

Influence of youth participation in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes

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ABSTRACT

There is low participation of young people in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes leading to failure in their acquisition of vocational skills for self-reliance. This study determined influence of out-of-school youth participation in decision-making on the implementation, to suggest measures to enhance their engagement for success. It was conducted in five typical Kenyan farming systems. Cross-sectional survey design, stratified, simple random and purposive sampling were used to select 160 adolescents who studied school agriculture but once out, had registered with youth groups engaged in it for self-reliance. Data was collected with questionnaires, analyzed by qualitative and inferential statistics at probability level $p \leq 0.05$. The linear regression correlation analysis confirms significant positive correlation ($R = 0.437$, $p = p \text{ value} \leq 0.001$) between level of participation in decision making and level of implementation of agricultural extension programmes. The result suggests that improving participation of out-of-school youth in decision-making would boost success in the implementation of agricultural extension programmes and enhance acquisition of vocational skills thus enhancing self-reliance. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed that level of implementation increases with rise in participation in decision making. Therefore, the proposed strategies possibly represent an effective scheme to transfer vocational skills to youth to enhance involvement in the implementation of the programmes for self-reliance.

Keywords: agricultural extension programmes, self-reliance, Youth decision-making on implementation

INTRODUCTION

The aspirations of the secondary school agriculture curriculum in Kenya were to promote the study of agriculture science both as an academic discipline and as vocation for self-reliance (Ochieng- Konyango & Asienyo, 2015). The vocational goal is meant to be achieved through a practical approach in the implementation of the curriculum which results in the transfer of farming skills to adolescents. But Ochieng- Konyango & Asienyo, (2015) observe that school agriculture programme has probably not made an impact on the practical aspect of the subject meant to promote vocational skills. Therefore, out of school youth who have completed the curriculum may have constraint of inadequate vocational skills in agriculture for self-reliance. To address the limitations, the Government of Kenya (GoK) initiated the Kenya agricultural rural youth extension programme in 1995 to transfer knowledge, skills and change attitudes of young people in rural areas. It is through youth groups that the Ministry engages young people in the implementation of

agricultural extension programmes in various aspects of the agricultural activities in which they are involved such as education content, crop and livestock production and nutrition. Specific measures in the programmes are to empower youth through capacity-building under technical and vocational training in farming. Also, introduction of new farming technologies such as green houses, drip kits, fish ponds and water harvesting facilities, that reduce drudgery, increase productivity and returns to labour (Kenya national youth policy, Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2007). Mager & Nowak (2012) define participation as involvement in collective decision-making process that includes dialogue amongst participants and other decision-makers and is not confined to individual decision making. The definition suggests that participation is said to occur when those involved have some influence over the decisions being made and actions being taken, rather than "taking part" or "being present".

There is problem of low youth engagement in decision making on implementation of

agricultural extension programmes leading to poor acquisition of vocational skills meant to enable them efficiently execute farming projects for self-reliance. In the absence of effective participation, their interests are possibly left out resulting in poor accomplishment of the programmes, achieving little in self-reliance. According to the World Youth Report (2003) harnessing the active involvement of youth in decision making represents an effective strategy for efficient implementation to achieve better outcomes. However, many stakeholders such as politicians, community leaders and society are far from convinced that without participation to decide on what is good for themselves, planning and implementation process, youth involvement would most likely remain low hence lack of self-sufficiency.

The objective of the study is to determine influence of participation of out-of-school youth in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes

The hypothesis of the study is that participation of out-of-school youth in decision making does not significantly influence implementation of agricultural extension programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The study area, Kisii and Nyamira counties region, southwest Kenya, has been characterized by Jaetzold & Schmidt (1992) into five agro-ecological zones. In the study, these zones were adopted as farm types and used as unique sampling locations for youth. The farm types were used to obtain diverse youth population segments of respondents with varied exposures to agricultural activities, opportunities and experiences arising from different farming systems. The farm types are typical of similar ones in the Kenyan highlands and described as: 1) Tea-dairy zone, 2) Tea-coffee zone, 3) Maize-pyrethrum zone, 4) Coffee-banana zone and, 5) Marginal-sugarcane zone.

The out-of-school young people were purposively sampled from youth groups spread across the five farm types of the two counties. Specifically, youth who had studied secondary school agriculture and therefore presumed to have acquired vocational skills in the subject sampled as respondents. There were 75 registered

youth groups found in the five farm types and actively involved in the implementation of agricultural extension programmes for self-reliance. The groups had a total of 280 out-of-school young people who had studied agriculture in secondary schools. The number of youth sampled as respondents per farm type were proportionate to their total population. Out of the 280 (N) youths, 160 (n) were sampled as respondents in accordance to tabulated guidelines by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) which summarizes sample sizes for different study populations. Purposive and stratified random sampling proportion procedures resulted in: 29 youth from tea-dairy, 9 from maize-pyrethrum, 32 youth from tea-coffee, 32 from coffee-banana, and 58 youth from sugarcane chewing and crushing farm types. At farm type level, simple random sampling technique was used to select the youth who participated in the study.

The investigation adopted an-ex-post facto research design and a cross-sectional survey approach to study the influence of participation of youth in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; and Konthari, 2004).

The questionnaire used was closed type and had two Likert rating scales; one coded 1 to 10 for measuring the level of participation in decision making and level of implementation of agricultural extension programmes by youth, where 1– 4 meant low level, 5 – 7 was average while 8 – 10 meant high level of participation.

The other scale was coded, 1 to 5, and was used to rate the strategies proposed to increase the participation of youth in decision making on the implementation, where: 1=Not Important; 2=Least important; 3=Important; 4=Very Important, 5=Extremely Important. The frequency of the respondents, who ticked the scale of 1 to 5, was then used to calculate mean score for each strategy. Mean scores were described as not important if the average score was less than 1.50, least important if between 1.50 and 2.50, important if between 2.50 and 3.50, very important between 3.50 and 4.50, and extremely important if between 4.50 and 5.00.

The questionnaires were left with sub-county agricultural extension officers in charge of the 75 registered youth groups to assist in their

administration to the target respondents. The researcher picked the filled questionnaires from sub-county extension officers after a period of one month as agreed. There was 95% return back rate of the filled questionnaires. The respondents answered the questionnaire items by ticking [✓] the two scales that were provided appropriately.

The following qualitative and quantitative statistical tools were applied in data analysis: two tailed t-test, analysis of variance, Tukey post hoc test, Spearman correlation two tailed and linear correlation. Means were used to describe the strategies proposed to increase participation of youth in decision making process on implementation of agricultural extension programmes that concern them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rating of strategies proposed to increase participation of out-of-school youth in decision making

There are five strategies that were proposed to improve participation of out-of-school youth engagement in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes (Table 1). The mean percentage scores of the five strategies are tabulated in Table 1. The F-test on the ratings of the strategies is presented in Table 2 ($F = 4.96541$, $P \text{ value} \leq 0.000588$) and indicates significant difference in the rankings of the five strategies by out-of-school youth. Tukey post hoc test provided mean separation of the strategy ratings (Table 3). From the result, the five strategies were all rated as being very to extremely important (Table, 3). The result shows that strategy 5 had significantly the highest rating mean ($\bar{x} = 4.3125$) compared to the rest. However, this was with exception of strategy 4 which though with a lower ranking mean ($\bar{x} = 4.1$) was statistically similar to strategy 5. Therefore, strategies 5 and 4 are comparable in ranking and are held highest by out-of-school youth as a means to enhance their participation in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes. Strategies 1, 2 and 3 were not significantly different in their mean ratings ($\bar{x} = 3.8813$, $\bar{x} = 3.926$ and $\bar{x} = 4.0125$). Strategy 1 which noted that views of youth should influence decisions of agricultural extension programmers that concern them since

youth are the best agents of their own change was ranked significantly lower than strategies 5 and 4.

Therefore, as stated in strategy 5, out-of-school youth should be provided with accurate information about the agricultural extension programmes to enable them to make informed decisions. Also as indicated in strategy 4, out-of-school youth should be involved in discussions of rules and regulations of accessing extension programme funds for youth-thought modalities to be put in place. The high rating of the need for information to the youth as one of the means to enhance their participation in decision making on implementation of programmes corroborate similar findings by Loncle, Leahy, Muniglia, & Walther (2018). The latter emphasized that youth need the right information in order to participate in decision making. There is need for a mechanism to be put in place to ensure correct information reaches the youth because they are the target of agricultural programmes meant to benefit them. Youth friendly modalities of funding would enhance their access to funding and enhance involvement in implementation of the programmes. According to Amsler *et al.*, (2017) youth are always downplayed when it comes to accessing programme funds on grounds of being irresponsible. The observation is probably the reason youth get discouraged from engagement in decision making ultimately leading to inefficient implementation of the extension programmes, and failure to attain self-reliance objectives. Mager & Nowak (2012) note that, one-off consultations and simple forms of participation such as answering questions and taking part in activities or being represented by adults are not considered participation in the context of decision-making. The result shows that mean for the other strategies; 1, 2 and 3 were rated as important though significantly lower than that of strategy 5 which was considered very important. The finding suggests that strategies 1, 2 and 3 should as well be taken into consideration though of less weight than strategy 5, to facilitate implementation and achieve self-reliance in youth. The overall result in the study, points to the significance of improving participation of out-of-school youth in decision making on implementation to enhance acquisition of skills, and performance of extension programmes to achieve self-reliance in young people in rural areas.

Table 1: Proposed strategies to increase out-of-school youth participation in decision making on implementation of on agricultural extension programmes

No	Proposed strategies to increase participation of out of school youth in decision making	Rating scale and mean ($\bar{x}$) score				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Inviting youth to agricultural extension meetings/workshops for their voices to be heard rather than adults speaking on their behalf from experience	1.9	4.4	21.3	40.6	31.9
2	The views of youth should influence decisions of agricultural extension programmers that concern them since youth are best agents of their own change	3.1	4.4	18.8	48.8	25.0
3	Involving youth in the discussions of rules and regulations of accessing programme funds for youth thought modalities to be put in place	1.3	5.6	16.3	35.6	41.3
4	Youth to have a greater say in choosing agricultural extension programmes for implementation since they are the best agents of their own change and thus the best agents to influence decisions	1.9	6.9	18.1	34.4	38.8
5	Providing youth with accurate information about the initiation, planning and selection processes of agricultural extension programmes, to enable them to make informed decisions	1.3	1.9	10.6	36.9	49.4

Table 2: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of out-of-school youth mean rating of strategies proposed to increase their participation in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes

Source of Variation	Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	F critical
Between Groups	17.42	4	4.355	4.96541	0.000588	2.383132
Within Groups	697.2688	795	0.877068			
Total	714.6888	799				

Table 3: Tukey post hoc test of out-of-school youth mean rating of strategies proposed to increase their participation in decision making on implementation of agricultural extension programmes, n = 160

No.	Proposed strategies to increase participation of out of school youth	Subset for $\alpha \leq 0.05$	
		1	2
1	The views of youth should influence decisions of agricultural extension programmers that concern them since youth are the best agents of their own change	3.8813	
2	Inviting youth to agricultural extension meetings/workshops for their voices to be heard rather than adults speaking on their behalf from experience	3.9625	
3	Youth to have a greater say in choosing agricultural extension programmes for implementation since they are the best agents of their own change and thus the best agents to influence decisions	4.0125	
4	Involving youth in the discussions of rules and regulations of accessing programme funds for youth thought modalities to be put in place	4.1000	4.1000
5	Providing youth with accurate information about the initiation, planning and selection processes of agricultural extension programmes, to enable them make informed decisions		4.3125
	Sig.	.226	.253

Influence of level of participation of out-of-school youth in decision making on level of implementation of agricultural extension programmes

The linear correlation analysis in Figure 1 indicates a highly significant positive correlation ($R = 0.437$, $p \text{ value} \leq .001$) between the level of participation in decision making by out-of-school youth and the level of implementation of agricultural extension programmes.

The result suggests that improving participation of out-of-school youth in decision-making would boost success in the implementation of agricultural extension programmes and enhance acquisition of vocational skills thus enhancing self-reliance. Probably, because increased involvement of youth in decision making would ensure that the extension programmes are designed to incorporate their interests. In that case implementation of programmes would be

successful in transfer of skills in youth thus assisting to achieve their self-reliance. Similar findings were found by Ayinde *et al.*, (2016) who observed that youth were able to put into practice the skills they had acquired from school agriculture or skills acquired by imitating their parents. The ranking of all strategies proposed as important possibly is an indication that out-of-school youth would like to be part and parcel of decision making on implementation of the agricultural extension programmes. Such engagement especially on rules and regulations governing accessibility of funds for the implementation of programmes as suggested in strategy 4 would guarantee their modalities in funding are taken care of in the processes of conception, selection, planning and execution. Also, it would ensure their recognition as mature persons who can make decisions on issues concerning them rather than being represented or dictated, yet they would be the best agents of their own change.

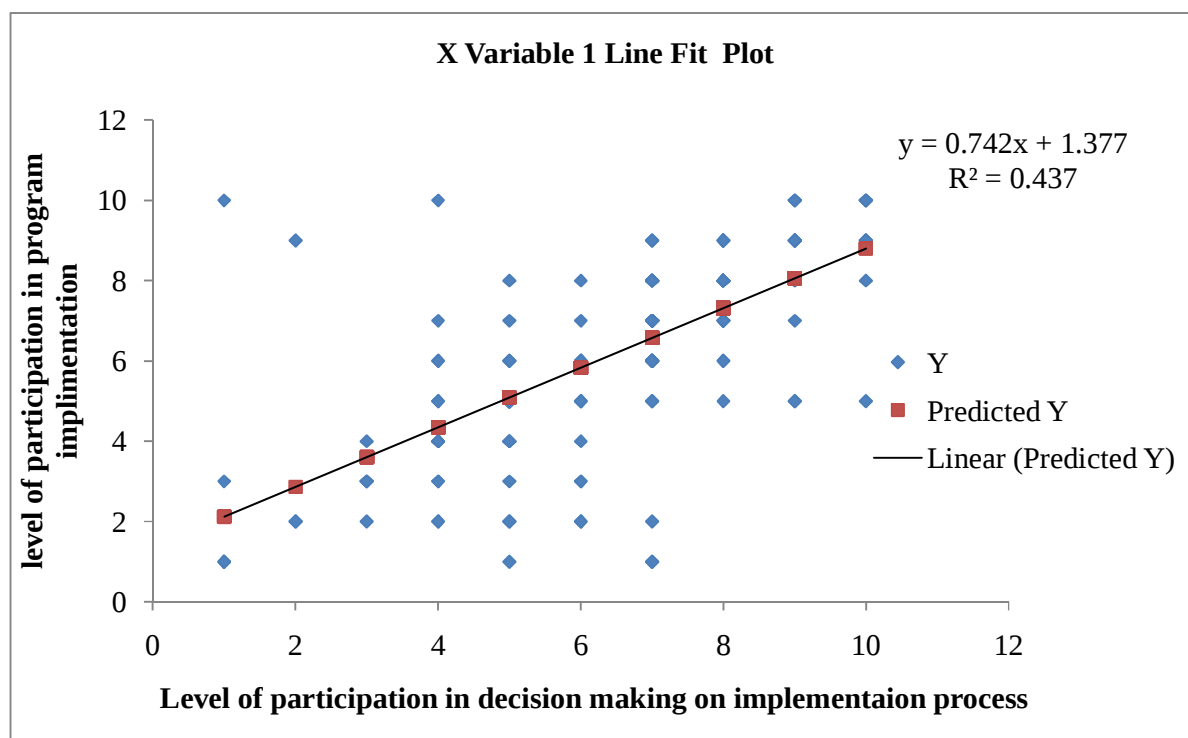


Figure 1: Relationship between level of participation of out-of-school youth in decision making and level of implementation of agricultural extension Programmes

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed strategies possibly represent an effective scheme to transfer vocational skills to

youth. The level of participation in decision making by out of school youth influences the level of implementation of agricultural extension

programmes to acquire vocational skills for self-reliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In agricultural extension, strategy 5 and 4 should be taken into consideration to enhance implementation of programmes and acquisition of vocational skills meant to make youth self-reliant.

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