

INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF POKOT SOUTH SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out influence of demographic attributes influencing on community participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County. A descriptive research design was adopted. Under it, survey method was used to solicit information from the residents of Pokot South Sub County. Main data collection tool was research questionnaire which was administered to the selected residents in the sub county. Simple random sampling technique was applied in picking the residents in each household. The sample size comprised of 100 Pokot South Sub County residents. The collected data was analyzed via the help of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) and is presented in tables and charts for ease of understanding. 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. Of the 81% of the sampled residents who had participated in the said forms of community projects, age and religious affiliation was the main demographic characteristic that hindered their participation. The study recommends that various efforts by the project initiators should endeavor to capacity build the target population before implementing the said projects in the area.

Keywords: Public administration, Community Projects, Community Participation, Demographic Attributes, age and religious affiliation

INTRODUCTION

Community projects are defined as the services volunteered by individuals or organizations to benefit a particular community or its institutions (The online Oxford dictionary, 2015). Public Policy Research Institute report (2013) on their part categorizes Community Work/Projects undertaken by various Community Organizations in the following; they include: first, community service and action projects which focus on improving the general physical characteristics of a community. These projects see a program within a broader community perspective and they are more multi-purpose. A good example of such projects includes a road construction project. Second, Health projects which focus on preserving and enhancing the physical and/or mental health of community including treatment of health problems, aftercare services and rehabilitation. Examples of these projects include: Health Education projects, Rehabilitation Mental Services and Community Health Care.

World Bank (2011) states that most of community projects/work are undertaken by Community Organization (COs) under Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) in collaboration with the local people. It says that COs are NGOs which serves a specific population in a narrow geographical area. World Bank acknowledges the fact that the global numbers of community projects undertaken by NGOs/CBOs are notoriously incomplete. It however estimates that in 2010, there were (community projects) somewhere between 6,000 and 30,000 national community projects in developing nations undertaken by NGOs whereas those community projects undertaken by COs across the developing world are numbered in hundreds of thousands.

In his dissertation, Alex (2008) identified that in 2003, there were approximately 1,200 National Community projects that were being undertaken by NGOs and Voluntary Organization in Kenya. He notes further saying that 450 of these community projects were active and completed return showing their total resources as 31b KSH....he says "that recent active community projects/work are even bigger reaching to 25,000." The numbers of Community projects were estimated to be a "hundreds of thousands" as each and every region had a massive number of unregistered community work operating locally.

Alex (2008) notes that majority of these community projects/work are mushroomed in urban areas/centers. The reasons accompanying this statement is that in urban areas there exists many vices such as crime, inadequate housing which leads to upcoming of slums, inadequate food supply calling for food aid, unemployment and culture erosion which leads to self-minded individuals. He points out that Community projects/work are mostly established to address these vices and constraints. Pokot South Sub County being a rural area was identified

for the study so as to bring out the factors influencing participation of community members in community projects among the rural households in the county.

Problem Formulation

Community work/projects have been pronounced as the most rewarding practice to individuals who engages in their activities. Most of the community projects are essential to any particular society whether poor or rich, urban or rural simply because a normal society has different groups of individual possessing different qualities. It has also come into consideration that Grassroots' community projects plays the key function of providing an institutional framework for beneficiary participation. For instance, an existing community project/work may be consulted during new project design to ensure that project's goals reflect beneficiary interests; undertake the implementation of community level project components; or receive funds for design and implement sub-projects. It has also been found that many National and International community projects are implemented in partnership with the local community members either by channeling development resources to them or providing them with services or technical assistance, (World Bank, 2011).

As observed by World Bank (2011), most of the community projects in rural areas are in devastating situation in that the projects formed often end up terminating their activities/services before accomplishing their goals and objectives. This process of dismantling the community projects before realizing the objectives/goals often has a negative impact on economy and development of the area/region as the Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) and World Bank lacks the intermediaries which can link them with the grass root populations other than the affected residents themselves.

The National Survey of Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) report (2013) laments that in areas where there is little community participation in community projects, the local residents' lack strong grass root links; field-based development expertise; adequate ability to innovate and adapt; process oriented approach to development; participatory methodologies and tools; long term commitment and emphasis on sustainability and adequate cost-effectiveness. This brings the backwardness and mushrooming of unfinished community projects that have been abandoned by the residents. Hence, there exists a problem in many rural areas where there is inadequate community participation in community projects/work.

Thus, the study sought to establish the influence of demographic attributes influencing on community participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholars have written on the subject “factors influencing Community participation in community projects among the rural households”. Taylor D. R. F (1992) quotes the words of Redcliffe (1969) who observed that rural people have a higher level of complacency for their circumstances but less aware about their system and in most cases, they are less confidence in their ability to get things changed. He concludes that rural people are less likely to organize themselves collectively to take an action as compared to the individuals in urban areas.

Taylor (1992) in the work of Russell (1986) has distinguished the rural locals who belong to and identify with the community affairs but feels no strong need to get involved actively in community affairs and the incomers who seek the acceptance by the community through active participation and getting things done. This has opened a doorway to understand what makes the rural people behave differently from their counterparts in urban areas.

Conlon (1977) has concluded by observing that country people seem to be less inclined towards organized group activity. He says that their lifestyle seem to encourage individualism plus a shyness about belonging to or speaking in a group.

Demographic characteristics

There are many factors at community level which influence men and women’s’ activity and access to and control of available resources including the local Organizations. As observed by David (1992), the middle aged and middle class households often do feature prominently among volunteers in community projects. He continues that women are more likely than men to do voluntary work. In such a scenario, most community projects are most likely to be flooded by women as their activities are mostly voluntary based. He notes further that groups which might be expected to have more time available such as people without children, the unemployed and perhaps the recently retired show lower than average participation rates in voluntary work.

Donald (1986) observed that for the most of human history, governance is seen as naturally for male, property has been seen as naturally male, ownership of anything including Community Projects has been seen as naturally male although laws also enforce it. This is a male chauvinism practice. Where such practice exists, women tend to be ignored so much and the ownership of such community projects is left to male. This practice (male chauvinism) may inhibit women participation in local community projects as they may feel (and often do) inferior to their male counterpart. The notion of the community laws enforcing male chauvinism kills the morale of a young woman enlightening others about owning and working in community projects. This in return leads to total incompetence of women in such societies. (ibid)

John (1989) pointed out that female participation in the labor market is still subject to major discontinuities, notably pregnancy, child birth, and child care and moving house due to marriage and/or husband's job change. Hence, in a situation where the community projects/work are headed by women, due to pregnancies, child birth and child care and moving house as a result of marriage and husband's job change, such programmes are highly subjected to discontinuity.

Religion can be said to be an important or even essential part of the social machinery, as a morality and law part of the complex system by which human beings are enabled to live together in an orderly arrangement of social relation. I.e. the contribution that religion makes is to transform and maintain social order.

Ken (1995), borrowing the work of Weber, established that protestants are more likely to participate in the worldly work compared to Catholics. He says that, "Protestants having only one avenue of action to combat anxiety and loneliness, threw themselves in to world work." Hence, majority of people affiliated to the Protestantism, are more likely to participate freely in any Community Work as compared to those affiliated to catholic religion.

Robert (1989) has presented three major factors which may kill the morale of a youth in participating in community activities: unemployment, gender differences and social class or race. Unemployment may deny a youth a chance to participate in groups where nearly all its affiliates are employed. This is mainly due to the reason that they will not be able to meet the amenities that the constitution of the Organization may require before enrollment of the new members. Inferiority also is cited as another reason.

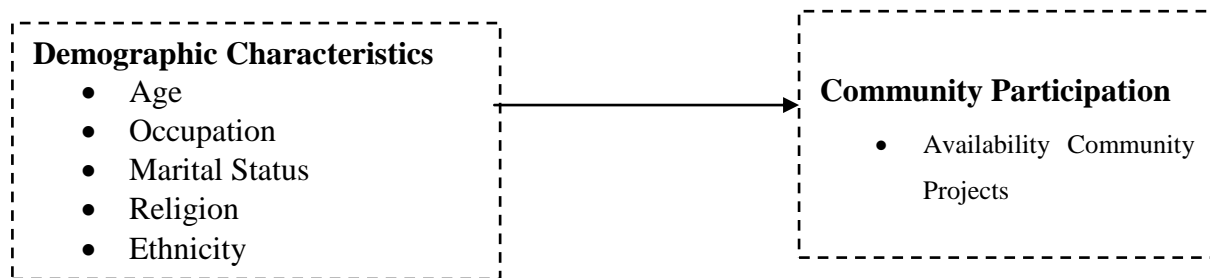
On the other hand, gender differences plays a bigger portion in that a lady often feels discomfort when operating in men owned community projects. Lastly, the class of the social elements leading and holding the community project can also affect the willingness of a lesser class joining it. For instance, in a situation where the project is run by the well-organized tycoons, poor individuals particularly the youths are bound to avoid it. (ibid)

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Community Organization Theory by Law (1981) who observes that the most significance factors in occupational choice are the interpersonal transaction contacted at the rural setting. He says "the way in which who-does-what in a society is decided as the product of plurality of interpersonal transaction conducted at local setting and the basis of interaction within and between groups of which the individual is a member-the community....the evidence gives significances to the personal exchanges which occur between individuals and the people with whom they are in community conduct-notably family, neighborhood, peer groups, ethnic groups, and teachers at school"- law 1981 p218.

The theory suggests that events occur in the context of community interaction between the individual and the social group of which he / she is a member. A number of modes or sources of community influence are identified specifically: expectations from an individual family and community groups; feedback referring to the varied messages that individual receive about their suitability for particular occupation or role; support related to the reinforcement of young people's aspiration, referring to the process by which people are influenced by for example information which defines young peoples' observation of other peoples work habit and pattern.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Community Members' participation in Community projects/work is influenced by myriad factors. The factors range from the demographic characteristics of the residents, the social-cultural beliefs and taboo a household maybe adhering to. Demographic characteristics such as ethnic, age, gender, occupation, religion, marital status and education often affect the formation and sustainability of Community projects. It's widely observed that women are more likely to participate in voluntary work than men. On the other hand, youths show negative interest towards community work participation due to shyness and personal characteristics associated with age. The learned individuals have been found to be the major participants in groups and associations; these groups of people have also been forming the leadership of many community projects. Religion also plays a bigger role in modeling the individual on which type of community projects to associate with and in most cases forbid the congregations from joining the organizations that contradicts their faith. Ethnicity also shapes the decision of an individual on what and which projects to join.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design majorly survey which focused on establishing factors influencing community members' participation in community projects in Pokot South Sub-County. This study design was chosen as it vividly examined the conditions in terms of knowledge of the residents, their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions on community

members' participation in community projects and the findings are generalized to the whole county.

The population of this study was drawn from the entire population of the sub-county i.e. 132,100 people (IEBC, 2013) who had lived in the sub county for more than 2 years and only those who were above 16 years of age.. However, only 10% of the desired sample size (1,321) was considered. This is because, given the nature, time and resources available for this investigation, 132 residents was sufficient to provide the required information to effectively realize the objectives of the study. The researcher employed stratified random sampling. The researcher used stratified random sampling to stratify the male residents from the female residents; this was aimed at giving each of the sexes an equal and independent chance of being a participant in the survey. Thereafter, a simple random sampling was employed to identify the subjects from each stratum to participate in the sample.

Data were collected using the research questionnaires and interviews. The reliability of the data collection tools were assessed through the split half method. 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.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sample characteristics

Majority of the respondents (48%) 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 to catholic religion and 56% were neither formally employed nor self-employed. While (99%) of the respondents sampled for the survey were above the ages of 17 years lastly, the study worked with the literate individuals as most (93%) of the respondents had at least attained formal level of education.

Community Projects in Pokot south Sub County

The main objective of this study was to find out factors influencing community participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County. However, it was important for the researcher to know whether there were community projects or not in the area under study. It was established that majority (91%) of the respondent agreed that there were Community projects in Pokot south Sub County; this is illustrated in table. 1 below:

Table 1. Whether there are Community Projects in Pokot South Sub County

Response	Frequency (%)
Yes	91(91)
No	09(09)
Total	100(100)

From table 1 above, it's quite clear that majority of the respondents had seen at least one form or another of community projects in Pokot South Sub County. For the Few (9%) who denied the availability of any community project in the area either did not understand what was meant by community project or they did not want to divulge any information about community project as they thought the question targeted them personally or the question did not have anything to do with them. These findings agrees with Alex, J. (2008) who stated that the numbers of community projects were estimated to be a "hundreds of thousands" as each and every region had a massive number of unregistered community work operating locally; not exempting Pokot South Sub County in particular.

Community Members' Participation in Community Projects

As illustrated in table 2 above, it's clear that majority of the residents have ever participated in any form of community projects in Pokot South Sub County; this is in line with Taylor D. R .F (1992) in the work of Russell (1986) who distinguishes the rural locals who belong to and identify with the community affairs but feels no strong need to get involved actively in community affairs. 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 are in line with Conlon (1977) who laments that country people seem to be less inclined towards organized group activity.

Table 2. Participation in Community Projects

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

Frequency of Participation in Community Projects

From the above table 3 of the 81 respondents who had ever participated in community projects in Pokot South Sub County, community project dealing with “Agricultural and Livestock Development” was ranked First (2.51), those dealing with “Security Matters” was ranked second (2.31), the ones dealing with “Social Welfare and Personal Growth” was ranked third (2.03), the ones dealing with “Health and Education” was ranked Fourth (1.94) and the ones dealing with “Food Aid and Humanitarian Assistance” was ranked fifth (1.81). Thus, among the forms of community projects, majority of the residents sometimes participated in those community projects that were dealing with agricultural and livestock development.

Table 3. The Frequency of Participation in any Form of Community Projects

Forms of Community Projects.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranks
Agricultural and livestock development.	2.51	1.567	1
Security Matters.	2.31	1.433	2
Social Welfare and Personal Growth.	2.03	1.410	3
Health and Education.	1.94	1.377	4
Food Aid and Humanitarian Assistance.	1.81	1.300	5

Through further probing, the researcher found out that the residents of Pokot South Sub County were only concerned with active participation in community projects in the cases when there were handouts for them such as fertilizers, seeds and/or maybe some training or incentives such as lunch allowances which enabled them improve their agricultural and livestock products. For instance, one of the residents said that “.....why should I waste my time there if there no lunch for us..... How can I attend the meeting/work then go back home hungry? I better not go”.

Demographic Characteristics

From the table 4 above, of the 81 respondents who had ever participated in community projects in Pokot South Sub County, “Age” was ranked first (2.7), “Religion” was ranked second (2.4), “Education Level” was ranked third (1.9), “Ethnic affiliation” was ranked fourth (1.7), “Gender” was ranked fifth (1.6), “Marital Status” was ranked sixth (1.6) and “Occupation” was ranked seventh (1.6). Thus, among the demographic characteristics influencing participation in community projects among the rural households, age is the major hindrance; this findings are in line with David F. (1992), who observes that middle aged and middle class households often do feature prominently among volunteers in community projects.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics and Participation in Community Projects

Demographic Characteristics	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	
			Tests	P Value
Age.	2.7	1.579	23	0.016
Religion.	2.4	1.523	6.963	0.008
Education Level.	1.9	1.255	19.956	0
Ethnic.	1.7	1.055	5.112	0.024
Gender.	1.6	0.931	6.004	0.014
Marital Status.	1.6	1.044	23	0.016
Occupation.	1.6	1.085	16.004	0.004

Further probing through informal interviews attested that majority of the youths were of views that it was impossible for them to mingle with the aged people in the society freely compared to their peers. In particular, one of the youth said..... “we only mingle when there is a special occasion such as funeral.....” On the other hand, the elders perceived the youths to be anxious, curious and don’t take time to listen to whatever they are being advised on. One of the elder said, “What can I discuss with a youth if not giving instructions and orders or directions?” These findings also agree with Robert G. B (1989) who argues that the following three major factors kill the morale of a youth in participating in community activities: unemployment, gender differences and social class or race.

It’s of importance to note that only age as a demographic characteristic do influence community members’ participation in community projects among the rural households as the residents were not certain about their influences in community projects i.e. they were neutral on whether its effect can actually affect their participation. This is attested by the age factor having an average mean of 3.0. Other demographic characteristics do not influence community members’ participation in community projects at all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first objective of the study was to establish demographic characteristics e.g. Ethnic, Education, Age, Gender, Occupation, Religion and Marital status influencing community members’ participation in community projects among the residents of Pokot South Sub County. The study found out that age as a factor was the major contributor to the residents’ little involvement in the community projects, followed by the religious affiliation of the residents. Education level of the respondents and their ethnic affiliations did not play a bigger portion in their participation while gender, marital status, and occupation were said to be not a major figure

in their participation in community projects. What the study confirmed is that age and religious affiliations are the major factors influencing community members' participation in community projects in Pokot South Sub County.

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 were 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.

There is 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 on the importance of mingling without basing on their ages or religious affiliation in community projects geared towards bettering their life as the benefits go beyond their age or religious affiliations.

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 this factors have influenced their participation in various forms of community projects in their area.

However, the study had small size which could not allow the generalization of the results. Also there was no use of regression analysis to indicate the causal effect. Moreover, the study used selected demographic characteristics.

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