Community- Based Projects in Nigeria

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Abstract

Experiences in the application of the community-based model for improving the quality of life of poor communities have reported improvement regarding project performance. However, most studies placed emphasis on the overall performance determined at the general level. For this reason, the findings do not allow for an adequate understanding of the explanatory factors for the success or failure of the projects. This article investigates the explanatory factors that account for the success and failure of a community-based development initiative in kebbi-state, Nigeria, using a case study approach.

Keywords: Community-based projects; Social service delivery; Quality of life; Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

The idea of participatory development approach stems from the realization that government efforts towards meeting the developmental needs of the people have not been entirely effective (Yeung & McGee, 1986). The inefficiency of the public sector makes it difficult for many governments to match demand with an adequate provision (Adeogun & Taiwo, 2011). This inefficiency prompted the adoption of participatory strategies towards improving the quality of life of the citizens. The strategies which come in different patterns (self-help, cooperative, self-sustaining and community-based) are termed participatory due to people's participation and organization.

Many evaluation studies (Kapopo, 1993; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Mumtaz, 2001) have reported improvements and successes with the adoption of the community-based development strategy. However, as valuable as they are, those studies have been criticized due to their emphasis on overall program performance. Most often, the studies do not explain the variation in successes and the explanatory factors for them particularly when the aggregate performance is adjudged to be good. This article focuses on investigating the explanatory factors that account for variation in success and failure of a community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) in Kebbi state, Nigeria.

Following a series of consultations between the World Bank and the Nigerian Government, the Kebbi-state Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) was established with the objective of improving the quality of life of poor communities.

Based on a prior assessment of needs conducted in the state, the project identified nine (9) infrastructure sectors to be supported by the fund. The areas include education, water supply, roads, health, market stalls, television viewing centers, skills acquisition centers, rural electrification, and erosion control. The Agency supports micro-projects for up to ₦5million ($26, 600) for CBOs that contribute 10% counter-fund.

Under the program, the agency channels fund directly in helping to build the capacities of communities for development projects. The communities, in return, are expected to identify, implement, and maintain the micro-projects. The funding arrangement is to sustain the project to 2006, after which the capacity of the participating communities would have sufficiently been strengthened to allow the pull-out of the development partners

This article investigates, using a case study approach, the explanatory factors that account for variation in success and failure of a Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) in Nigeria. The article contributes in broadening the understanding of the explanatory factors that contribute to the success of community-based projects. The knowledge of the explanatory factors will influence policy formulation and development of community-based projects towards uplifting the living standards of poor communities.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Participatory Development
The concept of participatory development is intertwined with the concepts of community development, community-based organizations, and empowerment (Schirin, 2010). Participatory development is a process, in which group of people as consumers and producers, influence the provision of infrastructure and services available to them (Shubeler, 1996). Community development, on the other hand, involves the participation of community members in a development program, which brings about an improvement in their quality of lives (Ngiri 2012).

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are not-for-profit organizations that facilitate community efforts for community development. CBO's are often more responsive to community concerns than government agencies or private businesses (Mwaura & Ngugi 2014). Consequently, they are increasingly becoming a key target group for implementing development projects at the local level.

The participatory approach strengthens the role of the community by involving them in the planning and implementation of development projects for the community. According to Ondrik (1999), beneficiaries of development projects contribute significantly to planning, operation, and maintenance of such projects. The impact of participatory development programs extends beyond service improvement. It also includes enhancing the capacity of citizens to manage local affairs and interact more efficiently with the authorities. The participatory development also increases user ownership of projects and ensures self-sustenance and better maintenance (Ibem, 2009; Laurens, 2012).

2.2 Factors influencing the success of participatory development projects
Many factors affect the performance of participatory development schemes. On important factor is targeting the projects to the perceived needs of the beneficiaries (Hermann, 2007). Participatory development projects should provide demand-oriented services and development that address the real requirements of the people concerned. Other factors include adequate resources (Mwaura & Ngugi, 2014) and community capacity (Muhammed, 2008) to support development projects. In a study on community-based rural development projects in Kenya, Ngiri (2012) attributed project performance to the adequacy of resources and community capacity to support the project. Various dimensions of community capacity include funds, materials, labor, and technical skills (Labonte, 1999; Merino & Carmenado, 2012). Similarly, Ibem (2009) attributed the success of the community-led infrastructure provision to the ability of the CBOs to raise sufficient funds to support the programs.

The success of participatory development projects also requires appropriate organizational structure and community leadership. As submitted by Kaltho (1985), citizens' participation should involve active utilization of local leadership and organizations, which can profitably assist in the development activities. Similarly, studies have found that

personal characteristics such as education (Abdullah, Said, Omar, & Abra, 2014), income level, and occupational skills (Rubin & Rubin, 2000; Xu, 2007) influence the performance of community development projects.

2.3 Application of Community-based Strategy for Improving Quality of life
The quality of Life (QoL) is a fluid concept, which is often confused with an income-based standard of living. However, QoL is a multidisciplinary (Ana-Maria 2015a) and multi-faceted approach (Marans, 2012). It relates to well-being and prosperity of individuals (Abdul Karim, 2012; Aklanoğlu & Erdoğan, 2012; Hanifah & Hashim, 2012; Mohit, 2013), state of feeling safe (Sham, Hussein, & Ismail, 2013) and overall evaluation of life (Ana-Maria 2015b). Other dimensions of QoL include Healthcare (Eusuf, Mohit, Eusuf, & Ibrahim, 2014; Marans, 2012), Needs satisfaction (Keles, 2012; Mohit, 2013) and material wealth (Constantinescu, 2013). As observed by WHOQOL (1998), QoL incorporates the person's physical health, psychological state, the level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and relationships to salient features of the environment. Issues about QoL have increasingly been the area of concern to many governments (Ahmad, Hamid, Afgani, & Yusof, 2014) and among researchers (Ludíková & Tomalová, 2013).

Experience has shown that the partnership between government and community-based organizations has high potentials in enhancing social infrastructure (Ibem, 2009) and societal well-being (Hamdan, Yusof, & Marzukhi, 2014). Various governments adopted the community-based strategy in many development programs for improving the quality of life of their citizens. The programs include infrastructure development (Shubeler, 1996), environmental and resource management (Abdullah et al., 2014; Ogu, 2000), poverty reduction (Muhammed, 2008), and environmental conservation (Peerapun, 2012). In rural development, for instance, Villa El-Salvador, a dessert site on the outskirt of Lima in Peru, was transformed into a thriving community of about 130,000 inhabitants. The community enjoys social services through the self-help managed activities of the residents (Shubeler, 1996). Similarly, to meet the diverse environmental and development needs of the communities in developing countries, the UNDP in conjunction with UNCHS articulated a bottom-up Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) strategy. This initiative, lead to the conception of the Sustainable City Program (SIP) in 15 developing countries including Nigeria. Under the program, the Sustainable Ibadan Project (SIP) in Nigeria was implemented in 1992. As observed by Ogu (2000), the program strengthened the capacity of the community to mobilize their resources and expertise for the improvement of the urban environment.

3.0 Methodology
The study has drawn from both secondary and primary sources of data. CPRP documents and reports were examined to determine the distribution of CPRP outputs among the local

government areas (LGAs) in Kebbi-state. A total of 562 micro-projects were implemented across the 21 LGAs in the state represent nine (9) infrastructure sectors.

The study grouped the LGAs in the state into three (3) categories based on project performance. The categorization is done based on the assumption that if the micro projects are to be distributed evenly among the LGAs in the state, every LGA will have an average of twenty-seven micro-projects (562/21 = 27). Hence, taking twenty-seven (27) micro-projects as the benchmark output, three (3) categories have been established as high, medium and low performance based on project's outputs (Table 1).

Table 1. Classification of LGA's by CPRP Outputs and selection of LGAs

S/No	High Performance (> 27 Outputs)	Medium Performance (14-27 Outputs)	Low Performance (0-13 Outputs)
1	Arewa	*Kalgo	*K/Besse
2	*Argungu	Ngaski	Suru
3	*B/Kebbi	Yauri	*Aleiro
4	Dandi	*Bunza	Augie
5	*Gwandu	Fakai	*Maiyama
6	Zuru	Bagudo	
7	Danko	*Jega	
8		Sakaba	
9		Shanga	

*Selected LGAs

A survey was then conducted using a structured questionnaire to establish the explanatory factors that account for the identified pattern of outputs in the project area. Three (3) local government areas were selected through stratified random sampling from each of the categories identified, and three beneficiary communities were chosen from each local government. Accordingly, twenty-seven (27) communities were sampled for the survey. Ten (10) questionnaires were self-administered through random sampling technique to members of CBO's associated with the project giving a total of 270 questionnaires. The survey examined how the socioeconomic characteristics of the communities influence the pattern of project's outputs in the state.

The variables considered for the analysis are education level, income, and occupational skills of the respondents. The authors measured the socioeconomic variables of the sampled communities in the form of X (Y), where X is the score and Y the rating of importance. For example, for the level of education, we use a rating scale of 0-4 where "0" represent no formal education, and "4" tertiary level education. The number of respondents (scores) were multiplied by the ratings to obtain a weighted score (Table 2).

Table 2. Weighted scores for level of education in the high-performance LGAs

Education level	Rating	Argungu		B/Kebbi		Gwandu	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
No formal Edu.	1	8	8	3	3	7	7
Primary	2	14	28	16	32	12	24
Secondary	3	5	15	8	24	7	21
Tertiary	4	3	12	3	12	4	16
Total		**30**	**63**	**30**	**71**	**30**	**68**

The weighted scores for other variables were then associated with the number of micro-projects in each category to explain the relationship between the socio-economic attributes of the benefiting communities and the project success using correlation analysis.

4. Results And Discussions

4.1 Factors Influencing Variation in Project's Outputs
The distribution of CPRP outputs among the sampled Local Government Areas indicates spatial variation in the number of micro-projects in which some areas have done very well while others were impoverished. The LGAs within high-performance category constitute more than 55% of all the outputs by the sampled communities (Table 5).

Table 5. Variation in project's outputs among sampled LGAs

LGAs	Outputs	Percentage	Total
High- performance			
Argungu	29	14.87	58.46
B/kebbi	45	23.08	
Gwandu	40	20.51	
Medium- performance			
Kalgo	20	10.26	28.21
Bunza	14	7.18	
Jega	21	10.77	
Low- performance			
K/Besse	6	3.08	13.33
Aleiro	12	6.15	
Maiyama	8	4.10	

Table 6. Correlation between project's performance and socioeconomic characteristics of communities

L/Govt Areas	No of projects	Socioeconomic variables		
		Education	Income	Occupational skills
Category A (High-performance areas)				
Argungu	29	63	55	45
B/Kebbi	45	71	53	62
Gwandu	40	68	60	52
Correlation Coefficient		0.97735	0.52519	0.59340
Category B (Medium-performance areas)				
Kalgo	20	73	64	55
Bunza	14	74	57	53
Jega	21	76	43	55
Correlation Coefficient		0.31701	0.02308	0.31701
Category C (Low-performance areas)				
K/Besse	6	47	40	42
Aleiro	12	53	43	47
Maiyama	8	54	49	52
Correlation Coefficient		0.66284	0.14285	0.32732

The findings of the questionnaire survey show a positive correlation ($p>0.01$) between the socio-economic characteristics of the benefiting communities with project's outputs in all the three categories (Table 6). It implies that the higher the level of such socio-economic characteristics, the more would be the chances of project's success. As supported by Xu (2007), personal characteristics of community members influence the performance of community-based participatory development projects. The correlation is found to be more significant with the level of education in all the categories with correlation figures of "0.97735," "0.31701", and "0.66284" respectively.

However, the study observed that the extent of correlation is not consistent among the performance categories. The relationship between observed variables is more significant in

the low-performance group (**0.66284, 0.14285, and 0.32732**) than with the average performance group. This relative significance implies that more attention should focus on strengthening the capacity of poor communities to support participatory development projects. From the findings of the study, the paper concludes that education is an integral component for promoting community development.

5.0 Conclusion

The community-based model adopted for the delivery of social services in the Kebbi CPRP has been a worthwhile initiative. A total of 562 communities has benefited with significant improvements in their quality of life as evidenced by the increased number of educational and health care facilities and improved access to potable water. The contribution of the study is in filling the gap created by the aggregate assessment of community-based development projects. The study established the explanatory factors that account for variation in success and failure of a community-based development project in Nigeria. In their efforts to support community-based programs, governments and international institutions should focus on programs towards enhancing the level of education of poor communities. Improving their level of education will enhance their skills and income and hence their ability to improve their quality of life.

The Authors concur with the observation made by Mostafa (2012) and Marans (2012) that most studies on QoL focus either on identifying indicators or measurement of peoples' satisfaction. The studies ignored the interconnection with other possible influential factors. Future studies on QoL may wish to focus on evaluating the influential cross-culture factors for the success of the quality of life programs in different parts of the world

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