money for the future	86.7	13.3	0.0		66.1	33.4	0.0	
B	**Fame**								
1.	To have my name known by many people	50.6	48.9	0.6	4.8	46.7	53.3	0.0	5.0
2.	To be admired by many people	62.2	36.7	1.1		70.0	30	0.0	
C	**Image**								
1.	To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.	82.6	17.3	0.0	8.5	75.6	23.9	0.6	8.1
2.	To have an image that others find appealing	76.7	23.3	0.0		68.9	31.1.	0.0	
3.	To have a good reputation in the community	87.2	3.8	0.0		75.6	24.4	0.0	
D	**Personal growth**								
1.	To grow and learn new things	70.6	29.4	0.0	14.1	60.0	39.5	0.6	13.6
2.	To have a well paying job	84.4	15.5	0.0		73.3	26.7	0.0	
3.	To work hard to get ahead	86.1	13.9	0.0		75.6	24.5	0.0	
4.	To have a happy life	90.6	9.5	0.0		82.2	17.8	0.0	
5.	At the end of my life, to be able took back on my life as meaningful and complete	85.6	13.9	0.6		81.7	16.1	2.2	
E	**Community contribution**								
1.	To work to make the world a better place	77.2	22.8	0.0	10.8	81.1	18.9	0.0	10.6
2.	To help others improve their lives	81.1	18.9	0.0		53.9	40.1	0.0	
3.	To work for betterment of society	68.9	31.1	0.0		58.3	41.7	0.0	
4.	To assist people, asking nothing in return	75.6	24.5	0.0		79.4	20.6	0.0	
F	**Meaningful relationships**								
1.	To have committed, intimate relationships	72.2	27.2	0.6	7.7	72.8	27.2	0.0	7.9
2.	To share my life with someone I love	77.8	21.6	0.6		82.2	17.8	0.0	
3.	To have good friends that I can count on	7.2	52.2	0.6		58.3	41.6	0.0	

Field survey, 2018 VI- Very Important ; I – Important ; NVI –Not Very Important ; NIAA- Not Important At All
VL – Very Likely; L – Likely; NVL- Not Very Likely; NLAA -Not Likely At All

Table 6: Level of youth aspiration

Level	Frequency	Percent
High (36.0-70.0)	98	54.4
Low (0.0-35.0)	82	45.6

Field survey, 2018

Test of hypotheses
There is no significant relationship between the family characteristics of respondents and their life aspirations.

The result of analysis in Table 7 shows that sex, religion, educational attainment, marital status and position in family had no significant relationship with life aspiration of youth $p<0.05$($p=0.765$, $p=0.177$, $p=0.625$, $p=0.418$ and $p=0.308$

respectively). However, primary occupation of respondents' parents or caregiver is significantly related to life aspiration of youth (p=0.000). This implies that the life aspiration of youth can be positively or negatively influenced by parent's occupation. For instance, an individual can aspire to become like his or her parents in future or aspire to

become a better person than the parents. This corroborates the findings of Stewart et al. (2007) who revealed that, as compared to their counterparts, children with better economic status due to their parent's occupation, hold higher aspirations and achieve better.

Table 7: Chi-square test relationship between selected family characteristics of respondents and their life aspiration

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision
Sex	0.090	1	0.765	Not significant
Religion	3.460	2	0.177	Not significant
Educational attainment	0.939	2	0.625	Not significant
Marital status	1.745	2	0.418	Not significant
Position in family	10.553	9	0.308	Not significant
Primary occupation	25.415	5	0.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2018. x^2 Value = chi square value, df = degree of freedom, p=probability value

Table 7b shows that age (r= -0.153, p = 0.041) was significantly related to life aspiration of respondents. This implies that as youth grow older their level of aspirations also increases. This

assertion is in line with the view of St Clair and Benjamin (2011) who stated that aspirations are not static and will change considerably through an individual's life as they grow.

Table 7b: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis of the relationship between selected personal characteristics of respondents and their life aspiration.

Variable	R	N	p-value	Decision
Age	-0.153	180	0.041	Significant
Household size	-0.122	180	0.102	Not significant

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Findings in Table 8 reveal that that there was a significant relationship between household poverty level of respondents and their life aspiration (r= 0.338, p< 0.000). This suggests that household poverty could influence the level of aspiration of youth. This supports the findings of Narayan et al (2009) who reported that aspirations for the future

had a statistically significant impact on a household's ability to move out of poverty. The result however contradicts the assertion of Darton et al (2015) that poverty reproduces itself by limiting aspirations, thereby creating a psychological poverty trap.

Table 8: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis of the relationship between the household poverty level of respondents and the youth life aspiration goals

Variable	r-value	N	p-value	Remark
Household poverty level	0.338	180	0.000	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2018

The result of test of difference between life aspiration of rural and urban youth in Table 9 shows that there was a significant difference in life aspiration of urban youth and rural youth (t=3.218

and p<0.05). This suggests that the life goals and ambition of urban and rural youth are different, this could be as result of the environmental

Table 9: T-test for test of difference in life aspiration of rural and urban youth in kwara state

Participants	N	Mean Score	T	Df	P-value	Decision
Urban	100	1.560	3.218	178	0.003	Significant
Rural	80	1.325				

Source: Field survey 2018

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
The study concluded that the poverty level among youth households was moderately high and

significantly influenced their life aspirations. Personal growth and wealth were the most important life aspiration of the youth. It was recommended that

government interventions should promote mentorship programs targeting youth from poor households. Also, poverty alleviation programmes should focus on building the capacity of youth and their entire household. Furthermore, both government and non-government organizations should provide mentorship opportunities aligned with the career aspirations of the youth.

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