

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN BUMBOGO VUP, RWANDA

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Abstract: This study focused on community participation and the performance of project implementation, which is very significant in the economic development of Rwanda and the entire global community. Community participation has become an increasing aspect key tool of public policy and service delivery within the realm of good governance across the world. This study hypothesizes community participation and the performance of project implementation within Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project, in Gasabo District as case study. The study used both descriptive and correlation statistics, where the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approach. The total population of this study equal to 850; using Yamane formula, the researcher used a sample size of 89 respondents. The sampling technique used in this study is stratified random and purposive sampling method. The data was finally analyzed using SPSS. The results of the study indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between community participation and the performance of the project implementation. The regression analysis indicated that community participation in need analysis has the greatest influence, followed by Community participation in M&E. community participation in planning has the least influence on the performance of project implementation. Overall, success of project implementation improves with greater community participation throughout the project life cycle.

Keywords: Community participation, project implementation, project performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Over many years, participation in development theory and practice has taken different dimensions and approaches over time. Hickey & Mohan (2004), point out that, from 1940s to 50s, the colonial approach was community development & participation was regarded as an obligation of citizenship; citizenship formed in homogenous communities. The locus or level of engagement was a community. From 1960s to 1970s, the post-colonial era approach was community development, political participation and emancipatory participation & voting, and campaigning. The period beginning in the 1980, participatory approach focused on projects rather than in broader political communities. The most actors have been the development professionals, participation learning groups, NGOs, World Bank, and United Nations agencies. It was realized that the ineffectiveness of externally imposed and expert-oriented forms of project planning, management and execution coupled with top-bottom approach. Major donors and organizations embarked on participatory approaches

purposely to empower local people, capture indigenous people's knowledge, and ensure sustainability & efficiency of interventions (Hickey & Mohan (2004).

Since the late 1990 to the present-day, the approach has been participatory governance and citizenship participation. Participation is regarded as primarily a right of citizenship and its level of engagement is at citizens, civil society, state agencies and organizations. (Hickey & Mohan (2004).

In Rwanda, community involvement/ participation has been for many decades synonymous with political participation among societies. These social groups established simple political systems provided grounds for public's participation in affairs that affected them. These political systems were organized around the groups. Each group managed its own affairs, elected its own leaders, settled disputes between its members, and held the brief & practice that all important decisions affecting the community could be made through a consensus of elders representing different groups constituting a particular community. This political organization was however contrasted to kingdoms which were governed by kings and a hierarchy of chiefs and sub-chiefs.

This was later succeeded by the colonization period which brought hasty efforts by colonial governments to introduce new structures which would channel popular demands into responsive policies. These structures included government and opposition parties, national parliament, local councils, elections (electoral participation), trade unions and cooperatives. Decolonization meant national control which in turn led to widespread popular political participation.

The earlier notion of political participation have been refined to turn into a multi-dimensional key element of decentralization and good governance programs. Its application has transcended all fields including health, agriculture, environment conservation programs among others. These determinations have been sustained by the increasing emphasis of beneficiaries' involvement in programs by development partners- donors of these programs mainly the WB through its good governance campaigns. Participation has become a basic criterion for arbitrating the attainment of political and developmental projects / programs in aid recipient countries (World Bank, 2000).

Problem statement

In most developing countries, many past efforts in programs and projects have had limited success because of lack of sufficient community participation (World Bank (1994; 2002). According to Akinbile, et al 2006, participation of community in project implementation is really low. The core constraint to fostering community participation especially among the rural people has been over-centralization of decision-making powers and resources thereby creating a communication gap between the beneficiaries and the program workers. Today, many programs and projects have been introduced and developed with participatory approach to bring together disparate voices of stakeholders into process. Vision Umurenge Programs (VUP) in Rwanda at large also uses this approach.

However, despite the sounding implementation framework, VUP has increasingly become a subject of debate and criticisms among different sections in Rwanda. The criticisms have revolved around its procedure and participation of community in need analysis, planning, and monitoring and evaluation among others (Mukakibi,2017). These have been expressed in the media, reports, and various public. A study which investigate community's participation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project could therefore help in better understanding how community participation influence the performance of project implementation.

Specific objectives

- To examine how community participation in need analysis influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project
- To establish how community participation in project planning influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project
- To determine how community participation in project monitoring and evaluation influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project

Research questions

- i. To what extent does community participation in need analysis influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project?
- ii. To what extent does community participation in project planning influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project?
- iii. How does community participation in project monitoring and evaluation influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

Empowerment theory

The study was guided by Empowerment theory by Perkins Douglas and Zimmermann Mark (1995). Empowerment helps individuals achieve their goals by participating with others. Participation, control and awareness are key areas of empowerment. Sustainable development is possible only if empowerment and its practical institutionalization in law become a reality, (Titi and Singh, 2001).

Empowerment is a structure that combines personal strengths and abilities, natural aid systems, and active behaviors with social change and social policy (Rappaport, 1981, 1984). Empowerment theory combines personal well-being with the larger social and political environment. Different definitions of empowerment generally correspond to empowerment as a deliberately ongoing process centred on the local stakeholder that includes mutual respect, critical feedback, and concern and group participation. The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) defines empowerment as a process by which people who do not have an equal share in valuable resources gain greater access and control over those resources. It is the ability of people to gain control over their lives, their democratic contribution to the existence of their community (Rappaport, 1987) and their critical understanding of their env't (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, Chekhov, 1992).

Empirical review

Community participation in the planning and execution of developmental projects is very low (Sheikh, 2010). He reveals that poor people are not included in project implementation organization committee. They are often dominated by people with strong socio-economic or political backgrounds.

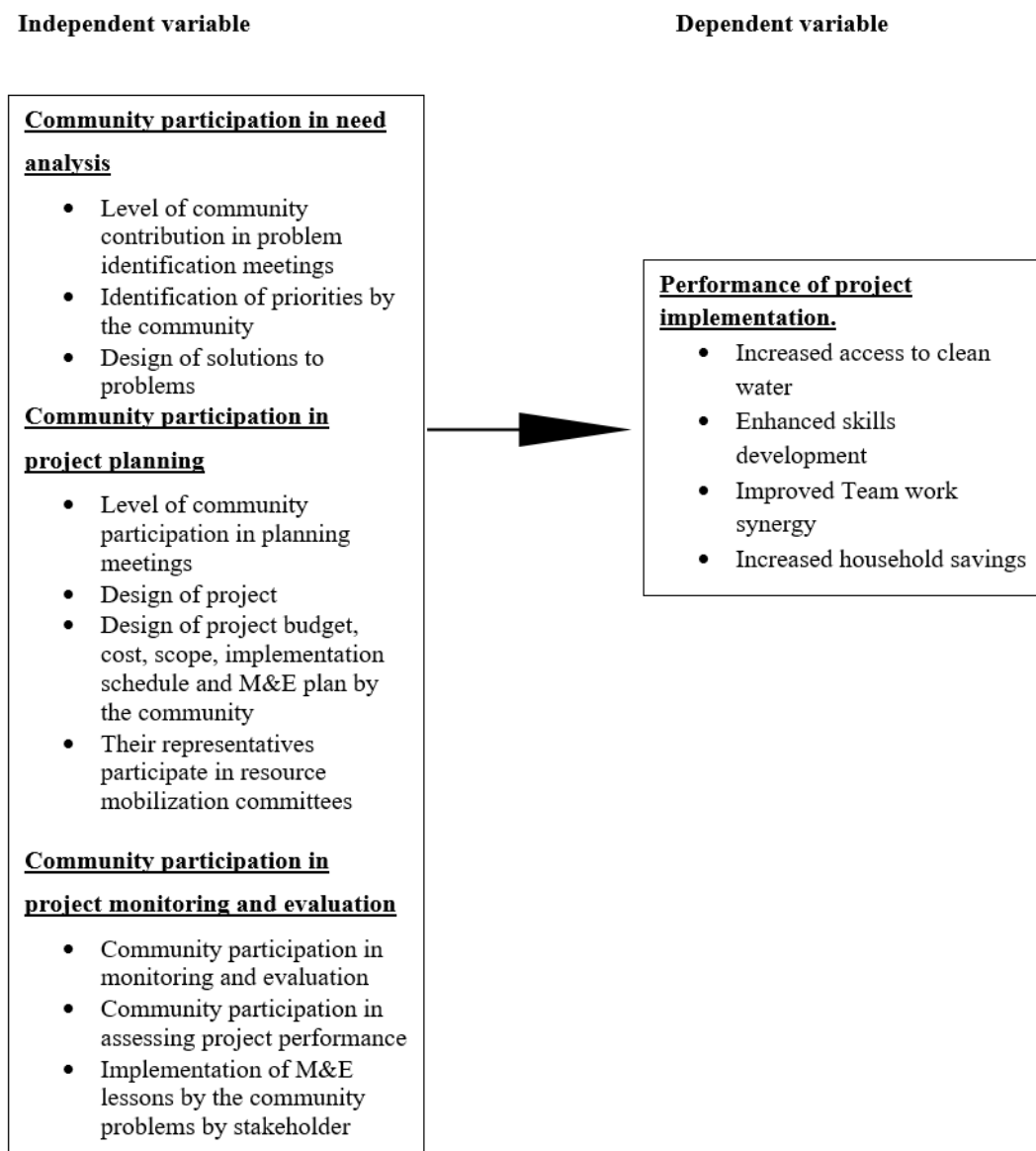
Akinbile, et al 2006, found out in his study about effects of community participation on perception of sustainability of rural water projects in Oyun local government area of Kwara State, Nigeria, that community involvement in project implementation in Nigeria water supply project was really low. Only the government made the plans. It has been recognized that ordinary community are not usually involved in decision making. However, the vast majority (70%) of respondents were involved in contributing funds to the project. Their involvement in work was very little. This job has the highest technical expertise that the communal members cannot provide.

Olukottun, (2008), in his journal on achieving project sustainability through community participation, found that when communities are involved in project implementation, a guarantee of sustainability subject is found to certain conditions, unlike when nothing is known or imposed on them. There must be a sincere demand by a communal group for all projects that the state or any global organization is helping or not helping. It eradicates the tendency to leave projects when they are in midway and retains the attention of communities in the project maintenance and protection. The plan was not found on a stranger.

William, (2008), in his study on community contribution/ participation in water supply services in Temeke Tanzania, he realized that their contribution in water resources management hasn't been effectively implemented in the earlier time. The identification and classification of stakeholders has not even been done in utmost corner of the country. The Ministry of Water routinely implements activities related on water resources issues without the involvement and participation of community, including local communities, in planning, management and decision making.

Conceptual framework

Figure the Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher 2021

Research gap

It is noteworthy that scholars have taken steps to talk about community participation in projects and how projects can be successful. But the gap still hung over what the benefit of community's participation would be and how they should be integrated in projects to reach their goal sustainably.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The designs of the study were descriptive research method. Descriptive research determines and reports things as they are, thus establishing the current situation of the target population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In addition both quantitative & qualitative methods will be utilized in data collection & analysis. The descriptive design were perceived to be suitable because it addressed major objectives and research questions proposed in the study adequately.

Study Population

This study emphasized on the community that work with the program and program staffs. The sample was 89 key respondents extracted from population of 850.

Sample size and sampling technique

Sampling Techniques

The population was classified into two strata which were Bumbogo households and VUP project officers. In addition, systematic sampling with the 10th respondents on the Bumbogo households list was selected until the desired sample size is obtained. In the other strata, they were selected with use of purposive sampling.

Sample size

To get the sample size, the researcher used Yamane formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (N \cdot e^2)} = \frac{850}{1 + 850 \cdot 0.1^2} = 89 \text{ Peoples}$$

Data Collection Methods and Tools

Prior to the administration of questionnaires, a supporting document was obtained from the UoK that enabled the researcher to solicit approval to conduct a study in Bumbogo VUP. The methods of data collection employed were Interview and Questionnaire.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v21 to analyze quantitative data (mean, standard deviation, correlation, regression) and content analysis was used to analyze qualitative collected through questionnaire and interviews.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of findings for the first specific research objective

The first specific research objective was aimed at examining how community participation in need analysis influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project.

The findings in this key area show that majority of the youth were mobilized and participated in need analysis. The project officers agreed with it, saying that they were involved and participated in discussions about their problems and how to solve the problems. Additionally, they agreed that they identified and prioritized their needs. They also agreed that they identified the need of supply of water as their highest priority. The respondent also agreed that their community ideas and contributions were considered and incorporated when determining solutions to their water needs. When asked about the degree to which they agree that the community participation in need analysis influence successful project implementation, 75% of respondent in project officers agreed to a very great extent and 25% agreed to a great extent while 58.82% of community indicated that they agree to a very great extent while 23.53% said that they agree to a great extent, 4.71% agreed to a moderate extent, 9.41% agreed to a little extent and 3.53% agreed to no extent. The study shown that community participation in need analysis has an important influence on the performance implementation of the project, as indicated by regression analysis. A unit change in the community participation in need analysis results in 0.399 increments in performance of project implementation when all other independent variables are reduced to zero. Performance of project implementation therefore improves when there is greater community participation in need analysis. Additionally, a strong positive correlation exists between community participation in need analysis and the performance of project implementations as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.945

Summary of findings for the second specific research objective

The Second specific research objective was aimed at establishing how community participation in project planning influence the performance of project implementation in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project.

The study shown that community participated in planning but in varying extents to the various aspects of planning. There was less community participation in the technical aspects of planning such as: in coming up with project cost and budget

and resource mobilization. A possible explanation for this is the limited project planning knowledge possessed the community. Respondents agreed that community ideas and contributions were incorporated in the design of the project. As to whether the community agreed on the proposed location of the various water kiosks, respondents were neutral. When enquired about the degree to which they agree that the community participation in planning influence the performance of project implementation, project officers agreed to 50% to a very great extent and 50% to a great extent. Respondents from community 35.29% pointed out that they agree to a very great extent while 23.53% pointed out that they agree to a great extent, 4.71% agreed to a moderate extent, 23.53% agreed to a little extent and 12.94% agreed to no extent. The study show that community participation in planning has an important influence on the performance of project implementation, as indicated by regression analysis. A unit change in community participation in planning results in 0.033 increments in performance of project implementation when all other independent variables are reduced to zero. Performance of projects implementation therefore improves when there is greater community participation in project planning. Additionally, a strong positive correlation exists between community participation in planning and performance of project implementation as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.954.

Summary of findings for the three specific research objective

The Third specific research objective was aimed at determining how community participation in project monitoring and evaluation influence the performance of project implementation in in Bumbogo VUP Water Supply Project.

Respondents were neutral to the statement that community participated in assessing project performance. They were neutral to the sentence that lessons learnt from assessing projects have been implemented. Most respondents agreed that benefits from the project are enjoyed by most community. When enquired about the degree to which they agree that the community participation in monitoring and evaluation influence performance of project implementation, 25% of respondent of project officer agreed to a very great extent and 75 % agreed to a great extent. 66.71% of community indicated that they agreed to a very great extent, while, 25.88% agreed to great extent, 2.35% agreed to a moderate extent, 3.53% agreed to a little extent and 3.53% agreed to no extent. The study pointed out that community participation in monitoring & evaluation has an influence on performance of project implementation, as indicated by regression analysis. A unit change in community participation in M&E results in 0.201 increments in success of project implementation when all other independent variables are reduced to zero. Success of project implementation therefore improves when there is greater community participation in monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, a strong positive correlation exists between community participation in M&E and performance of implementation as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.971.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study has shown that community participation in need analysis has the utmost influence on performance of project implementation, any development interventions targeting a community ought therefore ensure that stakeholders involvement in need analysis if the intervention is to be succeeded.
2. Government, NGOs or any other development partners that support community based projects should train of the stakeholders especially community so that they can effectively participate in project planning. They can be trained on aspects of project planning such as coming up with project design, project costing and budgeting, resource mobilization, drawing up implementation, monitoring and evaluation plans amongst others.
3. Community should be involved in the beginning of the project leading up to M&E, otherwise their participation in M&E will have less impact.

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