

THE INFLUENCE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION ON PERFORMANCE OF SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN RWANDA

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Abstract: *Over the recent years, the government of Rwanda has spearheaded development-specific programs with the objective of transforming the country into a knowledge-based middle-income country, thereby reducing poverty, health problems and making the country united, inclusive and democratic by 2020. This study sought to determine the influence of citizen participation on the performance of socio economic development projects in Rwanda.*

Methodology: *A sample of 397 respondents was used in both projects- Kirehe Community Based Watershed Management Project (KWAMP) and Bugesera Agriculture Development Support Project (PADAB). Cronbach's alpha was used to test for internal reliability of each variable used in the study.*

Findings: *The study found out that citizen participation has a significant influence on performance of socioeconomic development projects in Rwanda. The null hypothesis was rejected and p-values showed significant influence, meaning that citizen participation had a significant influence on performance of socioeconomic development projects independently. Institutional factors acted as intervening variable that explain the relationship between citizen participation and performance of socioeconomic development projects. The study concluded that governance dimensions and more specifically citizen participation had a significant influence on performance of socioeconomic development projects and that institutional factors had significant influence on the relationship between citizen participation and performance of socioeconomic development projects. The study recommends that citizen participation be sustained to get better performance of socioeconomic development projects in Rwanda. The study further recommends that citizens embrace participation with a mindset of collaboration, seeking to use the experience and knowledge gained in by way of partnership with other stakeholders.*

Keywords: *Governance, Citizen Participation and Performance of socioeconomic development projects*

Introduction

Citizen participation, is a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs and environments that affect them; a process in which citizens organise themselves and their goals at the grassroots level and work together to influence the decision-making process (Hatley, 2013). It is therefore a process, which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions, and a component, for a long time, of the democratic decision-making process (Parker, 2002). Davies & Simon (2012) argue that government projects are often seen as being legitimate if they include forms of citizen engagement such as

consultations, surveys or citizen panels; and state that that billions of pounds are spent on community-based and community-driven development projects by international institutions such as the World Bank; adding that development projects that do not include a participatory element are frequently seen as unethical or invalid. Davis and Simon (2012) also observe that the act of participation is valuable in itself, quite apart from any value it may have in helping to achieve other good things.

Davies and Simon (2013) argue that engaging people will always be a necessary feature of the development and implementation of innovation that genuinely meets social needs because citizens have specific knowledge of the challenges they face that no one else can claim; and engagement processes therefore enable a better understanding of problems that an innovation might address; and that citizens can be a source of innovative ideas; making it possible for engagement processes to uncover or tap into these ideas; implying that engaging citizens enables contributions from varied and sometimes unexpected sources, which introduces divergent thinking as well as diverse perspectives that add particular value when we are trying to solve problems.

Engaging people and implementation of innovations remains relevant with respect to socioeconomic development projects which are designed to generate sustainable economic and social benefits for local communities and for the population in general. They are essentially community-driven in nature and aim at redistributing national resources to the community to bring facilities and services closer to people in order to alleviate poverty, create employment, and eventually raise people's standard of living through better schools, healthcare facilities and the like. Large construction projects are concerned with developing the infrastructure and backbone of an economy, therefore while development projects attempt to directly improve the socio-economic conditions of people in a developing nation through various types of projects. However, socioeconomic development projects are also expected to fulfill other goals including social goals in addition to the economic ones (Ngacho & Das, 2017).

One of the avenues of dealing with the challenges of poverty and unemployment; and with similar challenges therefore has been to invest in socioeconomic projects. They are expected to empower the communities by providing them with employment and help alleviate poverty. They contribute to socioeconomic development which is a process of social and economic development in a society, measured with indicators, such as life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors, such as personal dignity, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, as well as the extent of participation in civil society are also considered (Rutherford, 2000). One of the critical challenges today, however, is how citizens can participate to ensure that the basic systems and services that countries need should provide; and how to ensure that investments made in socioeconomic projects translate into well being for the population. Key factors in confronting the challenge include existence of governance and citizen participation that impact on society's social and economic development process (Bingham *et al.*, 2005).

The traditional criteria of performance evaluation of projects, popularly known as the iron triangle are mainly based on the economic dimension which is in line the teachings in the field of project management, where time, cost and output are three fundamental factors that have been used to judge whether a project may be considered a success or a failure. The project management "Iron Triangle" has been used as a way to represent and highlight the connection between these three factors (Stewart, 2015).

Stewart (2015), makes the argument that although the Iron Triangle can provide a useful tool for discussing the inevitable compromises inherent in most projects, especially when deciding constraints and objectives, it can still be criticized because it represents a limited view of project perspectives since it only focuses on three aspects-cost, time and output, ignores many of the more subjective and context specific issues and fails to

take into account important success criteria relating to emergent properties of what is produced by the project. A project may fail time, cost and output specifications yet be a success in the long run as far as the customer or the public are concerned. Conversely, a project may keep within these three constraints but be seen as a waste of time, money and effort, he concludes.

Problem Statement

Citizen participation is expected to have a significant impact on performance of socio economic development projects. Much as this is so, there is hardly any empirical evidence to confirm this particularly in the case of Rwanda. Citizen participation and its influence on performance of socioeconomic development projects cannot be over emphasized. Projects that embrace strong citizen participation tend to perform well. On the other hand, those that display weak citizen participation tend to perform poorly and are, consequently, unable to benefit the local communities. Many governance dimensions that impact the performance of socioeconomic development projects exist (Bugingo & Interayamahanga, 2010). For the purpose of this study, however, focus was laid on citizen participation. The problem being addressed here is the performance of socioeconomic development projects, on whose livelihood the citizenry depends, as influenced by citizen participation reflected through dimensions such as quality of participation, the educative dividend of participation and the collective, affective experience of participation. Previous studies seem not to explicitly examine the link between governance and performance of projects and the extent to which citizen participation would otherwise influence performance of socio-economic development projects. The study, therefore, sought to examine whether or not citizen participation impacts on the performance of socioeconomic development projects focusing on post genocide Rwanda.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of citizen participation on the performance of socio-economic development projects in Rwanda.

Research Hypothesis

This study tested the following null hypothesis:

Ho: Citizen Participation does not have a significant influence on performance of socio-economic development projects in Rwanda.

Literature Review

Governance

A study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to establish whether countries with above-average governance grew faster than countries with below average governance came up with results that suggest that governance matters for development but may vary across the six dimensions /indicators of governance and a country's stage of development. The study concludes that in terms of policy the findings suggest that priorities of governance reform are country specific (ADB, 2014). The OECD analysis on the other hand has shown that substantial benefits can be realised by better managing public investment throughout its life cycle and across levels of government; and that the quality of public governance correlates with public investment and growth outcomes, at both national and sub national levels (OECD, 2014).

Concept of citizen Participation

Muro & Namusonge (2015) argue that it's of the fact that if community members are not effectively involved or not themselves engage into development works; the consequences are poor socioeconomic wellbeing with increasing levels of poverty. Effective participation in this case refers to the involvement of the people concerned in analysis, decision-making, planning, and program implementation, as well as in all the activities, without the involvement of external agencies. Involving local people in planning can increase their commitment to the program and it can help them to develop appropriate skills and knowledge to identify and solve their problems on their own. It also helps to increase the resources available for the program, promotes self-help and self-reliance, and improves trust and partnership between the community and leaders, they add. Therefore, if you involve the local community in a program that is developed for them, you will find they will gain from these benefits and develop sense of ownership, they conclude. Gitegi & Iravo (2016) on their part, argue that public participation in governance is a concept that is highly embraced by most democracies in the world, basically seen as the epitome and measure of effective governance.

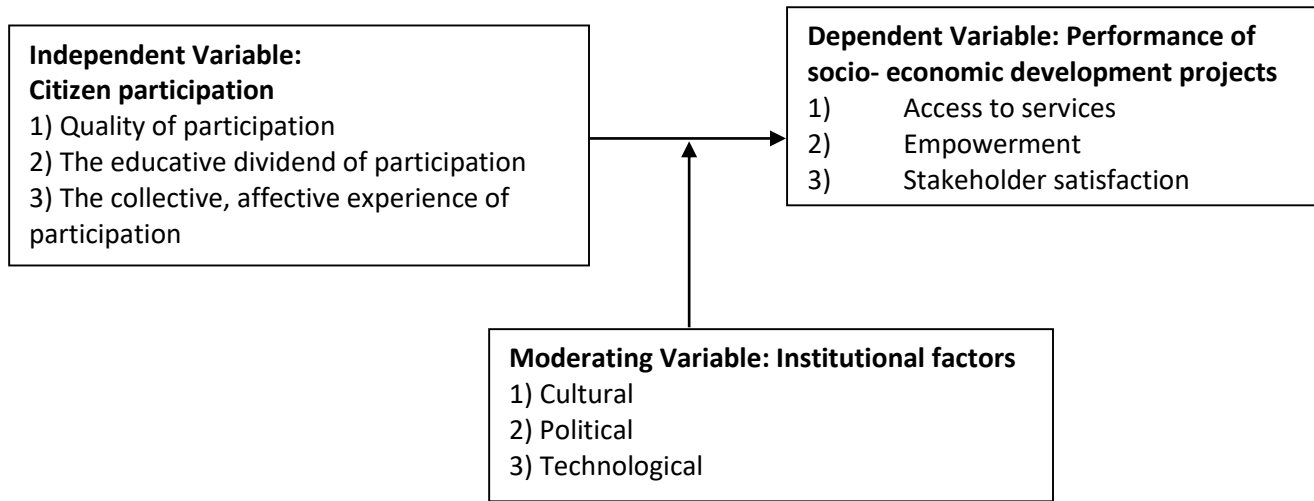
Public participation has proved to be an effective mechanism in promoting effective governance and that experience has shown that public participation strengthens democracy and governance; increases accountability; improves process quality and results in better decisions; manages social conflicts; and enhances process legitimacy. Public participation is the process through which stakeholders' input and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them; a process whereby stakeholders influence policy formulation, alternative designs, investment choices and management decisions affecting their communities. Therefore, public participation is a process through which citizens actively participate in matters that affect their lives. In public governance public participation involves techniques such as public hearings and sittings, citizen watchdog groups, social audits and citizen advisory groups (Gitegi & Iravo, 2016).

Mosses & Iravo (2015) on the other hand state that citizen participation means that citizens are part and parcel of what happens in their society or country and that the citizens are part of the decision – making process on matters that affect them. Communication is a two-way consultative process namely bottom – up and top-bottom which has to take place before any decision is reached; and Citizen participation is one of the vital and indispensable pillars /principles or rather tenet of democratic government. Tandon (2002) states that participation was first introduced in development discourse in the early seventies, then seen as a marginal concept, to be piloted at small scale by non-governmental organizations and that since then, participation has been mainstreamed; and, it has been coopted to mean different things; with the early eighties seeing re-connections between political aspects of participation with its developmental dimensions in the framework of democracy and citizenship.

Gaventa (2002) on the other hand states that around the world, a growing crisis of legitimacy characterises the relationship between citizens and the institutions that affect their lives and that in both north and south, citizens speak of mounting disillusionment with government, based on concerns about corruption, lack of responsiveness to the needs of the poor and the absence of a sense of connection with elected representatives and bureaucrats. Moreover, traditional forms of expertise and representation are being questioned and that the rights and responsibilities of corporations and other global actors are being challenged, as global inequalities persist and deepen. Moreover, as concerns about good governance and state responsiveness grow, questions about how citizens engage and make demands on the state also come to the fore, and as traditional forms of representation are being re-examined, new more direct and deliberative democratic mechanisms are proposed to enable citizens to play a more active part in decisions that affect their lives. Similarly, especially in the

context of globalisation, questions emerge about how participatory methods are used to hold corporations accountable and how corporations in turn act responsibly. In this context, the questions of how citizens, especially the poor, express voice with influence, and how institutional responsiveness and accountability can be ensured, have become paramount. To be meaningful, arguments for participation and institutional accountability must become grounded in a conception of rights, which, in a development context, strengthens the status of citizens from that of beneficiaries of development to its rightful and legitimate claimants Gaventa (2002).

Conceptual Framework



From the conceptual framework, it was noted that analyses were to be made between the independent variable (Citizen Participation) involving quality of participation, the educative dividend of participation and the collective, affective experience of participation; influences the dependent variable (Performance of socio-economic development projects) as reflected by access to services, empowerment and stakeholder satisfaction

Methodology

Research design

This study employed a before and after study design as well as a mixed research design. Data triangulation was conducted. The before and after study design also known as pre-test and post-test study design consists of studying one study population at two different points in time with a view to establishing change in a phenomenon or variable. Uncontrolled before and after studies measure performance before and after the introduction of an intervention in the same study site(s) and observed differences in performance are assumed to be due to the intervention (Eccles *et al.*, 2003; Bogere & Gesa, 2018). In this study it was used because it is intended to determine whether or not residents had been empowered; and accessed better services following the advent of the projects and to ascertain the level of satisfaction of stakeholders.

The Population of the Study

The study population for this research comprised of the residents of Bugesera and Kirehe districts also known to be the beneficiaries of the Bugesera agriculture development support project and the Kirehe watershed management project. According to the fourth Rwanda Population and Housing census, Bugesera district which is composed of 15 sectors has a total population of 361, 914 persons while Kirehe district composed of 12 sectors has a total population of 340, 368 persons (NISR, 2012). The two districts thus constituted 27 per cent of the overall population of Rwanda then.

Research Instruments

Self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data from residents of Bugesera and Kirehe districts bearing in mind the projected beneficiary households as well as from heads of “Imidugudu”- a collection of homes that is also the smallest administrative group, Imidugudu health advisors, sector agriculture assistants as well as local leaders and opinion leaders. This was largely used to conduct a quantitative study. A self-administered questionnaire was additionally used to gather data specifically from key informants.

Findings Presentation, Interpretation And Discussion

Pilot Results

Pretest was done on the small – scale that consisted of 162 sample size, were data was collected and analyzed and interpreted as in the following sub-sections.

Reliability

According to Bogere & Gesa, (2018); and Amin, (2005) reliability refers to how consistent a research procedure or instrument is. It is the degree of consistency or repeatability of findings. Sasaka *et al.*, (2014) on the other hand pointed out that reliability is the ability of the research instrument to give the same answer in the same circumstances from time to time. If respondents answer a questionnaire the same way on repeated situations, then the questionnaire is said to be reliable.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	162	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	162	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Test statistics Results

Governance Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Comment	F-Test	Sig	N
Citizen Participation	4.0025	1.08294	4	0.535	Moderate			
Performance of socio economic development projects	4.3287	0.89921	15	0.610	Moderate			
Cronbach's Alpha				0.969				
Grand Mean	4.229					167.782	0.000	162

This study conducted a pilot test analysis to ascertain if the research instrument would bring out reliable information. The number of items tested in the pilot study questionnaire was 162. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study. In their study, Theuri *et al.*, (2015) showed that Cronbach's alpha values ranges between 0 and 1.0; while 1.0 indicates perfect reliability, the value 0.70 is deemed to be the lower level of acceptability. The reliability statistic for the questionnaire items is presented in table above. The analysis established that the Cronbach's Alpha α = 0.820, which means that the questionnaires' internal reliability, was high and consistent. According to the Cronbach's Alpha 0.70 to 0.90 = High reliability, questionnaire items were acceptable and highly reliable.

Factor analysis was used to check validity of the constructs in this study. Factor analysis (FA) is an exploratory technique applied to a set of observed variables that seeks to find underlying factors or subsets of variables, from which the observed variables were generated. Several tests were used to assess the suitability of the respondent data for factor analysis prior to extraction of the factors. The tests included Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity. The study applied the KMO Measures of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity to test whether the relationship among the variables was significant or not as shown in table below. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measures of Sampling Adequacy shows the value of test statistic as 0.872, which is greater than 0.5 hence an acceptable index.

While Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity shows the value of test statistic as 0.000 which is less than 0.05 acceptable indexes. These results indicate a highly significant relationship among variables.

Model Summary- KWAMP

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.942 ^a	.886	.886	.30372

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional factors, Accountability

Multicollinearity- KWAMP

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Citizen participation	.452	2.214

a. Dependent Variable: performance of socio economic development projects - KWAMP

Model Summary- PADAB

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.965 ^a	.931	.931	2.51624

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institution factors PADAB, Citizen participation PADAB,

Multi Collinearity Statistics- PADAB

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Citizen participation PADAB	.210	4.754

a. Dependent Variable: performance of socioeconomic development projects PADAB

Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) state that Multicollinearity can occur in multiple regression models in which some of the independent variables are significantly correlated among themselves. In a regression model that best fits the data, independent variables correlate highly with dependent variables but correlate at best minimally with each other. Multicollinearity is thus a case of multiple regression in which the predictor variables are themselves highly correlated. Multicollinearity is associated with Variance inflation factor (VIF) above 5 and tolerance below 0.2. More specifically a commonly given rule of thumb is that the variance inflation factor (VIF) of 10 or higher; and tolerance below 0.2 may be a reason for concern (Landau & Everitt, 2003; Makori & Jagongo, 2013). The regression analyses are tested to see if there is a presence of autocorrelation and multicollinearity in the data variance inflation frequency statistics (Ruhio *et al.*, 2014). The results of this study indicate that all the variables had a VIF of less than 5 and tolerance of more than 0.2 for both PADAB and KWAMP which implies that there was no multicollinearity problem as showed in table 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7. The scores of these statistical tests were accepted, implying that there was no presence of autocorrelation and multicollinearity in the data. The independent variable of the study was therefore accepted for further analysis as they did not exhibit multicollinearity.

Normality Test

the inferential methods require checking the normality assumption. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was first derived by Kolmogorov (1933) and later modified and proposed as a test by Smirnov (1948). If the test statistic gives large values then it indicates the data are not normal. When population parameters are unknown then sample estimates are used instead of parameter values.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Conclusions

The following conclusions were made from the analyses of the objective on citizens' participation and performance of socioeconomic development projects in Rwanda. The study confirmed existence of citizen participation in deciding how the problem of drought in their area was to be solved, citizen participation in implementing at least one of the activities of the projects, citizen participation in monitoring and/or evaluation of the implementation of the projects and channel through which to report challenges encountered by the projects positively influenced the performance of socio economic projects in Rwanda. These findings emphasize that citizen participation was critical for performance of socioeconomic development projects in Rwanda, and that it helps create a sense of ownership of the projects within the citizenry, helps increase productivity, and develops a culture of problem solving and further the citizens' knowledge with respect to monitoring and evaluation of socioeconomic development projects.

The study confirmed statistically that citizen participation has significantly influenced performance of socioeconomic development projects in Rwanda. Citizen participation in project activities makes planning, management and implementation of project plans easy precisely because of a sense of ownership developed but also because the citizens themselves may actually be at the heart of the problem. The citizen also gain better insights into ways of using established channels to deal with challenges facing the projects; running activities and getting involved in decision making. The findings of the study help to further explain the findings by Mitchells & De Graaf (2017) that citizen participation has become normal practice in local democracy; and that various forms and types of citizen participation have developed, leading to consequential changes in the roles of local administration. Mitchells & De Graaf (2017) further established that over time, governments

around the world have introduced and gained experience with a wide range of instruments to enhance citizen involvement in policymaking and implementation, including different forms of interactive policymaking, deliberative forms and e-governance as is the case in Rwanda. The Utilitarianism theory was found to provide a good framework for analysis of the citizen participation dimension of governance and how it impacts on performance of socioeconomic development projects.

Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the objective of the study which involved the influence of citizen participation on performance of socioeconomic projects in Rwanda and are derived from the findings of the study. The study recommends that stakeholders encourage full and quality citizen participation. Government, stakeholders, project staff and management should have a clear purpose of the project to be undertaken, take the local context into account and permit citizen participation to remain focused in this context while continuing to allow meaningful citizen participation in policy making and project implementation so as to tap into the citizens' understanding and specific knowledge of their environment. The study further recommends that citizens embrace participation with a mindset of collaboration, seeking to use the experience and knowledge gained in by way of partnership with other stakeholders. Opinion leaders and local leaders need to play an advocacy within the citizenry to inculcate this mind set in them.

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