

Training Opportunities and Youth Participation in Development Agenda in Kenya

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Abstract

Youth participation in county development projects continues to worsen, even though they form the majority of the population. The reasons as to why youth have been reluctant to be engaged in development agenda and are pushed to periphery of decision making despite their massive numbers has escalated debate among scholars and researchers on what determines youth participation in development projects. The study examined the influence of training opportunities on young people participation in county development agenda with the particular focus on the rationale for their participation behaviours. The target population was 2000 youths with sample size 333. Explanatory survey research design was used to show cause effect relationship between training opportunities and youth participation. Structured questionnaires were used and researcher tested validity of instruments by discussing them with experts. Reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha for consistency of data. Test / re- test technique was done during pilot testing to test reliability of research instruments. SPSS was used for data analysis, presentation done using tables for easier communication of findings. The study findings revealed a positive high correlation between training opportunities and youth participation in Development projects ($R= 0.79$). This further showed that training opportunities positively influenced youth participation in development projects in Kakamega County. In conclusion, training increased youth participation in development agenda in Kakamega County. From the study results, it was recommended that government formulates policy measures and programs that champion creation of training opportunities for youth so as to involve them in development projects. This study will mitigate existing different and conflicting opinions on the training opportunities and youth participation in development..

Key words: *Training opportunities, youth participation*

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) defines youth as individuals between the age of 15 and 24 while on the other hand, the Kenyan Constitution defines youth as any individual between the age of 18 and 35 (OECD, 2009).

Youth participation is the process of involving or engaging young people in decision making, sports, schools and even development activities throughout the community (Print, 2014). Youth should be involved in shaping present and future development agendas so that they are part and parcel of determining their future and not leave it to old jabs who are only interested in championing their own interest at the expense of youth.

Whereas, a study by ILO (2013) on youth employment intervention in Africa found that young women and men face difficulties finding decent work. Furthermore, youth participation compared to their older counterpart has been low. Youth continue to experience diminished aspirations for jobs, limited freedom, social injustice and their deep alienation from the system. However, ILO (2012) cautions that economic and social exclusion of youth gives rise to acute inequalities in terms of wealth and income which ultimately has caused youth-led protests against economic injustice across the world.

Globally, there has been growing interest in enabling youth participation in decision-making. The issue of youth participation rose into limelight in 1995 when UN General Assembly hinted that young people are a major milestone in spearheading social change and economic growth if empowered to play a pivotal role in development through active participation (Kanyinga, 2014). It henceforth adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). Then, in 2007 UN realized the continued deterioration situation for youth who are unable to participate fully in development came up with a policy framework and guideline that aims to tap the potential dividends of youth. Thereafter, another resolution was made in 2009 which called upon the world to engage youth in conflict resolution, gender equality, fight against AIDS and decision making.

Locally, youth participation has been recognized in the African Charter for Participation in Development and Transformation. The Charter stipulates that young people have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives acknowledges that youth are still discriminated and marginalized in politics, economy and society (AU, 2013).

There is need to create opportunities for employment and poverty reduction and wealth creation and equip youth with necessary skills, capital and opportunities to create wealth for themselves through securing local and foreign investment in new factories and giving tax breaks. A study by Awiti and Scott (2016) elaborated on effects of regional integration on County Governments planning points out expansion of investment opportunities; corridor based infrastructural connectivity, expansion of productive capacities, and diversification into trade in services, wide public, civil society and private stakeholder involvement. Similarly, Kirbiš, et al., (2011) pointed out that there is need for programmes and projects meant to utilize young people's potential and improve their quality of life.

Statement of the Problem

Though youth are regarded as engine of development characterized by freshness and vigor, they have failed in contributing to meaningful development agenda and continuously made invisible economic growth and development, as if they are lesser and left everything to older jobs who are clueless about their preferences. Kenya continues to experience lag in youth participation despite the fact that youth comprise significant proportion of its citizenry. Nuria (2022) opined that youth unemployment in Kenya is a burden on youth and described it as a ticking time bomb. Kenya Youth Survey Statistics report (2016), 62% of found that youth are vulnerable to bribery, a situation that has deteriorated morals in the society (Awiti & Scott, 2016).

Further, Mumbua (2015) studied factors influencing youth participation in development projects and concluded that a positive correlation between youth education level, methods of awareness, accessibility to opportunities and government policies as far as participation in youth development activities. It's evident that youth participation is a critical issue that has been discussed in different concepts, hence there is need for this study in order to bridge the gap and explore deeply on determinants of youth participation in county development agenda.

Specific Objective

To examine the influence of training opportunities on youth involvement in development of primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Literature Review

Training Opportunities and Youth Participation

Training is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction especially at school or university. It can also be through enlightening experience. It further involves imparting or acquiring general knowledge developing power of reasoning and judgment and preparing oneself for mature life in future. (Mang'eni, 2010). Education and training in Kenya must reflect the needs of labour market for youth and enhance participation of young women and men in county development agenda including its practical challenges and rewards (UNESCO, 2012). Internships and exposure trips could be offered to trainees.

A study by Kanyinga, (2014) on progress in the making-youth participation in shaping education policy recommended creation of youth advisory council ensuring its representatives of all youth groups with particular attention given to women and marginalized groups. Structural incorporation of youth in local education groups for active facilitation of consultation including most marginalized. The finding was that we need funding and technical assistance. Contrary, Print (2017) studied citizen education and youth participation in democracy and pointed out that Citizen Education is challenged by declining youth participation in democracy. Youth disengagement is shown through voting, declining membership of political parties. Citizen education has been marginally successful and calls for education system and schools to address it. Harel and Zvulun (2018) add that human beings learn much behaviour from others through observing.

Under school-to-work transition, the school curricula have generally tended to alienate the youth from careers and have not been properly equipped with necessary skills to run income generating activities, and dire consequences of the youth study-to-work transition have made self-employment to be a last resort. Poor education and training education systems often fail to prepare young people adequately to participate in decision-making. They do not develop the necessary analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving through participatory, active learning (Njeru & Mwangi, 2017).

Furthermore, a study by Mumbua (2015), pointed out factors that limit their participation such as young motherhood, limited schooling that led to limited skills and lack of use of innovations in agriculture compared with their male counterparts. Whereas, schools are expected to mould young people into adulthood using participatory approach, statistics paint a shocking reality. Harel and Zvulun (2018) revealed that young rural women in developing countries face additional constraints in accessing financial services due to their higher rates of illiteracy, restricted liberty of action and lack of consent of family members, much of which can be traced to gender discrimination embedded in societal norms.

Additionally, Njeru & Mwangi, (2017) most countries lack opportunities for education sector to reflect needs and concerns of youth in implementation and monitoring of education plans and policies. There is need to support youth engagement in training decision making and develop further strategies for youth engagement.

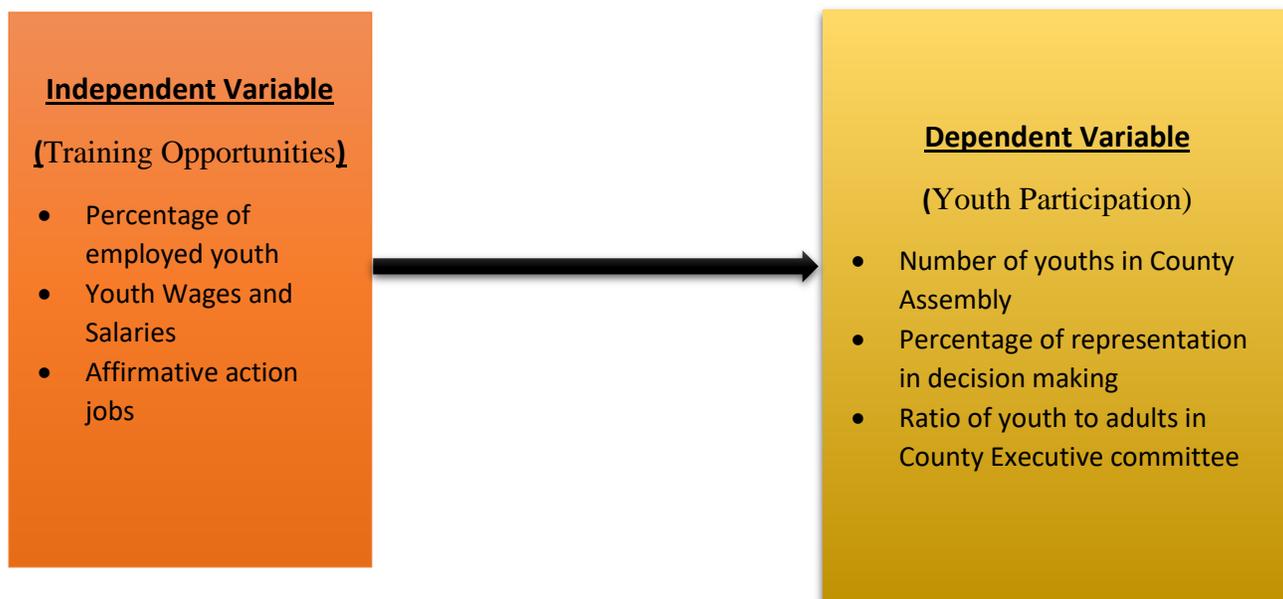


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework.*

Research Design

Research Methodology

The study used explanatory survey research design to assess the determinants of youth participation in county development agenda. This is because it details the cause effect relationship of the behavior of youth in participating in county development agenda. The design is appropriate as it assess whether the study variables; training opportunities determines youth participation in county development agenda.

Population of the study is 2000 youth members drawn from existing youth group. A sample size of 333 youth drawn from youth groups was used as determined using Taro Yamane's proportional sampling technique formula. This gives researcher the required sampling interval for a given population. Therefore a sample size has been calculated as per Taro Yamane's proportional sampling technique formula shown as follows;

Sample

$$n = N / ((1 + (e)^2))$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = population under study

e = margin error (0.05) of N

Therefore;

$$n = 2000 / ((1 + 2000(0.05)^2))$$

$$n = 2000 / ((1 + 2000(0.0025))$$

$$n = 2000 / (1 + 5)$$

$$n = 2000 / 6$$

$$n = 333.3$$

Purposive sampling technique was used to select 333 youth from existing youth groups because youth possessed unique characteristics such as differences in lifestyles, literacy level, rural and street youthful population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) opine that 40% of the population as a sample makes it a good representative of the entire population.

The study used structured interview questionnaires (Collins & Hussey, 2013). Open ended questions gave the respondents a chance to express their own personal opinion beyond the researcher's span of knowledge. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire because it is fast, efficient and gather large amount of data.

This study piloted a sample of 12 managers before carrying out the actual testing in order to identify problems in advance and make appropriate corrections in preparation for actual study. This study sought experts to determine validity of instruments in order to test the degree to which it measures what it intends to measure. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated using SPSS version 24. Thus, a coefficient of 0.70 or more implies that there is a higher degree of reliability of the data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Cronbach alpha coefficients values of 0.7 and above confirming the reliability of the study's research instruments. The quantitative data collected was sorted and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The data was analyzed using descriptive techniques.

The model that will be applied is as follows

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

Where: β_0 = Constant

Y = Youth Participation

X_1 = Training Opportunities.

e = Error term normally distributed about the mean of zero.

Multiple regression analysis has assumptions as highlighted by Hair et al., (2006) as follows:

- i. **Normality**; scores on a continuous variable are normally distributed about the mean. This was tested by histogram with normal curve whereby the curve should show a bell-shaped distribution.
- ii. **Test of Linearity**. Degree to which the change in the dependent variable is related to the change in the independent. Correlation results ought to show that a conceptualized independent variable has significant correlation with the dependent variable.
- iii. **Multi-collinearity**. This tests whether conceptualized independent variables are highly correlated with each other.

Findings

Response Rate

From the 92 questionnaires dispatched, 77 questionnaires were returned completely filled, representing a response rate of 83.6% which was good for generalizability of the research findings to a wider population.

Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

Validity of research instruments was checked using content validity where all questions were checked for clarity of words and ensuring all questions had adequate content as per the study variables. Cronbach alpha coefficients values of 0.7 and above confirming the reliability of the study's research instruments as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Reliability Test of Research Instruments

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Training Opportunities	6	0.809
Youth Participation	6	0.815

Descriptive statistics: training opportunities and youth participation These are summarized responses on whether training opportunities influence youth participation. The descriptive results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics, Training Opportunities and Youth Participation in Development Agenda in Kakamega, Kenya

Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std Dev
1. Percentage of unemployed youth is higher.	170 (21)	391 (48.9)	10 (1.25)	119 (14.9)	110 (13.8)	19.97	0.934
2. Wages and salaries in Kenya	160 (20.0)	295 (36.8)	230 (28.8)	50 (6.3)	65 (8.13)	20.0	0.942
3. Affirmative action for youth	171 (21.4)	344 (43.0)	240 (30.0)	20 (2.5)	25 (3.1)	20.1	0.942
4. Age discrimination in jobs	150 (18.8)	400 (50.0)	179 (22.4)	51 (6.4)	20 (2.5)	20.02	0.942
Valid list wise=800							
Grand mean =4.56							

From Table 2, most respondents agreed (48.9%) that the percentage of unemployed youth is higher while 1.25% disagreed to the statement. More closely, only 21.0% strongly agreed while 14.9% of respondents were uncertain. Further, while 36.8% of respondents agreed that most wages and salaries for youth are low, 8.13% disagreed. More so 43.0% of respondents agreed that there is need for affirmative action for the youth, while 2.5% of respondents also were neutral. Lastly, most respondents agreed (50.0%) of youth have been discriminated based on experience and agreed (18.8%) strongly agreed.

Linear Influence of Training Opportunities on Youth Participation

This tested the direct influence of training opportunities on youth participation. The results are shown Table 3.

Table 3
 Direct influence of Training Opportunities on Youth Participation

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.863 ^a	.678	.672	.91708	.568	98.422	1	75	.000

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	75.110	1	64.110	98.422	.000 ^a
	Residual	59.854	75	.651		
	Total	134.964	76			

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.921	.269		3.422	.001
	Training Opportunities	.801	.081	.753	9.921	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Participation

From Table 3, the model summary shows that $R^2 = 0.568$; implying that 67.8% variations in the Youth Participation explained by Training Opportunities while other factors not in the study model accounts for 33.2% of variation in Youth Participation in development agenda. Further, coefficient analysis shows that training opportunities has positive significant influence on Youth Participation ($\beta = 0.7982$ (0.081); at $p < .01$). This shows that rise in Training Opportunities will lead to 0.812 unit increase in the Youth Participation resulting to linear regression equation which is;

$$y = 0.921 + 0.801X1$$

Where;

y = Youth participation.

$X1$ = Training opportunities

Multiple regression analysis in Table 4 shows combined influence of the study's independent variable (Training Opportunities). The model's R squared (R^2) is 0.834 which shows that the study explains 83.4% of variation in the youth participation, while other factors not in the conceptualized study model accounts for 17.6 %, hence, it is a good study model.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) shows the mean squares and F statistics significant (F = 58.177; significant at $p < .001$), thus confirming the fitness of the model and also implies that the study's independent variable (Training Opportunities) has significant influence in causing a change in Youth Participation.

Finally, the values of unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis in Table 4 indicate that all the study's independent variable (Training Opportunities; $\beta = 0.723$ (0.151) at $p < 0.05$ significantly influenced Youth Participation (dependent variable).

In this regard, the study's final multiple regression equation is;

$$y = 0.71 + 0.723X1$$

Where;

y= Youth participation

X1= Training opportunities

Table 4

Multiple regression results

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.961 ^a	.834	.818	.76825	.834	58.177	4	72	.000
ANOVA ^b									
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	92.767	4	31.442	58.177	.000 ^a			
	Residual	42.197	72	.433					
	Total	134.964	76						

Opportunities.

b. Dependent Variable: Youth Participation

Conclusion

This tested the influence of training opportunities on youth participation on development agenda. The study found that training opportunities such as percentage of youth employed, youth salaries and wages and affirmative jobs influence youth participation in development agenda.

Basing on the finding, it is concluded that training opportunities determines youth participation in development agenda. Hence the government and other stakeholders can increase the participation of young people in development projects and agenda through creation of more job opportunities for them.

Recommendation

The study recommends that more training opportunities should be created for young people within the counties; this will boost their participation behavior in development projects.

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