

Effect of Peer Influence on Youth's Participation in Development Projects in Naivasha Sub-County Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of peer influence on youth's participation in development projects in Naivasha sub-county Kenya. This study utilized the social systems theory and participatory communication theory. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The studies focused on all Naivasha Sub-county registered youth groups. There are 13 youth-based youth groups with a population of 600 youth members. The study targeted 2 officials from the youth office in Naivasha Sub-county. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to get the sample size of 57 youths from the 13 community youth-based youth groups in Naivasha. A purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the two officials responsible for the implementation of the youth program in the Naivasha Sub-county. The questionnaires and interview guide were used to collect the primary data desirable for the study. Data was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics involved the calculation of percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendencies (mean), and measures of dispersion (standard deviation). Inferential statistics involving correlation analysis was used to determine the association between variables under investigation at a 0.05 confidence level. From the findings, there is a positive significant relationship between peer influences on youth participation in development projects in Naivasha sub-county Kenya as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.289. The researcher concluded that peer influence significantly influences the youth's decision to participate in the development project. From the finding, the researcher recommends that youth should be considered an integral part of the decision-making of community projects. The researcher recommends that participation in community development initiatives and education will enable youth to develop the necessary analytical skills that will enable them to become critical thinkers and problem-solvers in their future careers. The researcher recommends that further study should be done on the effects of youth empowerment programs on youth participation in the implementation of community development projects in Kenya.

Keywords: youth's participation, development projects peer influence, participatory communication theory SPSS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Development academics have recently argued strongly for youth engagement in community development programs, believing that the goals of any initiative cannot be completely realized unless youth and other members of the community participate actively and meaningfully Adesope (2017) suggests that it is vital to harness their active qualities to achieve progressive community transformation.

Youths designing projects in Nepal, India are needed to gather funds as a resource for the project, execute it to completion, and maintain it for community sustainability in Merscoprs Nepal Programmed (2019). The country's inability to complete key initiatives is due to the youngsters' lack of finances to support the programs. The majority of India's

youngsters is unemployed and lacks the financial means to sponsor initiatives. By including adolescents in all phases of the project, kids can consider themselves as agents of change and guardians of the future, as well as learn various skills and managerial expertise. The adolescents will be able to create positive interpersonal relationships, earning community members' trust in project execution and administration (Behn, 2013).

In rural Nigeria, Akinboye *et al.*, (2017) investigated the variables that influence youth engagement in community development initiatives. In their study, they used primary data and descriptive statistics. Lack of community collaboration, parental influence, insufficient government aid at the grassroots level, inadequate acknowledgment of teenagers as a powerful workforce in the community, access to information, youth occupation, and level of education were all key variables. Kimaro *et al.*, (2015) used primary data obtained via questionnaires to study the factors of youth engagement in agricultural activities in Tanzania. Marital status, sex, age, family background, credit availability, level of education, lack of career alternatives, perspective, and agricultural expertise were shown to be the most important factors of young engagement in agricultural activities.

According to (USAID, 2012), Kenya's lack of educational and training opportunities over the previous two decades has resulted in a young population that lacks the knowledge and skills necessary to find profitable employment and become productive and engaged members of their communities. By enabling the public to engage in government decision-making processes, youth involvement in decision-making strengthens democracy. Budgets and legal procedures in Kenya rely heavily on public engagement. Articles a, b, and c of the constitution, which deal with national values and principles of government, include democracy and public engagement, as well as good governance, honesty, openness, and accountability. Youth are guaranteed non-discrimination under Kenya's Constitution, which is enshrined in Article 27. Participation improves equality and non-discrimination in this aspect (Government of Kenya, 2015).

Mutua (2014) performed research in Kenya on the influence of community youth engagement phases on the sustainability of community-based programs. In Kaibaibate, Meru County, Mutua further focused on the influence of the community engagement stage in the development, management, and evaluation of the sustainability of community water projects. The outcomes of the research demonstrated that community engagement is critical and has a substantial influence on the long-term viability of community-based enterprises. Administrative institutions that offer labor and participate in the cost and other resources are influenced by the community.

Because devolved governance is founded on the principle of local empowerment, youth engagement is one of the most important windows through which county governments may be understood. The constitution established a broad structure for public involvement in regional government. Participation of the general public in their projects has not yet reached the necessary levels to justify full funding (Rural Communities Impacting Policy, 2002). The likelihood of the project operating to a meaningful goal is confined to the issue of public involvement when the initiative should engage the community; this is the situation in Nakuru County. According to a statement by the Society for International Development (2016), the majority of county governments do not provide platforms for dynamic citizen participation in project development decisions made by a few, which frequently deny the majority their rights to influence project development. Counties have witnessed the challenges and successes of project sustainability under devolved administration. Despite this, there is a wealth of records about these achievements and failures. This is partly because of the short time during which devolution was carried out.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The social systems theory

A social system, according to Talcott Parsons, is only a component (or "subsystem") of what he refers to as action theory (Parsons, 1951). Parsons classified social systems into action units, with one unit equaling one individual's activity. A social system, according to him, is a network of interactions between actors. According to Parsons, social systems depend on a linguistic system, and society must have a culture to qualify as a social system. Parsons' work provided the groundwork for the remainder of social systems theory research and sparked a dispute over what framework should be used to build social systems, such as actions, communication, or other interactions. As a consequence, a social system differs from other systems in that it is made up of people or groups of persons that interact with and affect one another's behavior. This hierarchy of orders includes families, organizations, communities, societies, and civilizations. As a consequence, the social system model may be applied with fair accuracy to every kind of human connection. However, it's

worth noting that this study was based on social system theory, which looks at how young people's social lives are organized and adjusted. Traditional assumptions are being reinterpreted in ways that sharpen individual lives, and issues like power division, identity, reason, and human experiences are represented as pre-modern, modern, or post-modern, depending on the viewpoint. It plays an essential function as a key topic of an important interdisciplinary inquiry that examines many social and human aspects. Social system theory covers a broad variety of issues intending to clearly describe the complexities of social human behavior.

The social systems theory was used in this study. This theory was applied to the present situation of youngsters in society, as well as a variety of subsystems including family, peer group, school, and other social institutions. The influence of the resultant situation on the individual youth's self or personality, which has an impact on their engagement and participation in community development, was assessed using the system theory. A system is defined as a collection of elements or components that are directly connected in a network, with each component interacting with at least some other components predictably over time. As a result, the goal of this study is to determine the factors affecting youth participation in development projects within Naivasha Sub-county Kenya.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer influence on Youth Participation

When a peer group or an individual exerts influence over others to persuade them to change their beliefs, values, or actions to conform to group standards, this is known as peer influence (Treynor, 2019). Individuals who are nominally members of membership organizations but whose membership is not properly defined are among the social groupings impacted. Adult peer influence is uncommon among adults, although it is growing more common as the competition for resources and personal progress intensifies.

Peer influence is generally frowned upon in the adult world but it exists and its impact could either be positive or negative. As a positive aspect, it challenges or motivates adults to do their best. The effect can be viewed as direct, indirect and individual effects on a peer (Friedman, 2021). Directly an individual could experience peer influence as someone possibly a group leader where he or she is told how to behave. A direct effect could be as a result of the individual being in need to attain something immediately. The adult is fully aware of his peer group and the demands stated and have to adhere to them to fit in the social group. Failure to conform to the requirements of their respective group could encourage deviance among his followers (Hoffman, Monge, Chou & Valente, 2017).

Youth engagement is critical for the effective implementation of community development programs, according to Rajani (2020). Furthermore, he says that youth's full and effective engagement in community and decision-making processes is a crucial component of the community's overall sustainable development. Participant involvement in the decision-making process, youthful attendance at community development meetings, tenacity, and engagement in the assessment and monitoring of community development initiatives are all indicators of youth involvement that may be investigated.

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To research the elements that impact community involvement in agricultural projects, Otieno (2014) utilized the Kimira Oluch Small-holder Farm Improvement Project (KOSFIP) as a case study. A random sample was utilized to identify the population of 280 respondents from a target demographic of 3,000 farmers. The results showed that the project design concepts were appropriate and that descriptive statistics offered a means for the local community to be successfully engaged in all phases of implementation. The governor developed the project in conjunction with the local community, earning it a 77.86 percent grade; nonetheless, capacity-building programs were inadequate, resulting in a discrepancy in farmer commitment to project activities. Youth engagement in decision-making enhances democracy by enabling the whole people to participate in government decision-making. In Kenya, public participation is critical to budgeting and legal procedures. Articles (2) a, b, and c: national values and principles of governance specify specific themes such as democracy and public participation, as well as good governance, honesty, transparency, and accountability. Kenya's Constitution, which is incorporated in Article 27, guarantees nondiscrimination to young people.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was conducted using a survey research approach. According to Kothari (2004), a survey research design is the process of collecting and documenting information on members of a population in a systematic manner. Because the population is small, a survey research strategy will be acceptable and appropriate for this study. The survey technique enables the investigator to conduct a thorough investigation of an issue. This strategy provides the investigator with a wealth of information. Within the Naivasha sub-county, the researcher was able to learn more about the variables that influence young engagement in development initiatives.

Target Population

Ngechu (2004) defines population as a well-defined set of people, services, elements, events, groups of things, or households being investigated. The study focused on all of Naivasha Sub-county registered youth groups. There are 13 community youth-based youth groups with a population of 600 youth members. The study also targeted 2 officials from the youth office in Naivasha Sub-county.

Sample Size and Sampling Design

According to Koul (2004), sampling is the act of choosing a representative group from the study's complete population to learn more about the entire population. The sample size should be optimal, according to the author, and should not be overly big or tiny. For the two officials from the Naivasha Sub-county youth offices who are male, and female engaged in the execution of youth programs in the Sub-county, census methodologies was used. To get a sample size of adolescents from the 13 community youth-based youth organizations in the Naivasha Sub-county, the research used a stratified random sampling approach. According to Kothari (2004), this sampling strategy decreases sampling bias by guaranteeing that sampled respondents are distributed in a fair and equal manner (proportionate). According to Nassiuma (2000), in most surveys or experiments, a coefficient of variation in the range of 21% to 30% and a standard error in the range of 2% to 5% is typically appropriate. Nassiuma's formula is a stable measure of variability that does not presuppose any probability distribution. As a result, a coefficient variation of 21% and a standard error of 2% was employed in this research.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N - 1)e^2}$$

Where

n = Represents sample size,

N = Represents study population

C = Represents coefficient of variation ($21\% \leq C \leq 30\%$), and

e = Represents error margin ($2\% \leq e \leq 5\%$).

Calculating the sample size,

$$n = \frac{600 (0.21)^2}{0.21^2 + (600-1)0.02^2}$$

$$n = 57.1$$

$$n = 57 \text{ respondents}$$

From the above calculations, therefore, the study sample size for youths was 57 youth respondents. Therefore the total sample size of this study was 59 respondents.

Data Collection Tools

The questionnaires were used to gather the main data that the research requires. According to Jankowicz (2005), questionnaires are any written instruments that offer respondents a series of questions or statements to which they must reply either by writing down their responses or picking from a list of pre-prepared responses. The questionnaire included structured questions, which are questions for which the researcher provided the respondents with a list of possible replies.

Piloting of Research Instruments

The pilot survey is a scaled-down version of the full research. It aids in establishing the research tools' applicability and convenience of use, as well as the operational elements of giving the surveys. A pilot test is used to identify any flaws, deficiencies, ambiguities, and issues in any area of the research process. A pilot test was carried out in the Nakuru East sub-county. The information gathered in the pilot research was not used in the main study. This location was selected since it has many of the same characteristics as the research area.

Validity of Research Instruments

The validity, according to Orodho (2005), is the degree to which data analysis findings accurately reflect the phenomena under inquiry. Pre-testing, according to Cooper and Schindler (2006), is an effective technique to improve the chance of face validity. Content validity, also known as logical validity, relates to the degree to which a measure accurately captures all aspects of a social concept. Obtaining the views of professionals in the subject of research, particularly supervisors improved the content validity of this study.

Reliability of Research Instruments

The degree to which a research instrument produces consistent outcomes or data after repeated trials is known as reliability (Kothari, 2004). Reliability allows the researcher to estimate mistakes and rectify them if required. This is because the smaller the mistake, the smaller the reliability, and the higher the error, the smaller the reliability. Pre-testing the questionnaire with a sample that was not included in the main research improved the study's reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used as an internal consistency tool. Internal consistency reliability is a criterion for determining how comparable various test items probing the same concept give similar responses. The higher the alpha value, the better. According to Kothari (2004), dependability of 0.70 or above (measured on a large sample) is considered satisfactory.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The information gathered for this investigation was quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative was evaluated using descriptive statistics and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research used descriptive and inferential statistics. Percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendency (mean), and measures of dispersion was used in descriptive statistics (standard deviation).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where: Y = Youth's participation in a development project in Naivasha sub-county

β_0 = Constant Term;

X_1 = Coefficients of the independent variables

X_1 = Peer influence

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Peer influence on Youth's Participation in Development Projects

Table 1

Peer influence Frequency (%)	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Peer influence significantly influences youth's decision to participate in the development project.	3	6	4	8	3	6	20	31	21	41
Youth participate in the project because their friends are also involved.	3	6	2	4	3	6	21	41	22	43
peers frequently discuss their participation in the development project	5	10	0	0	3	6	21	41	22	43
Youth find it difficult to say "no" to my peers when they encourage me to participate in the project.	3	6	2	4	2	4	19	36	25	47
Peers' opinions about the project impact my own views and participation.	3	6	1	2	2	4	13	26	32	63

From the analysis majority 72% agreed that peer influence significantly influences youth's decision to participate in the development project. 84% of the youth agreed that often participate in the project because their friends are also involved. In addition majority 84% of the respondents agreed that their peers frequently discuss their participation in the development project. From the analysis 83% of the respondents agreed that they find it difficult to say "no" to my peers when they encourage me to participate in the project with a (mean=4.196 and Std=1.096) Finally the 89% of the respondents agreed that peers' opinions about the project impact their views and participation. From the findings, there is a positive significant relationship between peer influences on youth participation in development projects in Naivasha sub-county Kenya as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.289. The findings agreed with (Treynor,2019) who found that a peer group or an individual encourages other individuals to change their attitudes, values, or behaviors to conform to group norms. Further, the findings are in line with Morrison, Kalin, and Morrison (2019), who found that peer influence is positive when a peer supports and encourages another peer to do something good. The study findings on the effect of peer influence on youth's participation in development projects were supported by the following respondents:

"Peer influence can significantly influence youth participation in development projects within Naivasha Sub-county. Often, young individuals may feel compelled to conform to the norms and behaviors of their peers, which can impact their decision to engage in such projects. Positive peer influence can encourage active involvement, as motivated and engaged friends can inspire others to join. On the other hand, negative peer influence might dissuade certain youth from participating due to fears of social exclusion or ridicule".

Regression Model Summary

The study conducted a regression analysis to find out the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Table 2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.739 ^a	.546	.476	.00012

a. Predictors: (Constant),

b. Dependent Variable:

The findings show change management of hospitality industry is 54.6% as explained by the independent variables under this study while 45.4% is the variation due to other factors which have not been covered in this study.

6. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher concluded that peer influence significantly influences the youth's decision to participate in the development project. The youth often participate in the project because my friends are also involved. The youth frequently discuss their participation in the development project further the youth find it difficult to say "no" to their peers when they encourage me to participate in the project. Finally, the researcher concluded that peer opinions about the project impact their views and participation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the finding, the researcher recommends that youth should be considered an integral part of the decision-making of community projects. The researcher recommends that more youth should be involved in the decision-making process to enhance better quality decisions in the projects. The researcher recommends that youths should avoid conflicts that arise during the development of community projects.

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