

Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Community Participation in Community Projects Among the Residents Inpokot South Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract:

This paper aimed at assessing socio-cultural factors influence community participation in community projects among the residents in Pokot South Sub-County, Kenya. The questionnaire contained both structured and unstructured questions. The study employed Simple random sampling technique to select 132 households. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The study identified that 91% of the respondents agreed that there were different forms of community projects and 81% of them had ever participated in the said forms. The study found that social, cultural factors such as belief system, dependency ratio, rural, urban migration and community resource and community governance hindered their participation in community projects. The study recommends need to embrace the spirit of cultural assimilations and cultural changes as most of the contemporary societies are made up of different individuals having varied cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Community based organization, Belief System, Dependency ratio, Rural, urban Migration, Community Resources and Community Governance

1.1 Introduction

Community based organization play a critical role in creating a ground for individuals to share their problems and resources in a manner meant to edify the community. Moreover, these organizations serve to bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of the society and their main sources of finance are contributions from the members of the organization, society and donors (Wanjohi, 2010). Community-based organizations (CBOs) are not for profit, organizations on a local and national level, facilitating community efforts for community development. Community based organizations conduct their work by engaging with the community by making use of existing finance institutions, the community getting involved in the development and making certain that community health education and infrastructure get better and better in due time (Clark, 2011). Cooke-Davies (2000) argues that for any development to succeed the youth involved and the community based organizations need to work hand in hand for the betterment of these projects. They should have the same targets and work towards a specific aim of improving the well-being of the society at large.

Community development work among the young people is very important in providing social services but also gives a great challenge to individuals who are assigned to do this work because they could run out of jobs. Public and private institutions have made taking care of the youth to be the biggest priority that they have so that they can empower them. They are very important because they are the source of capital and labour for the future generations (Gloria, 2012).

Engaging in community development projects is very crucial for the whole process to be successful (Østergaard et al., 2003). It is often fostered by individuals who want to show an act of kindness and hence end up developing the society at large (Botes & Rensburg, 2000). Beneficiary community participation, other than promoting reduced costs for project implementation and distribution of resources to an area that lack is very important in ensuring that the benefits are felt by the people involved and that they enjoy the fruits of their labour (Barasa & Jelagat, 2013).

Community participation needs careful planning to ensure that all areas are dealt with accordingly, and all resources needed to be provided (Burns et al., 2004). Samah and Aref (2009) argue that getting involved in community development activities implies that the community is not only involved in coming up with ideas, making decisions, planning, implementing but are also entitled to see the challenged experienced in their everyday lives and come up with proper solutions to deal with it. Deciding to participate in community development projects enables individuals to gain satisfaction and also see how their actions are helping benefit other people in the community (Reid, 2000)

1.2 Statement of the problem

Participation of community in the community based project is vital since it greatly contributes to effectiveness and efficiency of projects as well as help to improve the living conditions of low-income communities (Botes & Rensburg, 2000). However, community participation has been said to be low especially in rural areas. There is also a perception that community participation is a rigorous and time-consuming process, which results in most development practitioners camouflaging it with quick fix consultations and pseudo-participatory gimmicks to justify a means to an end. With the already documented empirical evidence of beneficiary community participation in development, there is underlying motivating as well as militating factors for people's participation. However, there is not much documented knowledge on social, cultural factors affecting how community participate in development in the community is driven development approach specifically in the Kenyan context, a gap that informed the problem statement and necessitated need for this study

1. *To investigate the influence of social-cultural factors on community participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County.*

2.0 Literature review

A number of scholars have written on the subject "factors influencing Community participation in community projects among the rural households." Conlon (1977) has concluded by observing that country people seem to be less inclined towards organized group activity. He says that their lifestyle seems to encourage individualism plus a shyness about belonging to or speaking in a group.

2.1 Social-Cultural Factors

The rate at which people engage in development projects is mostly influenced by the socio-economic by which they live by and have become accustomed to. The low class or those who are not economically rich are mostly not asked to engage in any community projects due to the beliefs that a certain society holds. The antecedents that enable more prompt participation are gender, economic status, the level of education and the place a person has in the society. Mostly social-economic issues have a huge role in influencing participation the results that come later. Gender inequality and religious beliefs may make certain sections of the community not to participate in community development projects (Gupter, 2004).

Masanyiwa and Kinyashi (2008) in their empirical analysis in Tanzania argue that community members will engage in a project if they have the belief that activities that arise out of the project will benefit them and their families. Bhatnagar and Williams (1992) argue that the society engages in projects that cater for the daily needs. Many people participate in development projects to make them rich and to empower their socio economic status (IFAD, 2009).

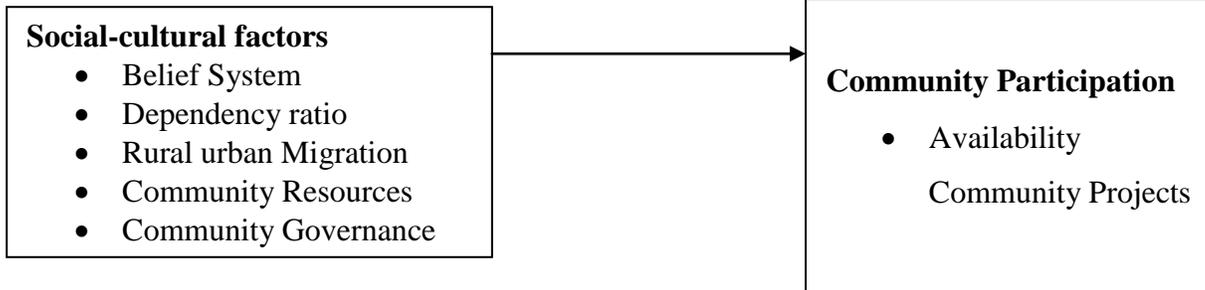
The rate at which the community engages in projects is determined the ability of these projects to improve their standards of living together with that of their future generations (Samah & Aref, 2009). The results of the study hence reveal that the rate at which people perceive a certain project, the ability of the project to meet their

needs, other experiences in development projects affects the rate of participation by the beneficiary community in development.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



Social-cultural factors play a bigger part in community project formation and survival. For instance, the role of a woman as defined by the certain community may hinder her participation in community work. There are also certain beliefs that see a young person as inferior before the old people. This may hinder his/ her participation in community work especially where the organization is filled with old figures. There are certain social-cultural beliefs that associate certain activities with certain groups of individual or certain tribe. Hence in a society where such taboos and beliefs are worshiped, the morale of participation by the willing individuals in community projects addressing the forbidden issue is greatly affected as they may fear rejection.

3.0 Materials and methods

This study used descriptive-survey research design majorly survey which focused on establishing social, cultural factors influencing community members' participation in community projects in Pokot South Sub-County. The study targeted 1321 people household in the ward (IEBC, 2013) who had lived in the ward for more than 2 years and only those who were above 16 years of age while a sample size of 10% of the population (1,321) was considered. A simple random sampling was employed to identify the subjects from each stratum to participate in the sample. This method of random sampling was also used so as to give each and every subject of the population an equal and independent chance of being a participant in this survey. Data were collected using the research questionnaires. The reliability of the data collection tools was assessed through cronbach alpha which after pilot test give a coefficient of 0.911. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies and percentages for each variable was calculated and tabulated using frequency distribution tables and charts. The analyzed data is presented in tables and charts for ease understanding.

4.0 Findings and results

The study established that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 17 to 32 years, 38% of them had at least attained secondary school level of education, 62% were married, 47% were affiliated with catholic religion and 56% were neither formally employed nor self-employed.

Table 1 Background Information of the Sampled Residents

Characteristics	No. of Respondent (%)
Gender	
Male	50(50)
Female	50(50)
Age Group(years)	
Below 16	1(1)
17-32	48(48)
33-49	30(30)
50-65	17(17)
Above 66	4(4)
Highest level of education	
Illiterate	7(7)
Primary	25(25)
Secondary	38(38)
Tertiary	17(17)
University	13(13)
Marital Status	
Single	35(35)
Married	62(62)
Divorced	1(1)
Separated	2(2)
Religion	
Catholic	47(47)
Protestant	42(42)
Muslim	9(9)
Others	4(4)
Occupation	
Formal employed	21(21)
Self-employed	23(23)
Not employed	56(56)

4.1 Community Members' Participation in Community Projects

Of the 91 respondents who accepted that there were community projects in Pokot South Sub County, 81% of the respondent agreed that they had ever participated in any form of community projects initiated in the area. This is clearly illustrated table 2 below. Those who participated were mainly those who had attained high school education (40.7%), single (37%) and were self-employed (25.9%). For the few (19) who did not participate in any form of community projects comprised of the residents who had attained only primary level education (36.8%), were either married (68.4%) or separated(5.3%) and were formally employed (26.3%). This finding is in line with Conlon (1977) who laments that country people seem to be less inclined towards organized group activity.

Table 2 Participated in Community Projects

Response	Frequency (%)
Yes	81(81)
No	19(19)
Total	100(100)

4.2 Social-Cultural Factors

The second objective of the study was to establish social-cultural factors influencing community members’ participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County. Social-cultural factors were measured by looking at the following variables: belief systems, sharing of community resources, dependency-ratio, rural-urban migration and other social-cultural factors as identified by the respondents. Because the factors identified, likert scale type of question where (1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree). Thus this question was analyzed by using the mean to identify the rank of each reason. Thus, among the social-cultural factors, other social, cultural factors were the major factors influencing community members’ participation in community projects. This is discussed in Table 3 below. From the table 4.6 above, of the 81 sampled residents who had ever participated in community projects in the area, “Belief System” was ranked fifth (2.4), “dependency ratio” was ranked fourth (2.0), “sharing of community resources” was ranked third (2.0), “rural-urban migration” was ranked second (2.0), “Other factors” was ranked first (1.2). Thus, among the social-cultural factors influencing community members’ participation in community projects among the rural households, other social, cultural factors as identified by the respondents included: cultural biasness, the role of women and children in the society and cultural ethnocentrism. These findings are in line with Martin .A (1999), who suggests that culture provides the repertoire of activities from which individuals choose and create the resources they need to pursue them.

In particular, one woman said that their culture did not allow them to mingle with men who were not their husbands or relatives. “.....My culture forbids me from mingling with my father in-law in any occasion.....” one of the respondents said. These findings too agree with Taylor D. R. F (1992) who found out that women were less represented in community projects in Zimbabwe where farmers organized themselves in to small groups for market purposes. The little involvements of women in such voluntary organization were due to heavy domestic workloads, and other social-cultural demands which prevent them from serving in elected positions and which reduce their ability to travel and represent their organizations externally.

It is also important to note that most social-cultural factors do influence community participation in community projects among the rural households as the residents were certain of them having significant influences on community projects. This is attested by all the socia-cultural factors having an average of the mean of 2.0.

Table 3 Social-Cultural Factors and Community Projects.

Social-Cultural Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi square
Other Social Cultural factors.	1.16	0.788	122.71*
Rural-Urban migration	1.70	1.049	98.01*
Community Resources	1.86	1.172	2.881
Dependency ratio	1.96	1.214	129.50*
Belief System.	2.38	1.369	58.99*

Hypothesis Testing

Research findings revealed that the belief system had no significant effect on community members' participation in community projects basing on $\beta_1 = 0$. (p-value = 0.394 which is more than $\alpha = 0.05$) implying that we accept the null hypothesis stating that the belief system has no significant effect on community members' participation in community projects.

Additionally, findings showed that the dependency ratio had coefficients of the estimate which was significant basing on $\beta_2 = -0.222$ (p-value = 0.000 which is less than $\alpha = 0.05$) hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the dependency ratio has a significant effect on community members participation in community projects. This implies that for each unit increase in the dependency ratio, there is up to 0.222 unit decrease in community members participation in community projects.

Furthermore, study findings showed that rural-urban migration had coefficients of the estimate which was significant basing on $\beta_3 = -0.308$ (p-value = 0.000 which is less than $\alpha = 0.05$) hence we fail to accept the hypothesis and conclude that rural-urban migration has no significant effect on community members participation in community projects. This indicates that for each unit increase in rural-urban migration, there is up to 0.308 units decrease in community members participation in community projects.

In addition, p-value is significant ($p < 0.05$), and the beta value of community resources was negative (beta = -0.267). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that community resources have a negative and significant effect on community members' participation in community projects. Consequently, for each unit increase in community resources, there is 0.267 unit decrease in community members' participation in community projects.

However, research findings showed that community governance had coefficients of the estimate which was not significant basing on $\beta_5 = 5.048$ (p-value = 0.157 which is more than $\alpha = 0.05$) implying community governance exhibits no significant effect on community members' participation in community projects.

Further findings revealed that the independent variable explained 45.4 percent variation of community members' participation in community projects. In addition, the above discussed coefficient of determination was significant as evidence of F ratio of 37.212 with p value 0.000 < 0.05.

Table 4 Coefficient of Estimate

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Belief System	0.285	0.333		0.854	0.394		
Dependency ratio	-0.224	0.082	-0.222	-2.748	0.007	0.625	1.599
Rural urban Migration	-0.41	0.112	-0.308	-3.647	0.000	0.57	1.755
Community Resources	-0.379	0.137	-0.267	-2.772	0.006	0.439	2.276
Community Governance	0.257	0.354	5.048	0	0.157	0.357	
R Square	0.454						
Adjusted R Square	0.442						
F	37.212						
Sig.	0.000						

Dependent Variable: participation

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The second objective of the study was to establish social-cultural factors influencing community members' participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County. The study established that the major social-cultural factor influencing community members' participation in community projects among the residents were role women in society, cultural ethnocentrism and egoism. What the study confirms is that culture of the people plays a major role in shaping their behaviour other than any other social-cultural factors.

In conclusion, the study established that majority (91%) of the sampled population agreed that there were forms of community projects in Pokot South Sub County out of which the common forms of community projects were those dealing with promotion of agricultural cum livestock development and security matters among other forms. Most (81%) of the sampled residents agreed to have participated in the said forms of community projects. However, their frequency of participation was termed as sometimes with most of them saying that they only participated when there were handouts for them. The study also confirmed that most of the sampled residents only participated to improve their basic needs. Among the demographic characteristics, the study confirmed that age of the resident and his/her religious affiliations are the major factors influencing community members' participation in community projects. The study also confirmed that culture of the people in the area played a major role in shaping their behaviour other than any other social-cultural factors as far as participation in community projects were concerned. The study also confirmed that capacity building of the locally targeted people was and is the crucial factor for any organization or community project/work to survive.

Based on the above findings, the study recommends that: -

- There is a need for the founder members of various community projects to first well understand the needs of a particular area/society before requesting them to be part of those community projects.
- The community members need also to be advised of the importance of mingling without basing on their ages or religious affiliation in community projects geared towards bettering their lives as the benefits go beyond their age or religious affiliations.
- The Pokot South Sub County people also need to embrace the spirit of cultural assimilations and cultural changes as most of the contemporary societies are made up of different individuals having varied cultural backgrounds.
- The CBOs spearheading the community projects should work closely with the NGOs and government agencies (both county and national) in organizing and facilitating training and capacity buildings through seminars and workshops to the targeted people.

Theoretical Implications

The data collected from the study area to some extent agrees with the theory of community organization by Law, (1981) which states that the role of the individual in any given society is determined by his/her environment surrounding such as social-cultural factors, governmental factors, and demographic characteristics. This was found to be the case with Pokot South Sub County residents who agreed that to some extent these factors have influenced their participation in various forms of community projects in their area.

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