THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Community Participation in Decision Making and Sustainability of Primary Schools in Uganda

Gerald Barungi Mutakooha
Program Development Manager, Department of Business Development,
Uganda Women to Save Orphans (UWESO), Uganda
Paschal Bamwenda
Program Coordinator, Department of Integrated Children and Youth Development (ICYD-USAID) Program, Uganda Women to Save Orphans (UWESO), Uganda

Abstract:
The study investigated the relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of private primary schools in Uganda. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between community t participation in: decision making and sustainability of selected primary schools in four districts, Uganda. The study was a cross-sectional survey that adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches to observe a sample of 269 respondents using Questionnaires and interview guides. used in the study. Whereas qualitative data was analyzed using content and thematic analysis, quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found a positive significant relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of private primary schools in Uganda. The study recommended that communities should be mobilized and empowered through community representatives to be more involved in management and monitoring of private undertaking like school.

Keywords: Sustainability, sustainable, community participation and Decision Making

1. Background

Education is a major component of wellbeing and is critical for reduction of poverty, morbidity and mortality rates (Cohen, S. A., & Richards, C. L. (1994). it directly serves the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically SDG1, 3, 4, 5&10. Sustainability of development interventions including education interventions, have for some time been part of a crucial debate in development agendas (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Governmental responsibility in education started in the late 19th century and became the norm in the mid-20th century. This was often done by taking control of or building on a system that was run by non-state actors (Crowson, N.2013). While Bray describes this practice as an illustration of the long history of partnership in education, his works also illustrated the origin of community participation in education systems in many countries, with the consequential increased government control, community participation decreased in most of the developing world, (Sumintono, B., 2006).

Formal community participation through schools' management committees (SMC) occurred primarily in government school systems, (Carney, S., Bista, M., &Agergaard, J., 2007). But now, a growing number of organizations have also established and are managing schools which were usually created with the community to fill needs that were not met by the formal government system (Starkey, K., & Madan, P. (2001). On contrary, in these church-founded schools, communities controlled most aspects of the school including recruiting and paying teachers, approved curriculum, financed, and procured materials. Would this mean that such schools were more sustainable than the formal government schools?Maybe this was the question to address. However, SMC and PTAs represented the primary ways through which communities participated in schools, (SMC hand book, 2005Uganda Ministry of education)

Accordingly, over the last 30 years a wide range of organizations with different agendas have started involving local people in their own development, (Walsham, G. 2017).Traditionally, sustainability of rural development initiatives was about allowing rural communities to take control of their future, recognizing, and fostering further development of existing community capacity through their participation, (Cavaye,2001).For sustainable development to be realized, community participation where individual skills and social networks are developed should be emphasized(Henry M et al., 2001).Cavaye, (2001) contended that communities make and implement their own decisions. This meant that if any project is to be sustainable, has to involve the local communities in decision making. Kenneth and Russell (2009) highlighted that the colonial rule did not only fail to develop mechanisms for the participation of parents and communities, but excluded the majority of these populations from accessing education.

Epstein, J. L., & Van Voorhis, F. L, (2001), the tripartite interaction of home, school and community contexts in which children were raised optimized the influence on children's development, these created overlapping objectives and responsibilities for children. Therefore, the school and the community need to cooperate in defining goals and organizing activities for sustainable schools. The question that remained unanswered was whether these schools continued to deliver

the quality of services and performance they were supposed to deliver? Community participation in development projects has become an important element in the design, implementation and consequently sustainability of development projects like education, (Paul, S. (1987). In the primary school projects, accommodating theconcerns, needs and interests of communities in education decision making, planning and management could help to generate strong demand for education, and sustainability of schools (Blumenfeld, P., Fishman, B. J., Krajcik, 2000).

The participation of communities was intended to promote sustainability of education projects. Despite community participation as recommended by different scholars, sustainability of primary schools in the four districts under study was still a distant reality.Furthermore, Annualstaff turnover in these private primary schools specifically redeemed of the lord evangelistic church (ROLEC) founded schools was still high. Every school on average lost eight staff every year; class rooms and staff quarter were not refurbished for a long time; and pupil's enrolments and performance in these schools over a period has declined. The study therefore, intended to examine whether there was a relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of church founded primary schools in Uganda.

2. Methodology

The study investigated the effects of community participation on sustainability of private primary school in the four districts of Kikuube, Mbarara, Lwengo and Wakiso specifically the study was done on church founded schools in Uganda, taking a case study of ROLEC primary schools. This included Munteme Junior Primary school, Kaswa Primary school, Adullum Primary school and Bussi Junior primary school.

The study was a cross sectional that adopted a descriptive design in which both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used. Whereas a cross sectional survey was selected to enable collection of vast information from several sources at the same point in time, a descriptive approach was adopted, descriptive qualitative approaches deployed interviews method. It also deployed documentary review method. These gave additional information on the quantitative information collected.

The study was conducted in the redeemed church founded primary schools located in the four districts of Uganda including Mbarara in Biharwe Sub County and Kishasa parish, Kikuube district Munteme Sub County, Wakiso district (Bussi islands) and Kaswa in Lwengo district and the head quarter at redeemed church Kampala. These schools are located among the remote vulnerable communities in the four mentioned project areas. The study covered financial year 2007-2016. This is crucial period when the schools faced turbulence given the established community participation spaces. It was during this time that alternative plans for sustainability of these four primary schools had to be drawn and suggestions had to be mobilized for the said plan. The study scope considered community participation and sustainability of schools. The study population was four ROLEC primary schools in the four districts of Uganda. The population categories under investigation composed of parent teacher association (PTA) 40 and SMC 48 executive communities and 734 parents from the four schools

2.1. Sample Size and Selection

The sample size was 269 determined by applying the formulae n = N/ (1 + Ne ^{2}) developed by Slovan (Yamane, 1967); n=Sample; N= Population size, e = Level of significance (5%).
Then the proportion samples were taken as below:
$n = \frac{822}{1+822\times e^2} = \frac{822}{3.055} = 269$:
Using Yamane 1967 the total sample size calculated and studied was 269.
 The number of SMC calculated and studied $= \frac{48}{822} \times 269 = $ 16

The number of PTA studied   = $\frac{40}{822} \times$ 269 = 13; Parents = $\frac{734}{822}$ ×269 = 240.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to refer to where the investigator chose the respondents by the virtue of one's position, experience and expert knowledge on matters related to the school. This was applied on executive committee members of PTA and SMC. The study considers four (4) SMC executive committee members and four (4) PTA executive committee members for Hoima and three for remaining three primary schools. This was so because Munteme junior school in Kikuube district PTA and SMC committees seemed to be more active than the rest of the schools. therefore, these included any of the committee members depending on their expert knowledge, the period one has served in that capacity and the number of years one has lived in this community not less than five years. This sampling technique was used on the community members that are parents in the four schools, Munteme junior school, Kaswa primary, Adullum primary school and Bussi junior school. From this, a representative sample was selected out of the total of 734 parents/ was determined using a formula by Yamane (1967). 16 respondents out of 48 from school management committees SMC and 13 out of 40 from PTA executive committees were purposively selected as elaborated in the table.

The researcher selected 16 respondents from the SMC and 13 from PTA because parents were already widely reached through questionnaires the researcher decided to give more attention to management committees through interviews to dig out in depth view about the study topic.

2.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed to selected and trained data collectors in the respective schools by the researcher personally in order to ensure accountability and a high response rate. Qualitative data was obtained by use of qualitative methods as mentioned earlier; documentary review and interviews were analyzed using content analysis technique. Firstly, qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis technique. Written texts and artifacts obtained during

interviews, observation and documentary review was explored by reading through all of it to obtain a general sense of the information.

Quantitative data analysis, raw data from the field was shorted edited to check the completeness, accuracy and consistency of responses. For descriptive analysis,SPSS was used to determine the measure of central tendencies data was then. To establish the strength of linear relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of private primary specifically church founded schools, the researcher used correlation coefficient to measure this relation.

3. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

3.1. Introduction

The study investigated the effects of community participation on sustainability of church founded schools in Uganda, taking a case of ROLEC primary schools. This chapter presents, analyzes and interprets the study findings First the sub-section presents the response rate followed by the demographic information about the respondent. This was followed by the presentation and analysis of the study findings in relation to the specific objectives. The empirical findings are presented using descriptive statics of mean, standard deviation, and correlation co efficiency in relation to the specific objectives of the study. The empirical findings are presented objective by objective

3.2. Community Participation in Decision Making and Sustainability of Private Primary School/ ROLEC Founded Primary Schools

The study sought to establish howcommunity participation in decision making affects sustainability of private primary schools. The objective was addressed by asking respondents to indicate on a five Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with a number of question items. On a scale of 1-5, the following abbreviations were adopted: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Don't Know (DK) and these were used. The study findings also showed that the respondentcommunity membersagreed that decisions were made through voting with mean= (3.36) out (of 5) this was above average. Community members participated in planning and budgeting (Mean = 3.03) and the schools had a moderately active PTA committee (Mean = 3.94). Similarly, findings showed that the PTA meetings were averagely convened every term (Mean = 3.52) and the decisions were reached. Through voting (Mean = 3.69). The study findings also show that the parents were consulted when management intended to take any serious decision (Mean = 3.46).

The study findings however showed that the head teacher rarely reads the budget every term to parents (Mean = 2.77). The study generally found a moderate level of community participation in decision making ofROLEC founded primary schools (Mean = 2.72).

3.3. Correlation of Community Participation in Decision Making and School Sustainability

The relationships between the study variables were presented using the Pearson (r) correlations coefficient (r). A positive relationship is said to exist between two variables X and Y if an increment in X causes an increase in Y. These two would be negatively related if an Increment in X causes a decline in Y as in the case of Price and demand. The results in the table above show that there is a positive relationship between community Participation in Decision making and School Sustainability (r = .551**, p<.05). When parents are given an opportunity to vote for the school leaders, this is likely to give rise to competent people in the school who will steer the school to its vision. On a related note, when parents have a say in the various school activities, they will be able to give constructive advice such as ways of cost cutting, making the school more sustainable.

		Community Decision Making	School Sustainability
Community Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	205	
School Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	.551**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	205	204
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Community Participation in Decision Making and Sustainability
Source: Primary Data

3.4. Model Summery on the Effects of Community Decision Making on School Sustainability

In order to establish the extent community participation in decision making influenced sustainability of church founded schools, a regression was run and the table below represents the results showing the extent.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.015	.295		.052	.958
Community Decision Making	.721	.077	.551	9.403	.000
Dependent Variable: School Sustainability					
R	.551				
R Square	.303				
Adjusted R Square	.300				
F Statistic	88.424				
Sig.	.000				

Table 2: Model Summery Community Participation in Decision Making and Sustainability
Source: Primary Data

The model summeryestablishedthat thecommunity Participation in decision making influenced 30.0% the of changes in the school sustainability. The regression model was statistically significant (sig. <.05). This means thatcommunity participation in decision making can influence almost a third of the changes in sustainability of church founded schools making it one of the strong influences that should not be ignored if church established schools are to be sustainable.

In order to establish whether those schools that are said to have involved their communities in decision making were more sustainable than others, analysis of variance between schools on the said dimensions was carried out.

3.5. Analysis of Variance between Schools on Community Participation in Decision Making
The analysisestablished that there were significant differences in community participation in Decision Making and, on this construct, it is Munteme Junior School that ranked highest (Mean = 4.640, SD = .515) followed by Kaswa and boarding primary school with 4.000, SD=.970 while SD=.550).

Sustainability	Number	mean	SD	Std
Munteme Junior Primary School	50	4.470	.745	.105
Kaswa day and boarding primary school	51	3.010	.552	.077
Bussi Junior school Primary school	79	1.781	.601	.068
Adullum primary school	25	1.440	.363	.073
Total	205	2.701	1.294	.090

Table 3: Analysis of Variance on the Sustainability of Private FoundedSchool
Source: Primary Data

According to the analysis it was established Munteme junior school seemed to be more sustainable than rest with mean=4.470, followed by Kaswa Day and evening primary school with mean=3.010, Bussi Junior school mean=1.781 and Adullum primary school mean=1.440. In order to hermonise the positions of school's analysis of variance oncommunity participation in decision making and sustainability of church founded schools a graphical expression was used to present the findings.

Name of School		Sustainability	Decision Making
Munteme Junior Primary sch		4.47	4.64
Kaswa		3.01	4
Bussi junior sch		1.781	3.405
Adullum primary sch		1.44	2.36

Table 4: Analysis of School's Variances on Community Participation in Decision Making and Sustainability
Source: Primary Data

In line with the assertion above, the documentary review in line with theme under analysis, indicated that three schools out of four had PTA meetings convened both lists and meeting minutes were seen and were dully signed by the executive committees and issues discussed related sustainability of the schools. However, for Adullum primary school there were no records for both PTA executive and general meetings and all schools SMC meeting records looked not to be up to date hence seem to indicate that SMC are not functional.

In the same vein the verbatim expressions had the following; One of the executive committee members in one of the schools asserted that;

'Decisions are taken from Kampala and are not communicated to community members nor are we consulted but the school administration is just directed to implement, these are their schools we left them to do what they want for us we will bring our children so long as the standard is good', our school seem not to be willing to convene PTA executive and general meetings for almost three years'Said by three PTA executive members.'since 2010 and 2011 our responsibilities were taken up by head office, we don't know what we are for we just see things happen we

don't know from where we actually stopped asking because we thought we were partners we the church but later we discovered that church probably would want to do their thing,'said one SMC chairperson.

The study findings indicated overall moderate relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of ROLEC founded primary schools. The Moderate relationship was indicative of the situation where the communities were detached from the development intervention and they were uncertain of their stake in the schools. This level of community participation in decision making was supported by verbatim expression which indicated that communities did not participate in key decision making for example budgeting, construction and recruitment of staff. These findings therefore disagreed with the assertion by Talbot and Verrinder (2005) that community participation is a concept that attempts to bring different people together for problem-solving and decision making. This meant that in attempt to complement government efforts to increase access to education ROLEC had to mobilize the communities in these four districts to address the problem but also allow them to participate in key decision making.

On the same note (Collins-Webb, J., 2002) alluded thatcommunity participation is a more robust factual base and reducing uncertainty. In the same vein (Olatunbosun, S. M., &Bayode, A. O.2014), articulated that participation in education was empowering process in which beneficiaries feel the sense of belongingness in the planning, implementation and sustenance of developmental project in theircommunity(Klugman, J. 2011), contended that the involving of communities in school decision making improved school management and sustainability the same view is supported by (J. Naidoo 2005) pointed out, community decision making in education reduces inequities mainly when financial responsibility is delegated to local communities. The t results were also quite related to (Yadete, W. A. 2012) assertion that the involvement of parents, teachers, local councilors and education officials in school management could help to promote decision-making at school level, which improves the quality of schooling, students' achievement and sustainability.

In support of this view, (Tadesse, T., Manathunga, C. E., &Gillies, R. M.2018).)confirmed thatcommunity' participation in decision making process was one of the most important aspects of democratic process. Major element of democracy was participation and involvement of people in matters that affect their life. The effectiveness of community participation therefore, was expected to depend on its representativeness, independency, earlier involvement of, level of influence and transparency in decision making process.

The foregoing discussion was sustained by Stiglitz, J. E. (1997), thatcommunity participation was considered a democratic right, as well as a means to achieve sustainable development and poverty alleviation. This emphasis was based on the assertion that planning should include the residents of an area, and they should be given the chance to participate in the planning of the area's future development and express their opinions related to the kind of futurea community' they would like to live in (Inskeep, 1991).

. As observed by Simpson, K. (2001). if Redeemed church had given every individual in local communities' a chance to participate in development of these schools at an early stage, there would have been sufficient consensus of opinion to permit broad based planning objectives. Community would provide valuable input into the decision-making process. Kantabutra, S., &Saratun, M. (2013) sustained that accommodating concerns, needs and interests of the community in decision making, planning and management could help to generate strong demand from those entrusted with administration for sustainable approaches.

Fridgen, J.D. (1996) noted that residents have both the right and obligation to participate in the development processes that will shape the future of their communities and their lives. This was because local people will have to live each day with the effects of development including increased numbers of people, increased use of roads and various economic and employment-based effects (Mirzaei, R. 2013).

Even though community participation structures such PTA and SMC but, in some schools, it was established, they take long to convene PTA and SMC both executive and general meetings and key decisions are made by ROLEC project office without consulting or informing parents and they were implemented in the schools.

4. Conclusions

The conclusions are derived from the discussion above and the first hypothesis in line with the first theme stated that the involvement of community members in decision making had no relationship with sustainability of church founded primary schools in Uganda. The findings of the study however, provided sufficient evidence to conclude that there was a significant positive relationship between community participation in decision making and sustainability of church founded primary schools in Uganda. Basing on such background, it was emphatic to assert that community participation in decision making should be upheld by any church-based organization from the design stage of an education project through all the project execution if such interventions were to be sustainable.

5. Areas for Further Research

Same study should be conducted in other government schoolsto generate a more balanced view about the sustainability of schools in Uganda. Study should be conducted to investigate about other variables that may influence sustainability to enrich possible alternatives for sustainability of education projects and any other project

6. References

i. Blumenfeld, P., Fishman, B. J., Krajcik, J., Marx, R. W., &Soloway, E. (2000). Creating usable innovations in systemic reform: Scaling up technology-embedded project-based science in urban schools. *Educational psychologist*, *35*(3), 149-164.

ii. Carney, S., Bista, M., &Agergaard, J. (2007). 'Empowering' the 'local' through education? Exploring community-managed schooling in Nepal. *Oxford Review of Education*, *33*(5), 611-628.

iii. Cavaye, J., 2001. Rural Community Development: New Challenges and Enduring Dilemmas. *Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy*, *31*(1), pp.109-124.

iv. Cohen, S. A., & Richards, C. L. (1994). The Cairo consensus: population, development and women. *Family planning perspectives*, *26*(6), 272-277.

v. Collins-Webb, J. (2002). *Decision Support for Sustainable Water Supply Development*. University of Surrey (United Kingdom).

vi. Epstein, J. L., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2001). More than minutes: Teachers' roles in designing homework. *Educational psychologist*, *36*(3), 181-193.

vii. Fridgen, J. D. (1996). *Tourism and the Hospitality industry*. Educational Institute, American Hotel & Motel Association.

viii. González-Zamar, M.D., Abad-Segura, E., López-Meneses, E. and Gómez-Galán, J., 2020. Managing ICT for sustainable education: Research analysis in the context of Higher Education. *Sustainability*, *12*(19), p.8254.

ix. Henry, M., Lingard, R., Rizvi, F. and Taylor, S., 2001. *The OECD, globalization and education policy*. Elsevier Science.

x. Hilton, M., McKay, J., Mouhot, J. F., &Crowson, N. (2013). *The politics of expertise: How NGOs shaped modern Britain*. Oxford University Press.

xi. Inskeep, E. (1991). *Tourism planning: An integrated and sustainable development approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

xii. Kantabutra, S., &Saratun, M. (2013). Sustainable leadership: Honeybee practices at Thailand's oldest university. *International Journal of Educational Management*.

xiii. Klugman, J. (2011). Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A better future for all. *Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All (November 2, 2011). UNDP-HDRO Human Development Reports*.

xiv. Mirzaei, R. (2013). Modeling the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of nature-based tourism to the host communities and their support for tourism. *Perceptions of Local Population: Mazandaran, North of Iran. Licentiate thesis. University of Giessen for the degree of Dr. rer. nat*.

xv. Naidoo, J. (2005). Education decentralization in Africa: Great expectations and unfulfilled promises. In *Global trends in educational policy*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

xvi. Olatunbosun, S. M., &Bayode, A. O. (2014). Community stakeholders' Participation for Sustainable Educational Development: The Nigerian Experience. *Research Journal in Organizational Psychology and Educational Studies (RJOPES)*, *3*(1), 28.

xvii. Paul, S. (1987). community stakeholders' *participation in development projects: The World Bank experience*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.

xviii. Russell, K. A. (2009). Community stakeholders' Participation in Schools in Developing Countries: Characteristics, Methods and Outcomes. *Online Submission*. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED519214.

xix. Simpson, K. (2001). Strategic planning and community involvement as contributors to sustainable tourism development. *Current issues in Tourism*, *4*(1), 3-41.

xx. Starkey, K., & Madan, P. (2001). Bridging the relevance gap: Aligning community stakeholders in the future of management research. *British Journal of management*, *12*, S3-S26.

xxi. Stiglitz, J. E. (1997). The role of government in economic development. In *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics* (Vol. 1996, pp. 11-23). Washington DC: World Bank.

xxii. Sumintono, B. (2006). Decentralized centralism: School based management policies and practices at state secondary schools in Mataram, Lombok, Indonesia.

xxiii. Tadesse, T., Manathunga, C. E., &Gillies, R. M. (2018). Making sense of quality teaching and learning in higher education in Ethiopia: Unfolding existing realities for future promises. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, *15*(1), 4.

xxiv. Talbot, L., &Verrinder, G. L. E. N. D. A. (2005). Promoting health. *The Primary Health Care Approach.*

xxv. Walsham, G. (2017). ICT4D research: reflections on history and future agenda. *Information Technology for Development*, *23*(1), 18-41.

xxvi. Yadete, W. A. (2012). *School management and decision-making in Ethiopian government schools*. Young Lives.