Factors Influencing Youth Participation in Leadership in Secondary Schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Youth participation in leadership activities is a continuous discussion to emphasize in our Tanzanian community. There are limited research findings on factors contributing to youth participation in leadership in secondary schools. This results in a lack of confidence, communication skills, leadership skills, team working, and social participation among the students. Therefore, the study examined the factors influencing youth participation in leadership in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. The study researcher adopted an explanatory research design to conduct the study. The covered a sample of 300 respondents drawn from a target population of 1400 students of secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. Data analysis was done by use of descriptive and inferential statistics; frequencies, percentages, correlation, and multiple regression. The study revealed that; social influence, social media, and civic education have a positive but weak relationship with youth participation in leadership in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. This is because the correlation coefficients (r) on the relationship between social influence, social media and civic education with youth leadership participation were 0.159, 0.139, and 0.099 respectively which shows positive significance but weak. This is because in estimating the required

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relationship the results yielded p values greater than 0.05 which justify insignificant contributions. The practical implication is that these constructs should be improved in their application in order to provide a significant contribution to youth leadership in Iringa Municipality. Based on these results, the researcher recommends advanced policies and division of resources to address youth marginalization in the distribution of opportunities for leadership participation. The resources to be addressed should cover both financial and non-financial resources. The study also recommends that schools should encourage leadership skills, mentoring, and trainings across all activities and programming to advance youth's self-confidence, agency, and voice to advocate for their issues and engage in civic discussions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is regarded in many cases as a complex, multi-component advanced competency rather than a fixed personality trait. Within this definition, leadership is regarded as a dynamic procedure, which can be developed by means of appropriate interventions (Sisk, 1993). Youth, as a concept, varies from culture to culture and from society to society. According to the National Youth Policy (2007), youth in Tanzania is defined as young men and women from the age group of 15 years to 35 years. Youth participation in leadership activities is understood by means of engaging youth in social activities, teamwork, building self-esteem, confidence, planning and organizing community welfare issues. Children of all ages can take leadership roles; however, research concerning leadership development has focused almost exclusively on adult leadership, and there is a gap in the literature with regard to how we should develop young leaders [1-8]. Wingenbach and Kahler [9] suggest that secondary school students have the ability to develop leadership skills by means of decision-making, getting along with others, learning the organization of self, self-awareness, and working with groups through taking part in many youth leadership organizations in school and/or community activities. It is useful to examine leadership during childhood and adolescence as what occurs during the developmental years can have an impact on the leadership behaviors exhibited later in the workplace as an adult [10-17]. That means youth leadership builds leaders in the future which results in sustainable developments. Realizing the importance of youth leadership, various governments across the World have developed various initiatives to promote youth leadership development. For instance, in the United States (US), a number of youth organizations have played important roles in creating early leadership opportunities for youth.

Tanzania has a population of over 59,242,393, and one third of the country's population is young people between the ages of 15-24. The Tanzanian National Youth Development Policy (2007) has recognized the presence of youth and has stated that youth do not participate adequately in decision making bodies. This reflects that there are challenges in building youth to become leaders. As a result, most of the decisions which have been made do not take concerns of the youth (GoT 2007). A report from Unicef from 2012 states that despite recognition by policy and legal frameworks, youth participation has yet to become a common practice in Tanzania. (Unicef, 2012). Most Tanzania leaders are 50 or older, with some as old as 75. This represents a significant gap between those deciding policy and those who have to weather its effects. At the parliamentary level, only 14 percent of members are under 40. Youth leadership in secondary school is important to build new leaders and a committed society for their own country. In Iringa municipality, youth leadership is much promoted, but the contribution of each factor on youth leadership participation is questionable. That means there are limited research findings which justify participation of youth leadership in Secondary school. Promotion of these agenda is done by using social influence, social media as well as civic education with which in secondary school is questionable. This study assessed the contribution of these variables to enhancing youth leadership participation in secondary school in Iringa Municipality in Tanzania.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Transformational leadership theory

To study the factors contributing to youth leadership participation, the study used

transformational leadership theory. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership style whereby leaders and followers influence each other in achieving objectives. Later, Bass [18] extended the theory of TL by adding four dimensions that tend to influence organizational performance. He describes the theory by stating that inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence are four determinants of TL that have significant contribution to achievements. Inspirational motivation is a variable of transformational leadership where subordinates are given support. Individualized considerations are social-emotional support given by a leader to subordinates. Intellectual stimulations is a variable which influences solving problems under creative thinking [19-21]. Idealized influence is a central point of transformational leadership which promotes the connection between subordinates under influence and communication [22-28]. Based on this study, social influence and communication was taken from idealized influence to study its contribution to youth leadership participation. This theory relates to civic education as an objective of this study. This is because it involves imparting knowledge and skills among people to accomplish better performance.

2.1.2 Social cognitive theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, purports that contextual variable such as social support, which includes friends, family and relatives, influence the career choice of an individual (Choo, Norsia & Tan, 2012). Social persuasion also affects an individual's choice of career (Lent, Brown & Hacket, 2002) because there is a dialogue between children and their environment. Similarly, Bandura posited that when individuals watch their peers succeeding, they are likely to believe that they can also succeed (Mills, 2009). In this career development model, a person's background (or contextual factors) and individual characteristics influence his/her learning experiences and consequently self-efficacy (Tang, Pan & Newmeyer, 2008:285). According to Bandura (1989:1) and Alexander, Seabi and Bischof (2010:497), because of the bi-directionality of influence between behavior and environmental circumstances, people are both products and producers of their environment.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Impact of social influence on youth participation in leadership

E Macri-Yishu examined whether social groups, among other factors, had an influence on youth's ability to participate in leadership in Malaysia. Using a conceptual framework, and social impact theory, the study aimed to investigate the possible reasons why most Malaysian youths at secondary and tertiary educational institutions do not actively participate in leadership activities in their communities. The study employed a cross-sectional survey and proportionate stratified random sampling method to collect data from 310 youth leaders the north, east, west and south zones of Malaysia peninsula. However, after data cleaning, data for 141 respondents were analyzed through descriptive statistics and regression methods. The study found that social groups had the most significant positive effects on leadership participation among Malaysian youths.

2.2.2 Impact of access and usage of social media on youth participation in leadership

Simpong et al. (2017) conducted a study to examine the effects of access and usage of social media on information, on youth's leadership participation (extra-curricular activities, community associations, social works, and political activities) among other variables under the premise of the theory of planned behavior. The study adopted the cross-sectional design and the stratified random sampling method to collect quantitative data from 400 student leaders from selected public universities, colleges, and schools in Peninsular Malaysia. the findings of the study revealed that access and usage of social media information have a significant positive effect on youth's leadership participation. Therefore, the study recommended that to promote youth leadership participation in Malaysia, the government and development agencies should focus on educating the social groups so as to improve the level of youth's involvement in extra-curricular activities.

2.2.3 Impact of civic education on youth participation in leadership

Koon Lin et al. (2018) conducted a study which tended to explain the pedagogical innovations that teachers could use to influence student civic learning and the school level activities that

principals can support. The study tested the model of the Hong Kong student data from the International Civics and Citizenship Education Study for which the data had been collected in 2009 [29] (ICCS, 2009). The study found that interest in Political &Social Issues exerted a strong, positive and significant effect directly on School Civic Participation; while School Civic Participation exerted a direct, moderate and positive effect on Civic Knowledge. This suggests that where schools deliberately encourage students' interests in political and social issues, perhaps as part of a specific school policy is likely to increase the average level of student participation in school civic activities.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Iringa Municipal Council. Iringa Municipal Council was chosen to know what factors influence youth participation in leadership in secondary schools in Iringa municipality. Since youth hold a majority population, as the roles of leaders expand, there is a need to understand factors contributing to youth leadership participation. Since there are limited research findings on factors contributing to youth leadership, this study will be conducted in secondary school in Iringa Municipality The philosophical foundation for the study was based on the positivism paradigm, which builds a highly structured methodology to allow generalization and quantifiable observations and evaluate outcomes with the aid of statistical techniques (Creswell, 2014). This study employed quantitative approach. This method was used in this research as its objectives are to firm up and modify knowledge first gained in a fundamentally quantitative way which is consistent with the research objectives (Bryman, 2017). The researcher employed a deductive approach because questionnaires were used as instruments to strike a balance. Explanatory research design was used because this study involves theory and from theory the research hypothesis developed. Also, the study employed a descriptive research design to assess the factors influencing youth's leadership participation in secondary schools—(Malhotra, 2015). This study employed the quantitative survey strategy to study youth participation in leadership in secondary schools. The survey strategy involves using a questionnaire administered to a sample, and then the data was standardized to allow for easy comparison. The target population is the entire aggregation of

respondents that meet the designated set of criteria (Kolen and Brennan, 2014). The target population of the study was for six students from high schools in Iringa Municipality. The total population was 1400. The main reason for the selection of this target group was because they practice leadership at home and school life time. The sample size was 300 as determined through Tabachnick and Fidell [30]. The questionnaire is a basic data collection tool that comprises of questions drafted by a researcher and filled by respondents to accrue research data. The study used several types of statistical tools to analyze the collected data in line with the research objectives: - descriptive analysis, factor analysis, and logistic regression analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Contribution of social influence on youth participation was measured by four items leadership conversation, persuasion, teamwork and delegation of power. The first indicator involved was leadership conversation between students and parents for sharing knowledge about leadership. On this indicator, 64.4 of the respondents agreed that the presence of discussion led by parents on the leadership matters meanwhile 8.2% disagreed and 27.2% of the respondents were neutral. The second item represented by social persuasion meaning that society persuades students to become leaders. For this item was observed that which represented by straining being given through seminars, 60% of respondents agree about these items and 14% disagree and only 25.9% were neutral. Likewise, 54.8% students agree that there is teamwork between students and teachers which assist them to learn leadership traits while 13.1% disagree and 32.1% were neutral. Also, 40.3% of the students agreed that there is delegation of power from teachers and parents while 22.6% of students disagree and only 36.6% was neutral. These findings show that social influence has a great contribution on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. Table 1 expresses the feedback from students relating the contribution of social influence on youth leadership participation.

The contribution of social media on youth leadership participation was measured by four indicator variables namely access to sharing information, transparency, facilitating conversation and content-sharing. Generally,

about 53.3% of the students agreed that they preferred using social media for sharing information on learning various matters including leadership participation, 9.5% disagreed and only 14.4% were neutral. In addition, students also agreed that they were able to use social media for transparency (openness) on learning various matters such as leadership. For instance, about 60% of students who were respondents were using social media for transparency matters effectively and efficiently while 13.6% disagreed and only 26.7% were neutral. Furthermore 45.7% of students agreed that social media facilitated conversations and learning about leadership while 20.2% didn't agreed and 34.2% were neutral. Also, 39.2% of students agreed that agreed that they were able to share leadership content via social media and learn leadership while 15.6% were not able meanwhile 28.8% were neutral as expressed in Table 3. Despite the students were able to use social media to learn leadership, it was difficult to access social media due to economic situations and school by laws.

To analyze the contribution of civic education on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality, four indicator variable was used which are civic knowledge, civic skills, mentoring and citizen participation. After statistical analysis findings revealed that Findings from descriptive statistics analysis indicate that about 38.3% of the students agreed that they were knowledgeable about leadership and participation while 25.1% disagree and 36.6% were neutral. In addition, 32.9% of respondents agreed that students were learning civic skills much on leadership participation from parents and teachers while 41.1% disagreed and 25.9% were neutral. Furthermore, 41.1% of respondents agreed that teachers were mentoring students on leading and managements by using various methods meanwhile 25.1% disagree and only 28.8% were neutral. Also, 60% of respondents agreed that students were in community citizen participation activities and making opinion as leaders while 14.5% were not and only 25% were neutral as shown in Table 4. Despite students being civic knowledgeable with skills in making opinions but mentoring, civic participation and training were not able to influence youth leadership participation since the level of agreed was low.

4.1.1 Relationship between social influence and youth leadership participation

The study used correlation to examine the relationship of variables. On that regard Pearsons' product moment correlation was employed to examine the relationship of variable. Findings revealed that social influence (SI) has positive correlation with youth leadership participation (YLP) with ($r = .159^*$, $p = 0.035$). This is because the P-value (0.035) is less than the correlation coefficient (0.05).

Table 1. Contribution of social influence on youth participation in leadership

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Mean (F)	Neutral		Mean (F)	Agree		Strong agree		Mean
	F	Per	F	Per		F	Per		F	Per	F	Per	
Leadership conversation	2	0.8	18	7.4	0.08	66	27.2	0.27	121	49.8	36	14.8	0.65
Social Persuasion	15	6.2	20	8.2	0.14	63	25.9	0.26	120	49.4	25	10.3	0.6
Teamwork	4	1.6	28	11.5	0.13	78	32.1	0.32	110	45.3	23	9.5	0.55
Delegation of power	12	4.9	43	17.7	0.23	89	36.6	0.37	73	30.0	25	10.3	0.4

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 2. Contribution of social media on youth participation in leadership

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Mean (F)	Neutral		Mean (F)	Agree		Strong agree		Mean (F)
	F	Per	F	Per		F	Per		F	Per	F	Per	
Sharing Information	12	4.9	23	9.5	0.14	71	29.2	0.29	117	48.1	20	8.2	0.56
Transparency	11	4.5	21	8.6	13.1	65	26.7	0.26	116	47.7	30	12.3	0.6
Facilitating conversations	32	13.2	38	15.6	0.29	78	32.1	0.32	82	33.7	13	5.5	0.39
Content-sharing	16	6.6	33	13.6	0.2	83	34.2	0.34	94	38.7	17	7.0	0.46

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 3. Contribution of civic education on youth participation in leadership

Item	Strong disagree		Disagree		Mean (F)	Neutral		Mean(F)	Agree		Strong agree		Mean (F)
	F	Per	F	Per		F	Per		F	Per	F	Per	
Civic Knowledge	26	10.7	35	14.4	0.25	88	36.6	0.36	83	34.2	10	4.1	0.38
Civic Skills	45	18.5	55	22.6	0.41	63	25.9	0.26	63	25.9	17	7.0	0.33
Mentoring	36	14.8	25	10.3	0.25	70	28.8	0.29	89	36.6	23	9.5	0.46
Citizen Participation	15	6.2	20	8.2	0.14	63	25	0.26	120	49.4	25	10.3	0.6

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4. Correlation between independent and dependent variable

Variable	Correlation	SI	SM	CE	YLP
SI	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	242			
SM	Pearson Correlation	.431**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	242	243		
CE	Pearson Correlation	.324**	.471**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	242	243	243	
YLP	Pearson Correlation	.159*	.139*	.099	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.037	.134	
	N	243	243	243	243

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Research findings, (2023)

4.1.2 Relationship between social media and youth leadership participation

The correlation between social media (SM) usage and youth leadership participation (YLP) was (r = .139*, p = 0.037). This indicated that the two variables are linearly related and have significant relationship since the P-value is less than the correlation coefficient. (0.05).

4.1.3 Relationship between civic education and youth leadership participation

The findings from data analysis show that the correlation between civic education (CE) and youth leadership participation (YLP) was (r = .099 p = .134) which justify that civic education its contribution was also positive on youth leadership participation.

This study used Likert scale to measure during data collection whereby 5-point Likert scales involved and was found appropriate for regression analysis. The final functions of the study based on linear models are well suited to this study. The functions which show relationship are:-

$$YLP = f_0 + f_1 SI_i + f_2 SM_i + f_3 CE_i + E_i$$

Where;

SI	=	Social Influence
SM	=	Social media
CE	=	Civic Education
E	=	Error term
I	=	Respondents
F	=	Parameter to be estimated

From this function the relationship between independent and dependent variable can be sown from the result obtained during regression analysis. Thus, the relationship between social influence, social media, civic education with youth leadership participation can be shown as follows:

$$YLP = 20.363 + .135 PSI_i + .097 SM_i + .042 CE_i + E_i$$

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the three independent variable was found being importannt to enhance youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality sinci all three variable has posititive contribution on youth

leadership participation. Even though findings revealed positive relationship, the the rate of contribution was low which indicates that some effort should be done to make sure that these independent variable function in maximum level.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The contribution of social influence on youth leadership participation

The study assessed the contribution of social influence on youth leadership participation in Iringa municipality. This study analyzed whether social influence have positive and significance influence on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. Result as expressed in Table 4. show positive but insignifint association between social influence and youth leadership participation in Iringa municipality. The reason of arguing this is that p - values was found being less than 0.05. That means that the contribution of social influence on youth leadership participation is minimum in Iringa Municipality. This means that social influence has little contributing power on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. This is due to the facts that society around youth do not value the sustainability of building tomorrow's leaders to ensure leadership sustainability. They assume that leaders are born and not learn. That is to say building youth leaders are not valued and there is little program for building youth leaders. From these facts social influence has little contribution on youth leadership participation. Discussion between parents and youth are not much encourages at house level relating to youth leadership [31-33]. There is little delegation of power at house level in order to learn and accomplish directives as young leaders. Also, to some family there is little relationship between house children and parents especially head of house. All these hinder the effectiveness of social influence on youth leadership participation. From these results youth leadership participation promotions should stand as a matter of great concerns to all society in Iringa Municipality in order to build strong youth leaders as well as leadership sustainability.

4.2.2 The influence of promotion on employees extra role performance

The drive for this study was mainly to investigate the contribution of social media on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. To come up with findings the study hypothesized that social media has no positive and significant contribution on youth leadership participation in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. The study involved multiple regression analysis and findings revealed that social media has positive but insignificant contribution on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. This is because; the score of the statistical analysis in regression has p value greater than 0.05 which indicates the insignificant result. That means usage of social media on youth leadership participation has little contribution. There are some factors which were hindering the effectiveness of social media on influencing youth leadership participation. For instance, youth at school and home level were not allowed to stay and own phones which assist to interact with leadership professional and gain leadership knowledge. According to government directives youth in secondary school are prohibited to own mobile phone. These situations hinder the effectiveness of social media to contribute youth leadership participation. In addition, most youth are not conversant they afraid using social media because their authority at school are not ready to allow youth to use mobile in social media [34-38]. Due to that youth lack support from using social media to learn leadership matters. Also, even when youth are allowed to utilize mobile most of them look for games and interesting channel. Leadership channel to them is not a prior. Social media are not contributing factors on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality.

Table 5. Testing hypothesis

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.363	1.360		14.973	.000
	SI	.135	.096	.093	1.302	.194
	SM	.097	.095	.079	1.032	.303
	CE	.042	.095	.030	.406	.685

Source: Research findings, (2023)

4.2.3 The contribution of civic education on youth leadership participation

This study analyzed the contribution of civic education on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. In order to come up with findings the study hypothesized that civic education has no positive and significant influence on youth leadership participation in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. The multiple regression analysis was used and results indicate positive but insignificant relationship between civic education and youth leadership participation. This means that the provision of civic education to youth have no contributing to youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. That means provision of lack some contributing power to influence youth leadership participation. For instance teacher's commitments on civic education are not a prior compared to others subjects. This concludes that the way civic education is given and the way youth receives training cannot provide youth leadership participation. The study findings indicate that civic education is not given to youth to increases the level of understanding leadership situations. In addition, youth are not provided with other leadership training such as being patriotic to build youth to become leaders. Mostly youth are provided science subject, arts subject but for civic education. Due to that there is some weakness which hinders youth leadership participation.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study concludes that, social influence, social media and civic education have positive contributions on participation of youth in leadership though the contribution is not very significant. These constructs have little power to be significant for providing significant results. This is because in estimating the required relationship, the results yielded a P values greater than 0.05 which justify insignificant contributions. This study has theoretically and empirically evaluated research framework by incorporating three dimension which are social influence, social media and civic education. Furthermore, various measurements have used to measure main construct. The study has evidenced the following: Social influence, social media and civic education have insignificant contribution on youth leadership participation in Iringa Municipality. Therefore, the practical implication is that these constructs should be improved its use in order to provide significant

contribution to youth leadership in Iringa Municipality. In addition to that all factors, which hinder the effectiveness of these three constructs, should be addressed to ensure to enhance its contribution to youth leadership in Iringa Municipality. Therefore, the study may assist researchers in section such as data collection instrument, validity and reliability, selection of variables and sampling procedure which may enlighten researchers on the methodological aspects of obtaining data based on relationship of variables.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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