FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN WAJIR EAST DISTRICT, WAJIR COUNTY

ABDULLAHI AHMED ALI

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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other university.

Signed …… Date ……

ABDULLAHI AHMED ALI

REG. NO**. L50/61862/2013**

This research project report has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors;

Signed……. Date……..

MR. MWANGI IRUNGU

Lecturer, School of Continuing and Distance Education,

Department of Extra Mural Studies,

University of Nairobi.

Signed……Date…….

MR MOHAMED ADEN NOOR

Lecturer, School of Continuing and Distance Education,

Department of Extra Mural Studies,

University of Nairobi.

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my mum Hasna Hassan, wife Habon Mohamed and my sons Zakaria, Farah, Khalid and my larger family. You have always been at my side during times of need and your constant encouragements have made me achieve this far.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

Youth need a chance to develop their various communities through participation in decision making on projects that can bring about the beautification of their community without depending on the government. This study examined the factors that influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County. The study was guided by the objectives of finding out the influence of gender on participation of youth in decision making in community projects, investigating the influence of cultural factors on participation of youth in decision making in community projects, finding out the influence of educational level on participation of youth in decision making in community projects and investigating on the influence of government policies on participation of youth in decision making in community projects in Wajir East district, Wajir County. This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population of this study comprised of 24, 066 youth, aged between 18-35 years in Wajir East district, Wajir County. This study used simple random sampling to select 380 youths from the total youth in Wajir East district, Wajir County. The primary research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire and an interview guide was used also for specific leaders. The sample data from the survey was subjected to descriptive statistical data analysis methods –SPSS and presented in form of tables. The data was interpreted in form of descriptions, frequencies and percentages. The findings and the conclusion of the study were that youth were mostly ignored in decision making in community projects in the area of study due to the influence of unfavourable government policies, low levels of education, cultural practices as well as gender imbalances. This study recommended that youth participation should be valued in Wajir County and Kenya at large to ensure that all citizens take part in development activities, government policies should be formulated which create room for every person to participate in spite of the differences in academic qualifications as well as gender, and that gender and culture should be overlooked in the current world so that every person can participate fully in decision making on community projects for more success.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Youth around the world need a chance to develop their various communities through embarking on a series of projects that can bring about the beautification of their community without depending on the government. They also need the opportunity to have their voices heard and to take active part in decision making as suggested by Lamborn, Brown, Mounts, & Steinberg (2011). These efforts can only be achieved by the government entities working in true partnership with the youth in the community, by listening to their opinions and concerns, which we can ensure that services meet their needs and that society can benefit from their contributions to enhance community development efforts in all areas of need in the society. According to Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss (2008), youth participation entails the involvement of young people in decisions that are made, specifically those directly or indirectly affecting their lives. In regard to this, many people believe that young people should be treated as citizens (as opposed to the citizens of the future) and should be involved in all decisions that are made about the community and society in which they live (Eccles & Barber, 2009).

Andolina, et al's (2010) literature supports the premise that participation in community activities is associated with behavioural well-being among adolescents. Influences on youth becoming involved, such as increasing academic performance during high school, increasing the likelihood of college attendance, greater school engagement, involvement in decision making concerning community projects and reinforcing positive social values or setting an example have been found to affect involvement (Youniss & Yates, 2007). Other factors have been reported by the youth as influencing their need for and willingness to be a part of a greater good through involvement. These include feelings of efficacy, the need to be valued and taken seriously by others in the community (Flanagan & Van Horn, 2011), increasing their own self-esteem, and having a responsibility towards society by performing a public duty (Independent Sector, 2011). Recognition by the community at large is part of feeling valued (Scales & Leffert, 2009). Factors, such as parental involvement, can facilitate influences on youth involvement. Youth whose parents is actively involved in the community are more likely to become active themselves (Chan & Elder, 2009). Youth whose parents do not participate in civic activities may still become active in their communities: however, a supportive and reinforcing parental relationship may have a greater contribution to civic

engagement than parental modelling (Fletcher & Van Horn, 2010). Perhaps as a result of an increased awareness of the advantages for adolescents, parents now play an important role in linking their children to the world around them according to (Parke & Ladd, 1992); Brennan, Barnett & Lesmeister, 2010).

1.1.1 Perspective of youth participation

The international community has recognized the importance of youth participating in political systems, including through several international conventions and UN resolutions. In line with these commitments, UNDP views youth as a positive force for transformative social change, and aims to help enhance youth political participation. A basic principle is that support for the political participation of young people should extend across the electoral cycle (Sinclair, 2007). Capacity development for younger candidates, for example, has proven to be more effective as a continuous effort than as a one-off event three months before an election. Eccles & Barber (2009) postulate that young people who participate actively in their community from early on are more likely to become engaged citizens and voters. This guide traces some entry points before, during and after elections, drawing on the UNDP's electoral cycle approach, which emphasizes strategic interventions beyond the electoral event.

An important core principle is that youth political participation needs to be meaningful and effective, going beyond token gestures (Kumpfer, Turner, Hopkins, & Librett, 1993). It has been found to be beneficial when interventions to assist youth are, as a youth-driven as possible. They can encourage youth to participate in project management, partner with youth-led initiatives, and facilitate youth inclusion in national and local consultation processes, including through new technology. Further, young people are not a homogenous block and other social aspects (such as gender, rural/urban dwelling, ethnicity, language, among others) need to be taken into consideration when designing interventions according to Felix (2011). To stress a message of youth inclusion, initiatives should be transparent, respectful and accountable, to be relevant, they can link to specific concerns of youth such as unemployment, the environment or HIV and AIDS. In Kenya, Youth are defined as persons resident in Kenya in the age bracket 18 to 35 years (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). This takes into account the physical, psychological, cultural, social, biological and political definitions of the term. The youth in Kenya, number about 9.1 million, and account for 32% of the population (Kenya open data statistics, 2009).

According to Felix (2011), many existing or emergent methods of participation are available for youth from focus groups to town meetings to public hearings to protest demonstrations to community surveys. This report will explore three forms of youth participation: youth in community planning, youth-based initiatives for social change, and youth in policy making. Youth participation in community planning occurs when young people have a role in the planning process. Young people may be sought as consultants to identify problems. They may participate in research to identify causes and resources for solving problems. They may recruit and mobilize other youth to create more inclusivity in community planning. In this form of participation (Chan & Elder, 2009), young people are ideally involved in formulating goals and action plans, as well as in tracking and evaluating action. Some examples of youth-based initiatives for social change may also be examples of community planning, but the differences are that, in the former, youth control the agendas, the organizations, and the processes, whereas, in the latter, they do not necessarily have that control (Wiseman, 2010).

Youth participation may be more influential if it is connected to power in the community. Youth-based initiatives for social change are those in which young people define the issues that they work on and control the organizations through which they work and the strategies they use (Bishop & Davis, 2011). In this form, youth employs a variety of strategies, including advocacy, social action, popular education, and mass mobilization, and community and program development, to achieve their goals for social change. Youth participation in policy making takes place when young people have direct decision-making authority or advisory roles in making public policy decisions. Young people participate in policy making, for example, when they sit on a county or city committee that selects grant recipients, or when they are voting members of commissions that allocate funds or develop recommendations for a state agency, county commission, or the mayor's office. They engage in policy making when they are selected to represent a youth perspective, or, because of their experience or expertise, to provide advice on a board or committee (Carson & Gelber, 2011).

Bishop & Davis's (2011) literature indicates that significant barriers to youth political participation occur at the three levels of capacity. On the individual level, barriers comprise the lack of technical skills; motivation, especially to participate in formal, adult-led processes; economic resources; and awareness and knowledge. On the organizational level, youth-led groups frequently face hindrances to economic and other resources, and have limited organizational know-how. Among formal political organizations, such as parties and

parliaments, internal mechanisms, rules and procedures do not favor the inclusion of youth. They are not considered for leadership positions and the only engagement does not lead to visible results (Scales & Leffert, 2009). These bodies may lack processes for which youth has an affinity, or use technologies and language that are off-putting to youth. On the environmental level, structural constraints may include a high eligibility age to contest for elections as well as cultural or social norms that inhibit them from participating. The solution to include youth in political processes cannot lie in the capacities of individual youth alone. The socio-political environment, organizations and youth all have to change in order to move closer together (Bynoe, 2008).

On the other hand, though youth participation has not yet attained a strong ground, the Kenyan government has taken the initiative to develop a policy for polytechnics and vocational training centers, which aim to mainstream youth polytechnics into a national education and training framework and reposition them to take a leading role in the development of youth for employment and lifelong learning in the tertiary education sector (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). There are education and literacy programs that target the youth in the slums and is being replicated in other parts of the country to reach the majority of youths who drop out of school. The government needs to establish systems to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of informal learning for young people. The government facilitates the availability of the university education through the Higher Education Loans Board and the reduction of the entry cut off points, increasing the number of universities through upgrading colleges into public universities and increasing the number of the polytechnics. The government of Kenya has established institutions for those with Special needs and also facilitated the inclusion of those with special needs within mainstream school and the wider community, a process that concurs with the proposition by Besant's literature (2010) 'This project majors its focus on the policies influencing teachers training as well as building capacity of parents and local community groups to lobby for educational policy change for the betterment of all children.

Additionally, the government has improved the people's living standards by putting up many community health dispensaries. The improved health care for all will come through providing access to those excluded from health care for financial or other reasons. The government has set aside funds to cater for HIV/AIDS infected individuals in the society through free supply of ARVs, voluntary counseling for the affected and infected persons. The

government has promoted partnerships with the private health sector in improving the quality of the health service delivery to the highest standards. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund was established in the year 2006 with the sole purpose of reducing unemployment among the youth who account for over 61% of the unemployed in the country (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

1.1.2 Community projects in Wajir East district; Wajir County

Wajir County is one of the 47 counties created under the Kenya Constitution 2010. The county is located in the North Eastern region of Kenya and covers an area of 56,685.9 Km2. It borders Somalia to the East, Ethiopia to the North, Mandera County to the Northeast, Isiolo County to the South West, Marsabit County to the West and Garissa County to the South. The county experiences annual average relative humidity of 61.8 per cent, which ranges from 56 per cent in February to 68 per cent in June. It receives an average of 240 mm precipitation annually or 20 mm each month and the average temperature is 27.9 °C.

The county comprises of eight sub-counties, namely Wajir East, Tarbaj, Wajir West, Eldas, Wajir North, Buna, Habaswein and Wajir South. It is further divided into 28 divisions, 128 locations and 159 sub-locations. The county has 6 constituencies, namely Wajir East, Tarbaj, Wajir west, Eldas, Wajir South and Wajir North and has 30 electoral wards. Wajir North and Wajir South constituencies have the largest number of wards in 7, and the rest have 4 each. Wajir County is one in which decision making processes have not fully incorporated youth participation as an essential element, though there are frameworks and factors for consideration that can enhance youth participation. The county has a total population of 661,941 (Kenya open data, statistics, 2009), in which all major decisions are made by a council of elders, who are mostly over fifty years of age and who may or may not have formal education. The council is formed informally with traditionally accepted set criteria. There is no set term of service of the council to serve and no appeal system for anyone who is not satisfied with their decision. This concurs with Land's (2009) study which indicates that Young people have been neglected in today's civil society while they can cause positive changes in the society.

Additionally, Political parties require one to pay nomination fees to vie for any elective position, e.g. currently, those vying for senator positions are required to pay Kshs 200,000. Political campaigns usually cost a substantial amount of money, hence locking out majority

of youth who do not have the financial ability. The government has set 18 years as the age limit for obtaining Kenya national identification card. This implies that the existing policy frameworks will limit many youth from accessing other important services offered by the government and that one is not able to obtain a Kenyan passport. The youth will not be able to participate in an election without identification card or passport. This will lock out many youth from voting for their preferred candidate; hence their decisions concerning policy formulation are not taken into account. This concurs with Kirby,'& Bryson's (2012) literature, which suggests that the current decades portray a minimal measure of People's Participation in Public Decision Making, specifically the Young People.

Further, the Kenya Constitution (2010) requires one to have a higher education (university degree) in order to qualify as a candidate for the Presidency and Governorship. Clan affiliations too contribute to ones chances of being elected into a political office. Evidence is available for membership and leadership positions in political parties and parliaments in Ellis (2007) literature. Non-state governance mechanisms, such as tribal leadership, are typically based on seniority or lineage, and tend not to encourage youth involvement. However, the establishment of factors that influence the participation of youth in community projects as well as the necessary frameworks will give the county an insight on matters concerning decion-making processes suitability, especially with youth involvement. With such a realization, the governance structure can be re-organized to incorporate the participation of young people in the future decisions so as to close the existing gap in the administration and performance of community projects as depicted in Eccles & Barber (2009).

1.2 Problem statement

The gap existing between youth participation, elderly dominance, youth involvement and decision-making in today's societal setup highlights the need for research in regard to factors influencing youth participation in governance. Youth participation has become an issue of concern in the current decades while some youth parliaments that have been established by Governments are merely showcases and offer no real opportunity for the articulation of concerns. The participants are often chosen by adults and do not represent any constituency of young people; adults assume that youth lack the capacity to choose appropriate delegates (Kumpfer, Turner, Hopkins & Librett, 1993).

While the free primary education (FPE) program has increased access to primary and secondary education, especially among poorer households, ancillary costs of education continue to hinder the educational attainment of many children, hence the inability to participate in community issues. For instance, the Somali elders known as “other document” choose the person who will run for elective posts without making reference to the person’s development records. There is no aspect of community participation, which would validate the decisions made as this would affect them in the foreseeable future (Ndeta, 2013). Despite the increased prominence of women’s issues in the public limelight, progress towards gender equality is still painfully slow in Wajir County. Gender biases and myopic cultural beliefs have conspired to muscle women out of political leadership over the years, all these features concurring with White & Wyn’s (2008) literature that addresses the neglect of youth and women in democratic processes.

Several African studies have been conducted in the area of youth, governance and decision-making. For instance, Kegler, Steckler, McLeroy & Malek (1998) studied on factors influencing the success of community projects in Africa and stated that youth participation was very crucial in mobilizing community projects. Goodman, et al (1998) studied on Identifying and defining the dimensions of community capacity to provide a basis for measurement for a society that values youth participation, and postulated that the involvement of all groups of people in decision-making regarding community projects impacts positively on societal governance. Though many studies have been conducted in the mentioned areas, no in-depth study has been conducted relating to youth participation in design-making, especially in Kenya’s Wajir County, hence depicting a research gap. In order to gain more insight and close the existing research gap on this issue, this study sought to find out the factors that influence youth participation in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County. The findings of this study were expected to help in providing policy framework that would help in creating opportunities for young people to join local community development projects, not only in Wajir County but also all over the country Kenya. The findings of this study also

were expected to provide more opportunities for young people to influence top-level decision making at community level.

1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the factors that influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

i) To find out the influence of gender on the participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.
ii) To investigate the influence of Cultural factors on the participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.
iii) To find out the influence of Educational level of participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.
iv) To investigate the influence of Government policies on the participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

1.5 Research questions

i) How does Gender influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in Wajir East District, Wajir County?
ii) To what extent do cultural factors influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County?
iii) How does the Educational level influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in Wajir East district, Wajir County?
iv) To what extent do Government policies influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study was of value to youth, the government through the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, Department of Youth Affairs, the public, specifically in the Wajir County as they address on issues regarding appropriate future governance structures.

This study also contributed to an addition of knowledge by creating greater awareness of the challenges hindering youth participation in community projects and neglected groups that continually confront communities, in guises such as welfare reform. Future researchers, academicians as well as scholars would benefit from the added knowledge.

The study would also be beneficial to the government of Kenya and the policy makers as they come up with policies and regulations governing the lives of youths in Kenya.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced the challenge of getting access to the informants. As a part time student who needed to balance studies with full time employment, the researcher was not able to undertake an extensive and exhaustive research limiting the researcher to a small sample and less research time. The researcher was a self-sponsored student relying on savings to progress his studies and therefore there was a limitation on financial resources.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

In trying to overcome the challenge of getting access to the informants, the researcher utilized community entry persons such as chiefs and spiritual leaders.
The researcher used research assistants for him to cover the study area.
Concerning the limitation of finances, the researcher requested for financial assistance from friends and relatives.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The research made an assumption that the respondents gave valid information relating to the factors that influence participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district. Secondly, the research assumed an age bracket of 18-35 to represent the definition of youth.

Thirdly, the researcher assumed that the sampled population would not change at the time of study.

1.10 Definitions of significant terms

Youth	-Youth is any person between the age brackets of 18-35 years, according to the Constitution of Kenya (2010).
Nonhierarchical	- classified according to various criteria into successive levels or layers
Youth development	- the process of growing up and developing one's capacities in education and skills development
Youth involvement	- A deliberate effort that centers on young peoples' participation in personal, social, institutional, cultural, and other forms of action throughout society
Typology	- a system used for putting things into groups according to how they are similar.
Decision-making	-the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities.
Othay Daqamet-	Somali council of elders

Adult In this research adult is taken to mean those over the age of 35 years

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents literature review, which is presented under the following subheadings: understanding, participation, youth participation: youth development and youth involvement approaches, youth development, youth involvement, summary of the literature review, Theoretical review, Empirical review and Conceptual framework.

2.1.1 Understanding participation

Participation tends to be conceptualized in three main ways. First, as individual, institutionalized acts that people do by themselves to try to influence political outcomes. Second, participation is a type of group or collective based action, usually undertaken on a voluntary basis, which can influence government or general public opinion. Third, participation is something governments and other formal organizations foster by including people and groups overtly within decision-making processes. These three ways of understanding, participation are often used interchangeably in both academic and policy practitioner literatures, despite the fact that they entail significantly different approaches to becoming involved in politics and society. This tendency to conflate all forms of participation has serious implications for the subsequent recognition of young people's capacity or entitlement to shape policy outcomes that will affect their everyday lives. That is, different approaches to understanding, participation are more or less prescriptive in both recognizing how young people are currently involved in government and community decision making, and for making suggestions on how they ought to be involved in the future.

Individualized forms of participation include signing petitions, boycotting, writing letters or donating money. People can participate in these ways without an institutional or group structure and increasingly can do so within their own homes, such as by signing a petition online. Participation as collective action is an activity undertaken by others, in a formal or informal group structure, to achieve a shared goal or interest, often for the creation of social and political change. This can be through activities such as joining local community or volunteering groups, a political party, an environmental group or attending a protest. Participation also occurs when community members are involved in consultation processes as part of community and government decision making. The debate about consultation and

participatory mechanisms as a tool of policy making has heightened in recent years. Some see consultation as necessary for government accountability, but tend to view the process with cynicism and argue the promotion of participatory governance can be a "populist red herring" (Sandercock in Bishop and Davis 2011: 175). Others have suggested that the dilemma for those that choose to participate in these processes is that governments could co-opt them into giving public support for positions that they do not really support. These analysts see consultation as a compromised political process as it is "a crucial mechanism for successive governments to 'neutralize' conflict so that it is not made public" (Everingham, 2009). A third view values consultation and participatory governance in of itself as it broadens the potential for active citizenship, increases the range of political actors, and forces the state to be democratically accountable to society (Wiseman, 2010; Carson and Gelber, 2011). There has been very little systematic evaluation of the Australian utilization of government-led consultation and participation processes. There has also not been significant research on the views of those who involved in participatory programs: both decision makers and citizens.

In this literature review, the increasing occurrence of participation initiatives is highlighted to understand how this new approach to governance offers both opportunity and constraints to young people from diverse backgrounds. This review mainly focuses on formalized forms of participation, but will make incidental reference to research on young people's individualized and collective action based forms of participation (for an overview of individual and group based participation by young people (Land 2009).

2.1.2 Youth participation

Government and community organizations alike are increasingly using 'youth participation' as an organizational strategy to develop processes such as community building and active involvement in the work force. Federal, state and local levels of government increasingly utilize youth advisory committees, such as the National Youth Roundtable and its state and local equivalents, to input into youth policy and realize youth participation. These strategies are aimed at young people aged about 15 to about 25 who are making the transition from adolescence into adulthood. There is often a focus on how the capacities of young people can be enhanced by participatory experiences in their transition to 'full' and active citizenship (Bessant, 2008). Skills development, experience in decision-making processes and a 'good work ethic' are seen as fundamental in creating the necessary conditions for young people to transform into 'good citizens' (Kirby & Bryson, 2012). In these approaches youth

participation is also a component of new forms of participatory governance that enhance both democracy and facilitate appropriate policy-making (Edwards 2011). Many youth participation advocates critique most consultation mechanisms, including some advisory committee structures, labeling them as tokenistic forms of participation of young people (Matthews 2011). Instead, there is increasing emphasis on partnerships between young people and older people where power is often delegated to young people for decision making in areas relevant to their lives (Wierenga 2008; Sheir, 2010). Different levels or models of youth participation have been identified (Hart, 1992) but they have a common endpoint that focuses on partnership and power being shared between governments (or other powerful organizational forms) and young people. For example, Shier (2010), defines participation on a continuum along five levels: children and young people are listened to; children and young people are supported to express views; children and young people's views are taken into account; children and young people are involved in decision-making; children and young people share power and responsibility for decision-making. Overall, there is not a homogenous view in the academic and practitioner literature on how to implement youth participation strategies, or even on what the most appropriate and meaningful outcomes are. There are, however, two discernible approaches that represent distinctive constructions of young people, participation and decision-making processes. These are the youth development and the youth involvement approaches.

2.1.3 Youth development

Within the youth development literature, youth participation is commonly used as an intervention strategy, or a strategy for enhancing the benefits of the other programs and interventions (such as those aimed at employment, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, welfare recipients for example). Increased interest in understanding how 'positive development' occurs has resulted in the identification and promotion of youth participation as an intervention strategy that promotes positive development in young people (Larson, 2010; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins, 2008). The youth development approach to involving young people has been particularly influential in the USA Larson, Pearce, Walker, (2007), and was also utilized in Australia at the federal level through the Ausyouth strategy (www.youth.gov.au/ausyouth). Youth development models generally emphasize youth participation as a key strategy in enabling the development of key skills, such as initiative and self-determination, as well as emotional, social, cognitive and behavioral competency (Jarrett

Watkins & Sullivan 2008; Larson 2010; Catalano et al 2008). Thus youth development places an emphasis on how young people can be both supported and guided in their transition from adolescence into adulthood and subsequent buffered from the threats of drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, mental illness and other potential social problems. In other approaches, youth development models also promote youth participation as a mechanism for maximizing the benefits of youth oriented projects and programs. Participation can be seen as a way of consulting with service users, ensuring that they are aware of the objectives of the program and encourage ongoing investment of resources such as time commitment and finances (Sinclair, 2007). Youth development approaches often focus on at-risk young people and construct programs that build young people's capacities to cope with risky and threatening transitional environments. While there is often a need for state intervention in providing assistance and support for disadvantaged young people, there also exists a critique in the literature of this type of construction of young people as 'at risk'. For example, Kelly (2009) argues forcefully that there is an institutionalized mistrust of young people embodied in a concern that particular groups of young people "pose certain dangerousness - to themselves and others". It is this sense of risk, fear and uncertainty that drives interventionist youth development policy agendas. Kelly (2009), suggests that the problem with a policy approach that is predicated on fear and regulating risk is that groups of young people different experience this mistrust; and that it is clearly structured along class, gender and ethnic lines .

2.1.4 Youth Involvement

Youth Involvement takes a different approach to youth participation. Most analyses in the youth involvement approach, similar to the youth development approach, recognize the role that individuals play as consumers in informing program or policy development, and that participation leads to the development of an individual's skills, knowledge and experiences. However, in youth involvement analyses, there is a significantly different emphasis on how the benefits to young people have broader social outcomes and lead to social and political change. This means that the youth involvement approach does not focus solely on change in young people themselves but argues that through participation and community development, or social capital type processes, young people are able to change policy making, organizations and society (White and Wyn, 2008). The youth involvement approach can also be distinguished in the literature from the youth development approach due to the emphasis

that it places on prerequisite principles of equality and justice necessary for appropriate youth involvement. There is an emphasis on the opportunities and constraints for young people exercising their right to participate in decision-making processes that affect them (Bessant 2010). Social justice outcomes of youth involvement, such as the capacity to strengthen democracy and become engaged through civic participation, are emphasized. Using a youth involvement level of analysis, Kirby and Bryson (2012) have examined how young peoples' participation is evaluated and find that: Whilst young people are increasingly being involved in participatory projects, the evidence from existing evaluations is that they are still having little impact on public decision making, although this varies across contexts and between different types of organizations. Few evaluations have looked at the quality of the decisions made (or influenced) by young people.

Therefore, despite an increasing up-take of youth participation strategies, particularly in local and state government and the community sector both in Australia and other liberal democracies, there is very little documentation of the impact that youth participation has on organizations and communities (Matthews 2009). In recent years, researchers in the United Kingdom have led a move to assess the impacts of youth participation in organizations and the broader community. For example, recent research conducted by Kirby has sought to investigate and document effective practice in youth involvement in the United Kingdom and to identify what leads to beneficial outcomes for both young people and organizations (Kirby & Bryson, (2012). What is known from the existing research is that in particular circumstances, youth participation: improves services and enhances their ability to adapt to changing needs (implying that resources are maximized); improves service development and client support; increases use of the services; and increases participatory practice (Kirby & Bryson, 2012). Sinclair and Franklin also found that participation of young people in decision making led organizations to make "more accurate, relevant decisions which are better informed and hence more likely to be implemented" (Sinclair and Franklin; cited in Sinclair, 2007).

2.2 Theoretical review

Arnstein's seminal ladder of participation (1969) describes a typology for the range of different kinds of adult involvement in institutional program decision making. Each of the eight rungs of the citizen participation ladder corresponds to a differing degree of citizen power in determining outcomes: Hart has applied the ladder metaphor, using the new

categories to best illustrate the levels of young people's participation when working on projects with adults. The beginning typology provides a framework for examining how adults can support the involvement of children and youth in community planning projects. The information can be used as a basis for designing a program that maximizes opportunities for young people to participate at the highest level of their abilities. According to Hart, the first three rungs of the ladder (manipulation, decoration, and tokenism) are unacceptable because they fail to maximize participation and are designed and controlled by adults, with children and youth playing predetermined roles. Manipulation occurs when young people's involvement is consciously used by adults to communicate the adults' messages. Decoration occurs when adults simply use children to promote or support a cause without any pretense that the children understand the issue themselves or are involved in organizing the activity. Tokenism, a much more common form of involving young people, deals with symbolic representation rather than a genuine voice and effective participation. In the higher rungs of the ladder of participation, Hart's underlying principle is choice: young people may not want to participate at the highest possible levels. However, participation programs should be designed to maximize the opportunity for the child to participate at the highest level of his or her ability. The "assigned but informed" rung of the ladder is the first step towards substantial participation. Although children may not have initiated the project themselves, they have an understanding and a sense of ownership that may arise from critically reflecting on the issue. The "consulted and informed" rung includes projects designed and run by adults who consult with children who understand the process and are able to form opinions that adults then consider seriously. The sixth step takes the adult-initiated projects another step by sharing the decision making with young people who should be involved in the entire process. Hart points out the general tendency to involve children only in the conceptual design phase and not in the development of the technical details, steps that are generally performed by professionals, such as planners, engineers, and architects. It is at this point that young people should be part of the discussion to learn how and why compromises are made so they can obtain a more realistic experience of a real-life, decision-making process.

The highest rungs on the ladder are "child-initiated/child-directed" and "child-initiated/shared decisions with adults." They require a level of competency and self-confidence from both young people and adults. The first category requires committed youth with a level of maturity and an ability to cooperate with their peers. The second category, or the eighth rung, involve the element of trust in which young people are able to include adults without feeling

subjected to adult control. This demonstrates a realization by the youth that collaborating with adults may further the success of their project. Hart's ladder of participation attempts to explain a complex subject in a manner that is simple to use and understand. It provides an overall frame of reference to guide the development of participation projects to ensure that genuine involvement actually occurs. Although the aim is to encourage the highest rungs of participation in involving children and youth in community planning endeavors, the actual level of participation may fluctuate among the upper rungs, depending on the capability and interest of the young person in a specific project. In his informative and practical book, Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care, Hart emphasize the authentic participation of children in developing democracy and sustainable communities. He presents organizing principles, successful models, practical techniques, and resources for involving young people in environmental (meaning environment in the broadest sense) projects.

2.3 Empirical review

There is a need for extension agents, program developers, and policy planners to better understand the role of youth in the community development process. Equally important, a need exists to better recognize the benefits and opportunities presented through youth involvement in community development activities. Youth can actively contribute to a variety of extension activities that enhance local life. If youth are included in programs to meet needs and empower communities, they can become lifelong participants and take on a sense of ownership in development efforts. The merging of community building and youth development has been at the core of recent youth engagement literature (Nitzberg, 2009; Kubisch, 2009; Lynn, 2008). It has identified that youth must be fully engaged and involved in change efforts at the community level if they are to learn to function as effective members of society (Nitzberg, 2005). Community building, for individuals, focuses on building the capacity and empowerment to identify opportunities for change within or outside of the community.

2.3.1 Gender issues

The participation of the females and males in formal and informal decision-making structures varies greatly between countries, but is generally in favour of the males. Similarly, the participation of youth and the elderly differs greatly, mostly favoring the elderly, most

importantly in decision making regarding community projects. Institutional as well as cultural, economic and societal factors limit women's opportunities and abilities to participate in decision making. Youth, especially women's low political representation is therefore often used as an indicator of gender inequality; however, generally youth participation is hindered by age gap. For instance, the 'proportion of seats held by women in national parliament' was chosen as one of three indicators to measure progress on MDG 3 on gender equality and women's empowerment (Carson and Gelber, 2011).

Generally, Youth (majorly women) are underrepresented, not only in the political sphere, but also in decision-making within the private sector, at the village level and in civil society. At the local level, men, especially the elderly usually dominate positions of power, including as religious and traditional leaders, local politicians and village elders. More specifically, women's representation and leadership tend to be confined to areas that are traditionally 'feminine' such as social welfare. Youth's representation in informal decision-making processes is often more common than their representation in formal positions and structures (Edwards, 2011), but it tends to be hidden and therefore not as highly valued as it should be. In order to deepen democracy at the local, national and international level, it is important to ensure that women and men are able to participate on equal terms in both formal and informal decision-making structures. Poor levels of participation and representation in decision-making bodies is exacerbated, for both men and women, by intersecting discriminations relating to ethnic group, socioeconomic status, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

2.3.2 Government policies

As more resources are channeled towards both tackling youth exclusion and disadvantage, as well as towards harnessing young people's potential as partners in growth, the role of young people in deciding and managing the allocation of resources has been brought into sharp relief. Globally there is increasing recognition that young people not only have a right to determine how resources are used, but that they bring unique and valuable experiences and viewpoints to the debate. The issue of youth participation in governance was first given global exposure in Agenda 21, the declaration following the Rio Summit (1992). Since then, a number of international conferences have drawn attention to the issue's importance and it has been highlighted in several prominent legal instruments including the African Youth Charter, which obliges states parties to, among other things, "facilitate the creation or

strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional and continental levels of governance" (African Youth Charter, 2006).

An understanding of youth motivations and efficacy for this kind of engagement are important so that extensions and other development professionals can maximize these valuable resources. As youth are brought into community organizations and civic roles that they have traditionally been excluded from, they can participate in local decision-making at multiple levels. This collaboration leads to skill enhancement, confidence building, and owning that prepare them as they navigate toward adulthood. To facilitate an understanding of youth involvement, this study reviews a study conducted to identify and measure factors associated with youth involvement in their communities. The study examined key independent variables previously found to affect youth involvement, including demographics, influences (Eccles & Barber, 2009; Sherrod, Flanagan & Youniss, 2010; motivations (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter & Zukin, 2010) obstacles (Felix, 2011), and efficacy (Fogel, 2008). All variables were entered into the full model, to assess the partial effects of each conceptual area of youth community involvement. Finally, a reduced stepwise model, including only those variables found to be statistically significant identifies those variables that play a key role in shaping involvement. Specific predictors were identified in order to help youth professionals know what resources to tap as they work to increase youth efforts and more clearly define roles for youth in local development efforts.

Overall, the literature indicates that; while there are a number of laws and policies setting out, on one hand, the promotion and mainstreaming of youth issues and, on the other hand, there remains a lack of clarity throughout the law and policy regarding the mechanisms and processes through which youth can engage in local and national governance processes. Overall participatory governance has been slow to emerge but that there are encouraging signs that it is starting to take root in many areas, an opportunity that young people should be able to take advantage of according to Zukin (2010).

2.3.3 Cultural factors

The development of community is a dynamic process involving all segments of the locality, including the often-overlooked youth population. The key component to this process is found in the creation and maintenance of channels of interaction and communication among diverse local groups that are otherwise directed toward their more individual interests. By facilitating

interaction and developing relationships, these diverse individuals interact and begin to mutually understand common needs. When relationships, consistent interaction, and channels of communication can be established and maintained, increases in local adaptive capacities materialize and community can emerge. During the process of residents and groups interacting, the capacity for local action emerges (Luloff & Bridger, 2008). This capacity is often referred to as "community agency." Agency is therefore reflected in the capacity of people to manage, utilize, and enhance those resources available to them in addressing local issues (Brennan, 2005). Community exists in the collective actions of its members. These collective actions allow residents of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the creation, articulation, and implementation of efforts to support local change. Through this process of interaction, the collection of individuals creates an entity whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

While much of the attention given to building local capacities is often focused toward adults, youth are an increasingly visible and active component in community development efforts. Such involvement contributes to both the development of community and the social and psychological development of the youth involved. To encourage youth involvement in the community, it is therefore, vital to understand the influences, motivations, obstacles and feedback that they receive from the community. Some factors have been reported by youth as influencing their need for and willingness to be a part of a greater good through involvement. These include: feelings of efficacy (Sherrod, et.al. 2010), they need to be valued and taken seriously by others in the community (Flanagan & Van Horn, 2011), increasing their own self-esteem, and having a responsibility to society by performing a public duty (Independent Sector, 2011). Recognition by the community at large is part of feeling valued (Scales & Leffert, 2009).

Finally, other factors, such as parental involvement, can facilitate influences on youth involvement. Youth whose parents is actively involved in the community are more likely to become active themselves (Chan & Elder, 2009). Youth whose parents do not participate in civic activities may still become active in their communities; however, a supportive and reinforcing parental relationship may have a greater contribution to civic engagement than parental modeling (Fletcher & Van Horn, 2010). Perhaps as a result of an increased awareness of the advantages for adolescents, parents play an important role in linking their children to the world around them (Parke & Ladd, 2009).

Despite the influences and motivations, significant obstacles exist that inhibit, and often discourage, community activeness among youth. Among the leading obstacles prevalent in the research, not being taken seriously, not being asked, and not being assigned or having an identifiable role is consistently noted in the research literature (Independent Sector, 2011). Felix (2011) identified other challenges to youth involvement in communities, including a lack of communication and awareness of opportunities, turf issues among organizations competing for youth participants, youth fears of speaking out, lack of diversity, and adultism or the systematic mistreatment of young people simply because of their age.

Moreover, factors such as lack of transportation (Scales & Leffert, 2009), lack of time (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2008), and not being sure of the benefits of their contributions can limit the active involvement of youth. Scales & Leffert (2009) identified four key barriers that keep youth from participating in activities: lack of interesting programs, transportation problems, lack of knowledge about programs, and cost. Similarly, community organizations may be uncertain of the role or impact that youth may have in their efforts (Israel, Coleman & Ilvento, 2007). Viewing young people as transient, participating in too many other activities, and having less predictable schedules, community organizations may exclude youth. Lastly, the extent to which youth can contribute to the decision making process of organizations and play an active role in programs is important in shaping youth involvement.

2.3.4 Level of education

Youth typically spend a substantial amount of time in activities, extracurricular to school, including involvement in community-based organizations, school and local sports teams, and school-based clubs. All of these, and the interaction with individuals within them, directly influence youth involvement in their communities. Previous research supports the premise that participation in community activities is associated with behavioral well-being among adolescents. Influences on youth becoming involved, such as increasing academic performance during high school, increasing the likelihood of college attendance (Eccles & Barber, 2009), greater school engagement and reinforcing positive social values or setting an example (Youniss & Yates, 2007), have been found to affect involvement.

2.4 Conceptual framework

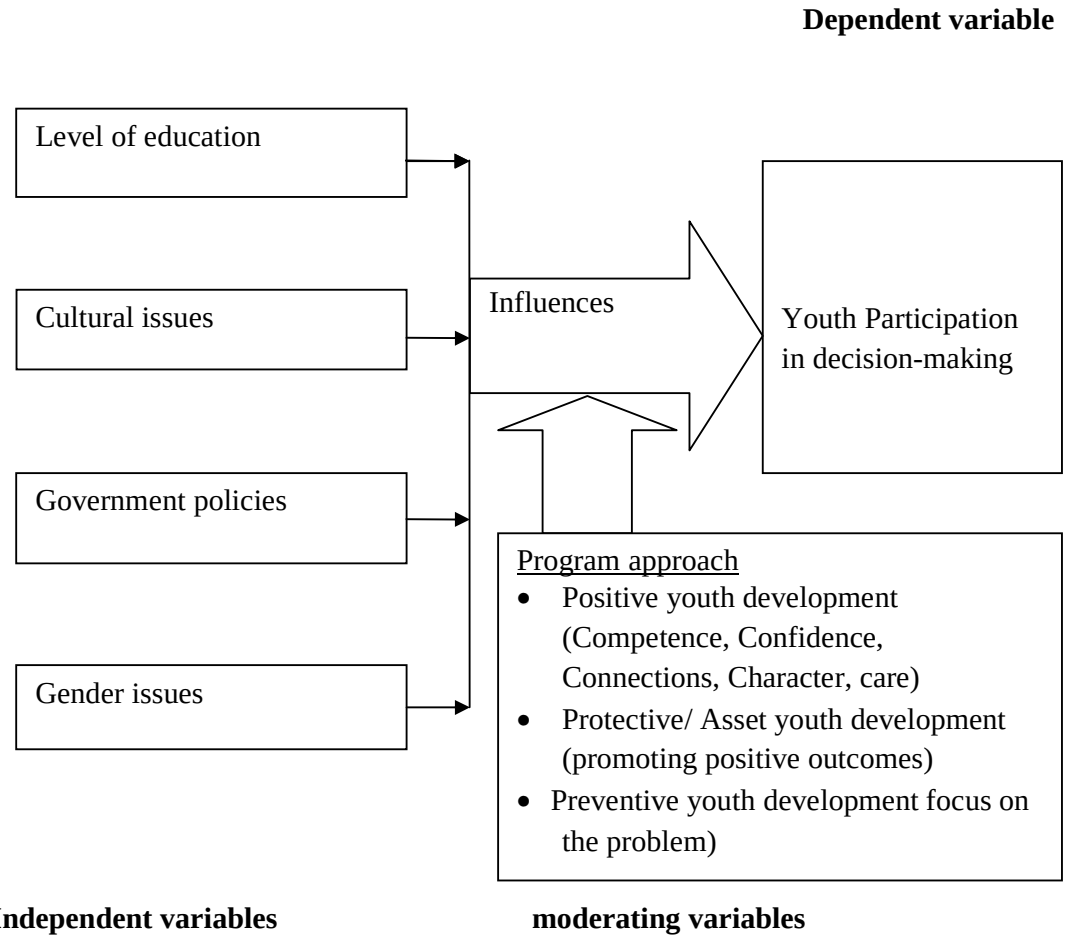

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Different scholars define conceptual framework according to the subject under review, but all point to the same methodology or maps of processes and procedures followed in solving a problem. It shows the relationship between variables and the expected outcome. This particular study has three types of variables. The dependent variable is youth participation in decision-making and the mediating variable include; Positive youth development (Competence, Confidence, Connections, Character, care), Protective/ Asset youth development (promoting positive outcomes), Preventive youth development (focus on the problem) while the independent variables include; educational levels, inadequate government support, cultural factors and the gender issues.

The conceptual model indicates that, youth participation in decision making would require a concerted effort of all the stakeholders and adequate government support to provide a basis

for fostering improved youth participation in decision making. This would encourage the youth to be more focused and willing to participate in decision making in development projects. At the same time, the need for change, adaptation arises in terms of: educational level; government policies and cultural factors. It is anticipated in this study that the foregoing factors will minimize the challenges associated with the non participation in decision making in development projects and subsequently promote overall participation in decision making. It can, thus, be argued that participation in decision making depends on: educational level, appropriate government policies, cultural and equal gender participation in decision making in development projects.

In this research, the type of program approach (preventive youth development, protective youth development or positive youth development) is treated as a mediating variable. Program approach is conceptually defined as the basic model of youth development: preventive youth development, protective youth development or positive youth development models that organizations choose to implement as their main approach in working with the youth.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the research methodology. It presented the following research components: the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted that a survey research attempts to collect data from members of a population and describe existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perception, attitudes, behaviour or values. Moreover, it explores the existing status of two or more variables at a given point in time. This method is considered appropriate in this study as it enhances a systematic description that is as accurate, valid and reliable as possible regarding the factors influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

3.3 Target Population

The study was conducted in the Wajir East district, Wajir County. The district has ten locations with 19 sub locations (Wajir First County Integrated Development plan, 2013, page 18) which have a total population of 82,800. Out of the total population, according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009, 29.07% are estimated to be youths. The target population of this study, therefore comprised of all male and female youth, i.e. those aged between 18-35 years in the Wajir East district, Wajir County (as per recognition of Youth in the Kenyan Constitution, 2010), totalling to 24, 066 respondents. The age distribution of this population was 18-19, 20-24, 25- 29 and 30- 35 years, respectively according to information sourced from (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). The target population was tabulated as in the following table;

Table 1 Youth population

Age bracket	Male	Female	**Total**
18-19	2616	1944	**4560**
20-24	4057	3586	**7643**
25-29	2739	2985	**5724**
30-35	3075	3064	**6139**
Total			**24,066**

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

The target population of the study is 24, 066 respondents. According to Krejcie & Morgan's (1970, p 608) table on the determination of sample size for research activities, a sample for this study, fell in the category of N>20,000 items (N=Population), where a sample size of 380 respondents was found appropriate for the study. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970, p 607), the sample size increases at a diminishing rate with increasing population from 1<infinite values. Therefore, the selected value of this study was 380 respondents. In this regard, this study used simple random sampling to select 38 youths from the total youth from each of the ten locations that make the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

Additionally, the study used purposive sampling to select 2 more leaders comprising of 1 social development officer and 1 youth development officer from the Wajir East district for an interview, because they were deemed to have more information regarding youth participation in community projects. Therefore, the sample population comprised of approximately 380 youths and 2 youth officers to make a total number of 382 respondents who participated in this study.

3.5 Research instruments

The primary research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire for the 380 youths in the ten locations. Questionnaires are most commonly used when respondents can be reached and are willing to cooperate. Information can also be collected from a large sample that is able to read and write independently and hence it can be free from the interviewer bias (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaires also yield quantitative data, which is easy

to collect and analyze. A semi-structured questionnaire was used, consisting of open ended and closed ended questions. Closed ended questions only allowed specific type of responses such as Yes or No. They were easier to analyze since they were in an immediate usable form. Open-ended questions allowed the respondent to state responses as they wished and hence permitted a greater depth of response (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaires were divided into five sections. Section 1 elicited information about the demographic characteristics about the youths. Sections two to five sought information to answer research questions about the factors influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the Wajir East district, Wajir County.

Additionally, this study used an interview guide to obtain information from the two youth development officers selected by the researcher in the Wajir East district, who were deemed to have more information regarding youth participation in community projects. An interview guide was appropriate for it allowed a one on one interaction between the researcher and the respondent, and more reliable information could be obtained.

3.6 Instrument validity

Refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. This research determined content availability of the questionnaires for the target population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted that content validity is determined by piloting and use of expert advice. A pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the instruments as the reliability of each of the items in the instruments as well as the sustainability from the language used, (Mulusa, 1998). Validation was considered important in this study in terms of testing if the questionnaire and the interview guide were properly constructed. The targeted youths participated in pre-testing of the instrument and suggested areas of improvements. The process was considered important in this study in order to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation of questions included in the questionnaires and the interview guide. In validating the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using three locations out of the 10 that will be used in the main survey.

3.7 Instrument reliability

An instrument is reliable when it can measure a variable accurately and consistently and obtain the same results under the same conditions over a number of repeated trials (Orodho,

2008). For this study, the test retest method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires. This technique was good because it offered a time lapse between the two tests and the researcher used this to prove instrument reliability. Test re-test involves administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The developed questionnaires were administered to youths randomly selected from the target population and the responses scored. The same questionnaire was re-administered after two weeks and the responses scored. The scores from test one and test two were correlated to getting the reliability coefficient, the Pearsons product moment correlation. The reliability coefficient was expected to lie between 0 and 1. The closer the value would be to 1, the stronger the congruence measure (Adams and Schranevel, 1985).

3.8 Data collection procedures

The data for this study was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire, which was administered to the youths and leaders identified in the Wajir East district. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents for filling in and were collected after two days from the day of the distribution.

Additionally, data were collected using an interview guide from the selected youth development officers, which the researcher conducted personally via a one on one conversation with the target respondents.

3.9 Data analysis and presentation

The sample data from the survey was subjected to descriptive statistical data analysis methods –SPSS. Descriptive characteristics of the youths' surveys were measured using frequency analysis methods. The analyzed data were presented in the form of table's descriptions, frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the study findings on the factors that influence youth participation in decision making in community projects in wajir east district, Wajir County, Kenya.

4.1.1 Response rate

The study's response rate was as in table 4.1 below;

Table 4.1: Response rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Responded	328	86.32%
Not responded	52	13.68%
Total	380	100

The study targeted to interview 380 respondents drawn from ten locations found within Wajir Central Division in Wajir County. The aim of the study was to establish the factors that influence youth participation in decision making in community projects in wajir east district, Wajir County, Kenya. Data collection instruments, which were the questionnaires, were distributed to respondents through hand delivery. However, out of the 380 questionnaires distributed, only 328 questionnaires were collected by the researcher fully completed making a response percent to 86.32%, while 13.68% indicated that 52 questionnaires were not complete. The distribution of the response rate is also as shown in table 4.1 above.

The interview guide utilized in the study targeted to participants, i.e. 2 leaders comprising of 1 social development officer and 1 youth development officer from the Wajir East district because they were deemed to have more information regarding youth participation in decision making in community projects. The findings indicated making 100% response rate of the two targeted respondents.

4.2 Demographic information

4.2.1 Gender

The study required the respondents to indicate their gender. The findings are as presented in table 4.2 below

Table 4.2 Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Male	207	63
Female	121	37
Total	328	100.0

From table 4.2, the study findings indicated that the majority of the respondents were male as shown by 63% while females were 37%. This is an indication that most of the youth reached at the time of the study were male.

4.2.2 Age bracket of the respondents

The researcher wanted to establish the age range of the respondents. The age range distribution was as in table 4.3 below;

Table 4.3 Age bracket of the respondents

Age bracket	Frequency (n=328)	Percentage %
18-19	37	11.28
20-24 yrs	96	29.26
25-29yrs	110	33.54
30-35 yrs	85	25.92
Total	328	100

According to the findings of the study, the most of the respondents were between 25-30 years as shown by 33.54%, 29.26% were aged between 20-24 years, 25.92% were aged between 30-35 years while the rest as shown by 11.28 were aged between 18 and 19 years respectively.

4.2.3: Respondents' level of education

The researcher sought to establish the level of education of the respondents. The the findings of the study were as in table 4.4 below;

Table 4.4: Respondents' highest level of education

	Frequency (n=328)	Percentage (%)
Primary	28	9
Secondary	82	25
College	145	44
University	73	22
Total	328	100

According to the findings, the study found out that most of the respondents were college graduates as shown by 44% of the respondents, 25% had secondary school certificates, 22% of the respondents had university degrees, while 9% possessed only primary school certificates. This implies that the majority of the respondents had at least a college certificate and could give relevant information on the subject matter.

4.3 Youth participation

4.3.1 The importance of youth participation

The study sought to establish the level at which the youth believed that it was important for them to participate in decision-making processes in their County. The results were as in the table 4.5 below;

Table 4.5 Importance of youth participation

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Yes	295	90
No	33	10
Total	328	100.0

From table 4.5 above, the majority of the respondents indicated that it was important for the youth to be involved in decision-making in community projects as indicated by 90%. This showed that youth participation could be a matter for consideration so as to make community projects more successful.

In regard to the response above where 90% of the respondents agreed with the importance of youth participation, the researcher sought to establish the ways in which youth can participate in community projects in their County. According to the study findings, youth can be involved in decision making regarding community projects by being allocated parts of the project work via affirmative action. Additionally, the youth can participate by being incorporated decision making committees for planning county projects as they also become informed of the criterion on how to become important people in the community. Moreover, the youth can be involved in decision making by being offered a participatory space and the trust by the county government so that they can have freedom to air their ideas, as they are also included in the implementer committees.

From the interview guide, study required the respondents to indicate their position regarding the importance of youth participation in decision making on community projects in the Wajir East District, Wajir County. In this case, the study established that the respondents agreed that was important in the county because it would foster for more development.

4.3.2 Level of youth involvement

The study required to establish the level at which the youth were involved in decision making regarding community projects during the last one year. The findings of the study were as in the table below;

Table 4.6: Level of youth involvement

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Very great extent	6	1.8
Moderate extent	31	9.45
Little extent	165	50. 34
Not at all	126	38.41
Total	328	100.0

From table 4.6 above, the majority of the respondents indicated that youth were involved in decision making regarding community projects in the last one year to a little extent as indicated by 50.34%. 38.41% indicated that youth were not engaged in decision making at all, 9.45% indicated that youth were involved in decision making to a moderate extent, as 1.85 indicated that they had been involved in decision making in the last one year to a very great extent.

Additionally, the interview guide required the respondents to explain the various factors that influenced youth participation in decision making in community projects in the county. In this case, the study findings indicated that factors like development prioritization, community mobilization, prevailing governance structures, level of youth recognition and involvement by the community, youth population, cultural practices and literacy levels influenced the degree of youth involvement to a very great extent.

Also, the interview guide findings indicated that the youth have not yet been offered that opportunity even with the devolving government. The respondents indicated that youth have not yet been empowered and that no avenues have been created so far so that they can be incorporated in the project planning committees or even in the planning programs of the county. The respondents also indicated that there should be such avenues created to ensure that young minds are incorporated in decision making so as to foster for digital development in the current era.

4.3.4. Challenges hindering youth participation

The researcher sought to establish whether there were challenges hindering the participation of in decision making regarding community projects in Wajir central division, Wajir County. The findings of the study were as in table 4.7 below

Table 4.7: Challenges of youth participation

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Yes	305	93
No	23	7
Total	328	100.0

Table 4.7 above shows that the majority of the respondents indicated that there were challenges hindering the participation of youth in decision making in community projects as indicated by 93%.

In regard to the fact that there were rampant challenges hindering the participation of youth in decision making, the researcher sought to establish some of the common challenges facing the youth that the respondents were aware of. According to the study findings, some of the respondents indicated that low literacy levels highly hindered youth participation in decision making in addition to the failure of youth to be incorporated in development and implementation committees. Additionally, some of the respondents attributed the hindrance of youth participation to lack of youth's vibrant structures that can allow them to participate as well as to strict requirements like age and identity cards, cultural practices, lack of recognition by the necessary authorities and massive engagement of youth in activities like drug abuse.

In the interview guide findings, the respondents cited marginalization of different clans was a major challenge, where major clans have at one time or the other conflicted with each other, where the youth fall victim most of the times; hence they cannot be trusted by the elders on major issues. Additionally, unemployment was a major hindrance where most youth lacked resources like the ones needed by the government when one has to contest for a governmental position in Kenya, hence leading youth to lag behind in all ways. Moreover, there seemed to be lack of youth organizations to represent the others in the community, hence the youth

could not have avenues for airing any of their grievances. The respondents also cited strict government policies and traditional community practices as another major challenge, where there are no policies supporting the involvement of youth in community projects in the whole country as well as the negative attitude that elders have on the youth regarding lack of effectiveness and lack of prior experience like the elders may have.

In regard to the already identified challenges, the study sought to establish two ways in which youth participation in decision making on community projects can be improved currently in the county. According to the study findings, participation can be improved via the provision of platforms for youth participation by the county government officials as some of the respondents indicated. Additionally, some respondents indicated that a timely issuance of identity cards to the youth is likely to increase the participation of youth as they also consider empowering the youth as a community. Also, some respondents stated that youth participation can be improved via the formulation of policies that will favour youth and women to participate in community in decision making.

Additionally, the interviewed respondents viewed that that youth participation could be improved via the formulation of viable and deliberate policies that would provide the youth with a framework for airing their views in the community. Additionally, the study found out that the youth need to have awareness regarding their constitutional rights in Kenya and start taking action to create their space in the community. Also, youth participation could be enhanced via the installation of voluntarism culture that is not embedded on the traditional practices, rather, that which considers every individual in the community.

4.4 Government policies

4.4.1 Influence of government policy on youth participation

The study sought to establish the level of the respondent's agreement with various relating to the influence government policies on the participation of youth in decision making in community projects in the county. The findings of the study were as in table 4.8 below;

Table 4.8: Influence of government policy on youth participation

Statement	Very great extent %	Great extent %	Moderate extent %	Little extent %	Not at all %
Age for obtaining ID card affect youth participation in community projects	13	78	6	2	1
Age requirement for contesting for various political posts affects participation of youth in community projects	18	74	6	1	1
Minimum monetary requirements for contesting for various offices affects participation of youth in community projects	18	67	10	3	2

From table 4.8 above, the study findings indicated that the age for obtaining ID card affected youth participation in community projects, the age requirement for contesting for various political posts affected participation of youth in community project and the minimum monetary requirements for contesting for various offices affected participation of youth in community projects to a great extent, as shown by 78%, 74% and 67% respectively. This has the implication that the prevailing government policies are unfavourable to lead youth to participate in community projects and need to be revised so as to create space for their participation.

From the interviewed respondents, government policies regarding the involvement of different community groups and the role they should play have not yet been well formulated. The respondents cited late issuance of identity cards to the youth lack of proper systems to address youth and issues as well the massive capitalization on use of resources to acquire government posts as a major issues affecting youth participation. At the same time, the respondents cited the lack of a clear definition on who should make decisions in the community affected youth participation in community projects.

4.6 Gender issues

4.6.1 Influence of gender issues on youth participation

The researcher aimed at establishing whether gender issues had an influence on youth participation in decision making in Wajir East Constituency community projects. The findings of the study were indicated as in table 4.9 below;

Table 4.9; Influence of gender issues on youth participation

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Yes	292	89
No	36	11
Total	328	100

Table 4.9 above shows that the majority of the respondents indicated that gender issues influenced the participation of youth in decision making on community projects as shown by 89%, while only 11% indicated that gender issues had no influence on youth participation.

The researchers also sought to establish the level to which the respondents agreed to various statements relating to gender as a factor that influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects. The findings of the study were as in table 4.10 below;

Table 4.10: Effect of gender issues

Statement	Very great extent %	Great extent %	Moderate extent %	Little extent %	Not at all %
Youth and women are not economically empowered to engage in community projects	68	20	7	4	1
Youth and women are locked out of the traditional decision making hierarchy in community projects	63	24	7	5	1
Women have the lowest education level	59	32	5	2	2
Men have an upper hand in contesting and winning in political position than women	54	39	4	2	1
Females and males are given equal responsibility and positions in participation in community projects	13	4	15	26	42

From the study findings, the majority of the respondents indicated that youth and women were not economically empowered to engage in community projects, youth and women were locked out of the traditional decision making hierarchy in community projects, women had the lowest education level, men had an upper hand in contesting and winning in political position than women and females and males were given equal responsibility and positions in participation in community projects to a very great extent as shown by 68%, 63%, 59%, 54% and 13% respectively. This had the implication that women and youth are most ignored in decision making processes while men take the role of leadership and decision making on community operations.

The interview guide findings also indicated the respondents stated that genders issues play a major role in determining the participation of youth in decision making. According to the findings, women are always ignored in development projects, mostly young females despite their level of education. Also, when it comes to the struggle for power, females are mostly left out due to lack of resources that may be needed to fulfill the policy requirements for those vying for government positions.

4.7: Level of education

4.7.1 Level of education's influence on youth participation

The study sought to establish on whether the level of education influenced youth participation in decision making on community projects. The study findings were as in table 4.11 below;

Table 4.11: Level of education

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Yes	296	90.24
No	32	9.76
Total	328	100.0

The findings in table 4.11 above show that the majority of the respondents at 90.24% agreed that the level of education of the youth influenced the degree of participation in decision making concerning community projects. This has the implication that the higher the level of education a youthful person possesses, the higher the recognition in the society and involvement in community projects' decision making

Also, the interviewed respondents indicated that education is the key to survival in Kenya. The respondents added that highly educated youth are capable of airing their concerns as compared to lowly educated ones. However, the quality of education, according to the respondents was affected by inadequate learning facilities and institutions in the area of study and poor learning conditions, hence these issues could be attended to in order that youth can be empowered

4.7.2 Equality in youth participation

The researcher also sought to establish whether the society gave equal chances to youth with both strong and weak formal-education backgrounds to participate in community projects. The findings of the study were as indicated in table 4.12 below;

Table 4.12: Equality for participation

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
No	302	92.07
Yes	26	9. 93
Total	328	100.0

From the study findings, the majority of the respondents disagreed and indicated that youth were not offered an equal chance for both the ones with strong and weak educational backgrounds in the community as indicated by 92.07%. This implies that distinct educational qualifications are recognized distinctly in the community and the level of involvement depends on how well the youth are educated.

4.7.3. Present educational frameworks

Owing to the fact that decision making requires educated individuals, the study sought the respondents opinion regarding whether their county had the right frameworks to enable youth acquire the necessary educational requirements. The study findings were as in table 4.13 below;

Table 4.13 Educational frameworks

Response	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Yes	285	87
No	43	13
Total	328	100.0

From table 4.13 above, the study findings were that the majority of the respondents indicated that their county lacked the right educational frameworks to support youth in acquiring the right qualifications as shown by 87%. This has the implication that though the level of education influenced the degree of youth participation in decision making, the educational frameworks were a big hindrance and the factor needed special considerations.

The fact that there was lack of adequate educational frameworks from the findings in figure 6 above, the researcher wanted to find out from the respondents if some of the suspected reasons were true for the failure of better education for the youth in the county. The study findings were as in table 4.14 below;

Table 4.14: Reasons for inadequate education

Reason	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Lack of Universities and colleges for higher education	101	30.79
Inadequate learning facilities	78	23.78
Late enrolment of young children in schools	52	15.85
Poor learning conditions	43	13.20
Lack of teachers in most of the schools	31	9.45
Overcrowded schools	23	6.93
Total	328	100

From table 4.14 above, the study findings indicated that lack of adequate Universities and colleges for higher education acquired the highest score from the respondents at 30.79% followed by inadequate learning facilities with a score of 23.78%. Additionally, some of the respondents at 15.85% agreed to the late enrolment of young children in schools, followed by poor learning conditions at a score of 13.20%, lack of teachers in most of the schools at 9.45%, and finally overcrowded schools received the least response at 6.93%. The high scores indicated that all of the reasons were valid as to why there is an inadequate educational framework in the county, though as indicated by the majority of the respondents, lack of

tertiary learning institutions adversely contributed to low academic qualifications of the youth, hence the low involvement in community projects.

4.8 Cultural factors

4.8.1 Decision making in the community

The study sought to establish from the respondents concerning who were the major decision makers in their community. The study findings were as in table 4.15 below;

Table 4.15 Decision making process

Decision maker	Frequency (n=328)	Percent (%)
Elected government officials	177	54
Community elders	108	33
Don't know	26	8
Youthful leaders	17	5
Total	328	100

Table 4.15 above shows that the majority of the respondents indicated that the major decision makers in the community were elected government officials, and who are usually above the youthful age as shown by 54% followed by some of the respondents indicating that the community elders are the major decision makers as shown by 33% of the respondents. Also, some of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of who make the community decisions as indicated by 8%, while the rest of the respondents at 5% indicated that youthful leaders are involved in decision making. This has the implication that most of the decisions are made by elected government officials, who according to the leadership profile of Kenya are normally people with the age of 50 years and above, meaning that they are also part of the elderly people. The 5% score for the youthful leaders is so low, providing a clear indication that the youth in the county are inadequately recognized when it comes to decision making concerning community projects, which explains clearly why the youth do not participate in decision making processes.

4.8.2. Influence of cultural factors

The study sought to establish the respondents' position on various statements relating to cultural factors as a factor that influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects. The study findings were as in table 4.16 below;

Table 4.16: Influence of cultural factors

Statement	Very great extent %	Great extent %	Moderate extent %	Little extent %	Not at all %
Adults promote youth active participation in community projects	2	6	14	58	20
Adults respect young people and believe they have significant contributions to make in community projects	1	8	23	53	15
Adults do share their power with young people in community projects.	3	5	10	48	34
Adults plan programs projects and involve youth in the process	4	7	13	46	30
Young people may have good ideas but are unsure about how to implement them in community projects	2	8	14	41	35
Young people do not view themselves as a group that can create change in community projects	1	5	11	38	45

Table 4.16 above showed that the majority of the respondents indicated that Adults promote youth active participation in community projects, adults respect young people and believe they have significant contributions to make in community projects, adults do share their

power with young people in community projects, adults plan programs projects and involve youth in the process, young people may have good ideas but are unsure about how to implement them in community projects, and that young people do not view themselves as a group that can create change in community projects to a little extent as shown by 58%, 53%, 48%, 46%, 41% and 38% respectively. This has the implication that young people have good ideas that can be utilized in implementing community projects but the elderly do not involve them in any form of decision making, which is a great hindrance to youth participation.

Also, the interviewed respondents added that cultural practices sometimes may allow room for youth to participate in decision making. However, culture denies women the opportunity to engage fully in decision making and even taking leadership positions no matter how educated they are.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of key findings, conclusions and recommendations with regard to the study specific aspects related to strategies for creating competitive advantage.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

5.2.1 Youth participation

With this objective, the majority of the respondents indicated that it was important for the youth to be involved in decision-making in community projects as indicated by 90%. Also, the study finding showed that youth can be involved in decision making regarding community projects by being allocated parts of the project work via affirmative action. Additionally, the youth can participate by being incorporated decision making committees for planning county projects as they also become informed of the criterion on how to become important people in the community. Moreover, the youth can be involved in decision making by being offered a participatory space and the trust by the county government so that they can have freedom to air their ideas, as they are also included in the implementer committees. This finding concurred with Bessant (2008), who stated that there is often a focus on how the capacities of young people can be enhanced by participatory experiences in their transition toward ‘full’ and active citizenship

Most importantly, the study findings indicated that factors like development prioritization, community mobilization, prevailing governance structures, level of youth recognition and involvement of the community, youth population, cultural practices and literacy levels influenced the degree of youth involvement to a very great extent. Also, the interview guide's findings indicated that the youth have not yet been offered that opportunity even with the devolving government. The respondents indicated that youth have not yet been empowered and that no avenues have been created so far so that they can be incorporated in the project planning committees or even in the planning programs of the county. The respondents also indicated that there should be such avenues created to ensure that young minds are incorporated into decision making so as to foster for digital development in the current era.

On the challenges, the majority of the respondents indicated that there were challenges hindering the participation of youth in decision making in community projects as indicated by 93%. According to the study findings, some of the respondents indicated that low literacy levels highly hindered youth participation in decision making in addition to the failure of youth to be incorporated in the development and implementation committees. Additionally, some of the respondents attributed the hindrance of youth participation to lack of youth's vibrant structures that can allow them to participate as well as to strict requirements like age and identity cards, cultural practices, lack of recognition by the necessary authorities and massive engagement of youth in activities like drug abuse.

In the interview guide's findings, the respondents cited that marginalization of different clans was a major challenge, where major clans have at one time or the other conflicted with each other, where the youth fall victim most of the times; hence they cannot be trusted by the elders on major issues. Additionally, unemployment was a major hindrance where most youth lacked resources like the ones needed by the government when one has to contest for a governmental position in Kenya, hence leading youth to lag behind in all ways. Moreover, there seemed to be lack of youth organizations to represent the others in the community, hence the youth could not have avenues for airing any of their grievances. The respondents also cited strict government policies and traditional community practices as another major challenge, where there are no policies supporting the involvement of youth in community projects in the whole country as well as the negative attitude that elders have on the youth regarding lack of effectiveness and lack of prior experience like the elders may have. These findings were in accordance with Bishop & Davis's (2011) literature indicating that significant barriers to youth participation occur at the individual, organizational as well as political levels of capacity.

Concerning the improvement of youth participation, to the study findings, participation can be improved via the provision of platforms for youth participation by the county government officials as some of the respondents indicated. Additionally, some respondents indicated that a timely issuance of identity cards to the youth is likely to increase the participation of youth as they also consider empowering the youth as a community. Also, some respondents stated that youth participation can be improved via the formulation of policies that will favour youth and women to participate in community decision making. From this, Everingham (2009) was right because he values consultation and participatory governance in of itself as it broadens

the potential for active citizenship, increases the range of political actors, and forces the state to be democratically accountable to society

The study findings also indicated that youth participation could be improved via the formulation of viable and deliberate policies that would provide the youth with a framework for airing their views in the community. Additionally, the study found out that the youth need to have awareness regarding their constitutional rights in Kenya and start taking action to create their space in the community. Also, youth participation could be enhanced via the installation of voluntarism culture that is not embedded in the traditional practices, rather, that which considers every individual in the community.

5.2.2 Government policies

With this objective, the study findings indicated that the age for obtaining an ID card affected youth participation in community projects, the age requirement for contesting for various political posts affected participation of youth in community projects and the minimum monetary requirements for contesting for various offices affected participation of youth in community projects to a great extent, as shown by 78%, 74% and 67% respectively. This has the implication that the prevailing government policies are unfavourable to lead youth to participate in community projects and need to be revised so as to create space for their participation.

Also, the study findings indicated that government policy regarding the involvement of different community groups and the role they should play has not yet been well formulated. The respondents cited late issuance of identity cards to the youth lack of proper systems to address youth and issues as well the massive capitalization on use of resources to acquire government posts as a major issue affecting youth participation. At the same time, the respondents cited the lack of a clear definition of who should make decisions in the community affected youth participation in community projects. These findings concurred with Scales & Leffert (2009) study whose findings state that formal political organizations, such as parties and parliaments, internal mechanisms, rules and procedures do not favor the inclusion of youth, and they are not considered for leadership positions and the only engagement does not lead to visible results

5.2.3 Gender issues

With this objective, the study findings were that gender issues influenced the participation of youth in decision making on community projects as shown by 89%, while only 11% indicated that gender issues had no influence on youth participation.

Additionally, From the study findings, the majority of the respondents indicated that youth and women were not economically empowered to engage in community projects, youth and women were locked out of the traditional decision making hierarchy in community projects, women had the lowest education level, men had an upper hand in contesting and winning in political position than women and females and males were given equal responsibility and positions in participation in community projects to a very great extent as shown by 68%, 63%, 59%, 54% and 13% respectively. This had the implication that women and youth are most ignored in decision making processes while men take the role of leadership and decision making on community operations.

The findings also indicated the respondents stated that genders issues play a major role in determining the participation of youth in decision making. According to the findings, women are always ignored in development projects, mostly young females despite their level of education. Also, when it comes to the struggle for power, females are mostly left out due to lack of resources that may be needed to fulfill the policy requirements for those vying for government positions. These findings concur with Kirby and Bryson (2012) who examined how young peoples' participation is evaluated and found that: Whilst young people are increasingly being involved in participatory projects, the evidence from existing evaluations is that they are still having little impact on public decision making,

5.2.4 Level of education

On this objective, the study findings showed that the majority of the respondents at 90.24% agreed that the level of education of the youth influenced the degree of participation in decision making concerning community projects. This has the implication that the higher the level of education a youthful person possesses, the higher the recognition in the society and involvement in community projects' decision making. Also, the study found out that education is the key for survival in Kenya. The respondents added that highly educated youth

are capable of airing their concerns as compared to lowly educated ones. However, the quality of education, according to the respondents was affected by inadequate learning facilities and institutions in the area of study and poor learning conditions, hence these issues could be attended to in order that youth can. According to Lynn (2008), community building, for individuals, focuses on building the capacity and empowerment to identify opportunities for change within or outside of the community.

Additionally, the study findings showed that the majority of the respondents disagreed and indicated that youth were not offered an equal chance for both the ones with strong and weak educational backgrounds in the community as indicated by 92.07%. This implies that distinct educational qualifications are recognized distinctly in the community and the level of involvement depends on how well the youth are educated. The study findings further indicated that lack of adequate Universities and colleges for higher education acquired the highest score from the respondents at 30.79% followed by inadequate learning facilities with a score of 23.78%. Additionally, some of the respondents at 15.85% agreed to the late enrolment of young children in schools, followed by poor learning conditions at a score of 13.20%, lack of teachers in most of the schools at 9.45%, and finally overcrowded schools received the least response at 6.93%. The high scores indicated that all of the reasons were valid as to why there is an inadequate educational framework in the county, though as indicated by the majority of the respondents, lack of tertiary learning institutions adversely contributed to low academic qualifications of the youth, hence the low involvement in community projects. This finding also corresponds to Bessant (2008), who stated that there is often a focus on how the capacities of young people can be enhanced by participatory experiences in their transition toward 'full' and active citizenship.

5.2.5 Cultural factors

On this objective, the study findings were that; the majority of the respondents indicated that the major decision makers in the community were elected government officials, and who are usually above the youthful age as shown by 54% followed by some of the respondents indicating that the community elders are the major decision makers as shown by 33% of the respondents. Also, some of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of who make the community decisions as indicated by 8%, while the rest of the respondents at 5% indicated that youthful leaders are involved in decision making.

Also, the study findings were that indicated that adults promote youth active participation in community projects, adults respect young people and believe they have significant contributions to make in community projects, adults do share their power with young people in community projects, adults plan programs projects and involve youth in the process, young people may have good ideas but are unsure about how to implement them in community projects, and that young people do not view themselves as a group that can create change in community projects to a little extent as shown by 58%, 53%, 48%, 46%, 41% and 38% respectively. Also, the interviewed respondents added that cultural practices sometimes may allow room for youth to participate in decision making. However, culture denies women the opportunity to engage fully in decision making and even taking leadership positions no matter how educated they are. These findings were in accordance with Goodman, et al (1998) whose identification and definition of the dimensions of community capacity to provide a basis for measurement for a society that values youth participation showed that the involvement of all groups of people in decision-making regarding community projects impacts positively on societal governance.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Youth participation

With this objective, the student concluded that it was important for the youth to be involved in decision-making in community projects. The youth can be involved in decision making by being offered a participatory space and the trust by the county government so that they can have freedom to air their ideas, as they are also included in the implementer committees. This is in accordance with Bessant (2008), who stated that there is often a focus on how the capacities of young people can be enhanced by participatory experiences in their transition toward ‘full’ and active citizenship.

Most importantly, the study concluded that factors like development prioritization, community mobilization, prevailing governance structures, level of youth recognition and involvement of the community, youth population, cultural practices and literacy levels influenced the degree of youth involvement to a very great extent. Also, the study concluded that the youth have not yet been offered that opportunity, even with the devolving government because they have not yet been empowered and that no avenues have been created so far so that they can be incorporated in the project planning committees or even in

the planning programs of the county. In this case, the conclusion was in accordance to Eccles & Barber (2009), who postulate that young people who participate actively in their community from early on are more likely to become engaged citizens, and that there should be such avenues created to ensure that young minds are incorporated in decision making so as to foster for digital development in the current era.

On the challenges, the study concluded that some of the challenges included low literacy levels that highly hindered youth participation in decision making in addition to the failure of youth to be incorporated in the development and implementation committees. Also, the study concluded that lack of youth's vibrant structures that can allow them to participate as well as the strict requirements like age and identity cards, cultural practices, lack of recognition by the necessary authorities and massive engagement of youth in activities like drug abuse could be great hindrances to youth participation.

In regard to the various challenges, the study concluded that the provision of platforms for youth participation by the county government officials, timely issuance of identity cards to the youth is likely to increase the participation of youth as they also consider empowering the youth as a community in addition to the formulation of policies that will favour youth and women to participate in community decision making. This conclusion agrees with Chang & Elder (2009) postulating that young people should ideally be involved in formulating goals and action plans, as well as in tracking and evaluating action.

5.3.2 Government policies

With this objective, the study concluded that the age for obtaining an ID card affected youth participation in community projects, the age requirement for contesting for various political posts affected participation of youth in community projects and the minimum monetary requirements for contesting for various offices affected participation of youth in community projects. This has the implication that the prevailing government policies are unfavourable to lead youth to participate in community projects and need to be revised so as to create space for their participation.

Also, the study concluded that government policy regarding the involvement of different community groups and the role they should play have not yet been well formulated. The late issuance of identity cards to the youth and lack of proper systems to address youth issues as

well the massive capitalization on use of resources to acquire government posts were concluded as the major issues affecting youth participation. At the same time, the respondents cited the lack of a clear definition of who should make decisions in the community affected youth participation in community projects. These conclusions are in accordance with Scales & Leffert (2009) study whose findings state that formal political organizations, such as parties and parliaments, internal mechanisms, rules and procedures do not favor the inclusion of youth, and they are not considered for leadership positions and the only engagement does not lead to visible results

5.3.3 Gender issues

With this objective, the study concluded that gender issues influenced the participation of youth in decision making in community projects. Additionally, the study concluded that youth and women were not economically empowered to engage in community projects, youth and women were locked out of the traditional decision making hierarchy in community projects, women had the lowest education level, men had an upper hand in contesting and winning in political position than women and females and males were not given equal responsibility and positions in participation in community projects. This had the implication that women and youth are most ignored in decision making processes while men take the role of leadership and decision making on community operations.

According to the study's conclusion, women are always ignored in development projects, mostly young females despite their level of education. Also, when it comes to the struggle for power, females are mostly left out due to lack of resources that may be needed to fulfill the policy requirements for those vying for government positions. This conclusion concurs with Kirby and Bryson (2012) who examined how young peoples' participation is evaluated and found that: whilst young people are increasingly being involved in participatory projects, the evidence from existing evaluations is that they are still having little impact on public decision making,

5.3.4 Level of education

With this objective, the study concluded that the level of education of the youth influenced the degree of participation in decision making concerning community projects. This has the implication that the higher the level of education a youthful person possesses, the higher the

recognition in the society and involvement in community projects' decision making. Also, the study concluded that education is the key for survival in Kenya, and that highly educated youth is capable of airing their concerns as compared to lowly educated ones. However, the quality of education, according to the study was affected by inadequate learning facilities and institutions in the area of study and poor learning conditions, hence these issues could be attended to in order that youth can participate in community projects.

Additionally, the study concluded that youth was not offered an equal chance for both the ones with strong and weak educational backgrounds in the community. This implies that distinct educational qualifications are recognized distinctly in the community and the level of involvement depends on how well the youth are educated. The study further concluded that lack of adequate Universities and colleges of higher education, inadequate learning facilities, late enrolment of young children in schools, poor learning conditions, and lack of teachers in most of the schools and overcrowded schools were some of the reasons as to why there is an inadequate educational framework. The conclusions of this objective are in accordance with Nitzberg (2009), who identified that youth must be fully engaged and involved in change efforts at the community level if they are to learn to function as effective members of society.

5.3.5 Cultural factors

With this objective, the study concluded that that most of the decisions are made by elected government officials, who, according to the leadership profile of Kenya are normally people with the age of 50 years and above, meaning that they are also part of the elderly people. This provides a clear indication that the youth in the county is not recognized at all when it comes to decision making concerning community projects, which explains clearly why the youth do not participate in decision making processes.

Additionally, the study concluded that adults do not promote youth active participation in community projects, adults respect do not respect young people or believe they have significant contributions to make in community projects, adults do not share their power with young people in community projects, adults plan programs projects without involving youth in the process, young people may have good ideas but are unsure about how to implement them in community projects, and that young people view themselves as a group that can create change in community projects. Also, added that cultural practices sometimes may allow room for youth to participate in decision making. However, culture denies women the opportunity to engage fully in decision making and even taking leadership positions no

matter how educated they are. This has the implication that young people have good ideas that can be utilized in implementing community projects but the elderly do not involve them in any form of decision making, which is a great hindrance to youth participation. This concurs with Land's (2009) study which indicates that young people have been neglected in today's civil society while they can cause positive changes in the society.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

This study recommends that youth participation should be valued in Wajir County and Kenya at large to ensure that all citizens take part in development activities. In this regard**,** Land's (2009) study plays a significant role by creating awareness that young people have been neglected in today's civil society while they can cause positive changes in the society. The current level of development for community projects could be far much better if young minds are offered room for participation in decision making processes.

Additionally, this study recommends that government policies should be formulated which create room for every person to participate in spite of the differences in academic qualifications as well as gender. For instance, for the youth to participate fully in decision making processes, issuance of identity cards should be enhanced via the setting up of a quick processing system so that all youth in Kenya can participate in decision making in community projects at the age of 18 years as per the definition of a youth offered in the Constitution of Kenya (2010).

The study also recommends that the right frameworks are set regarding the process of vying for government positions. From the findings, it was evident that for individuals to vie for a government post, they have to pay certain amounts, and in most cases the youth are unemployed and may not have the resources. That policy locks out many youth who may have excellent leadership qualities and useful ideas but lacking resources. Therefore, if the government could consider eliminating such kind of fees, youth participation would be enhanced and community projects would be more successful.

Further, the study recommends that Universities and Colleges be introduced and operationalized in Wajir County to increase the access of educational facilities to all youth, as a way of enhancing educational qualifications. For instance, the conclusion of this study was that there were few tertiary institutions in the area of study and prevalence of poor learning

conditions in addition to inadequate teaching personnel. Most of the youth therefore blamed the poor educational framework for their low academic qualifications. Therefore, if the government could set up enough institutions of learning in Wajir County and all other counties, this would enhance youth participation in decision making in community projects. Further on education, the government, NGOS and voluntary organizations should consider offering career guidance via the establishment of a career guidance center to youth in Wajir County and Kenya at large to ensure that they understand their talents, potentials and gifts. This will ensure that they join tertiary institutions and gain appropriate knowledge that can offer them the right employment as a way of reducing the massive numbers of youth who are still unemployed and have no careers.

Most importantly, the study recommends change that will ensure the development of a voluntarism culture in Wajir County and Kenya at large so that all people can have the freedom to participate in community projects despite their age, gender or educational qualification. According to Felix (2011), many existing or emergent methods of participation are available for youth, men and women focus groups to town meetings, to public hearings, to protest demonstrations, and to community surveys. This implies that everybody in Kenya can play a vital role in community projects where the right frameworks are formulated.

Finally, this study recommends awareness that gender should not be a hindrance to youth participation, owing to the current situation where all people (both male and female) have the opportunity to acquire equal academic qualification. Nowadays women are educated, and hence; should be given an equal opportunity as that of men to participate in decision making processes on community projects.

5.5 Areas for further research

This study has reviewed on factors that influence youth participation in decision making in community projects in Wajir east district, Wajir County, Kenya.The same study should be carried out in other counties in Kenya to find out if similar results would be obtained. Also, this study should be carried out all over the world to find out if the same results would be obtained. Most importantly, other areas of study like the effect and requirements for youth participation in decision making on community projects should be carried out to also provide outcomes so that many academic knowledge gaps can be closed.

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Appendix 1: Transmittal letter

Abdullahi Ahmed Ali

P.O. Box 208- 70200, Wajir.

Phone No: +254 720463203

Email; ahmeds264@yahoo.com

The selected Respondents,

Wajir East Constituency, Wajir County,

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi carrying out a research project on factors influencing youth participation in decision making in community projects in Wajir East District, Wajir County. I kindly request you to respond to the study questions asked sincerely because the ultimate goal is to provide insights on the aspect of youth participation and how it can be improved so that everyone in the community participates in decision making in community projects. I assure you that the information you provide will be treated with utmost confidence and will only e used for the purpose of the study. To assist in concealing the information, kindly do not write your name or anything that can lead to the revelation of your identity.

Am very grateful for your cooperation and thank you in advance

Yours Faithfully,

Signature.....Date.....

Abdullahi Ahmed Ali,

University of Nairobi

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

SECTION A: Demographic information

1. Please indicate your gender? Use a (√)

Male ( ) Female ( )

2. What is your age bracket?

18-19 ( ) -20-24 ( ) 25-29 ( ) 30-35 ( )

3. Indicate your level of education

Primary School ( ) Secondary School ( ) College ( ) University ( )

Any other (Specify) .....

SECTION B: YOUTH PARTICIPATION

4 a) In your opinion, do you believe that youth participation is important in decision making processes regarding community projects in Wajir County?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If yes, how do you think youth can participate in decisions concerning projects?

.....

.....

.....

5. To what level have youth been involved in community projects in Wajir County central division in the last one year? Use a (√) to select your answer from below;

Very great extent [ ]

Moderate extent [ ]

Little extent [ ]

Not at all [ ]

6a). Are there challenges hindering youth participation in decision making regarding community projects in Wajir central division?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If yes, state three common challenges that you are aware of;

.....

.....

c)In your own opinion, state two ways in which youth participation in decision making on community projects can be improved currently in your county?

.....

.....

SECTION C: GOVERNMENT POLICIES

7. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on government policies as a factor that influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects?

Statement	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
Age for obtaining ID card affect youth participation in community projects					
Age requirement for contesting for various political posts affects participation of youth in community projects					
Minimum monetary requirements for contesting for various offices affects participation of youth in community projects					

SECTION D: GENDER ISSUES

8. Do you think that gender issues can affect youth participation in decision making in community projects?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to gender as a factor that influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects?

Statement	**Very great extent**	**Great extent**	**Moderate extent**	**Little extent**	**Not at all**
Youth and women are locked out of the traditional decision making hierarchy in community projects					
Youth and women are not economically empowered to engage in community projects					
Women have the lowest education level					
Men have an upper hand in contesting and winning in political position than women					
Females and males are given equal responsibility and positions in participation in community projects					

SECTION E: LEVEL OF EDUCATION

10 a) In your opinion, does the level of education influence youth participation in community projects?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) In your community, does the society give equal chances to youth with both strong and weak formal-education backgrounds to participate in community projects?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

11 a) Owing to the fact that decision making requires educated individuals, do you think that your county has the right frameworks to enable youth acquire the necessary requirements

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If no in the statement above, mark in below if a reason stated below is true for the failure of better education for the youth in your county; mark as many as possible;

Late enrolment of young children in schools [ ]

Lack of teachers in most of the schools [ ]

Lack of Universities and colleges for higher education [ ]

Overcrowded schools [ ]

Poor learning conditions [ ]

Inadequate learning facilities [ ]

SECTION F: CULTURAL FACTORS

12. In your opinion, who are the major decision makers regarding community projects in our County?

Community elders [ ]

Elected Government Officials [ ]

Youthful leaders [ ]

Don't know [ ]

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to cultural factors as a factor that influencing participation of youth in decision making in community projects?

Statement	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
Adults respect young people and believe they have					

significant contributions to make in community projects					
Adults promote youth active participation in community projects					
Young people may have good ideas but are unsure about how to implement them in community projects					
Young people do not view themselves as a group that can create change in community projects					
Adults plan programs or projects and involve youth in the process					
Adults do share their power with young people in community projects.					

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 3: Interview guide

1. Is youth participation in decision making regarding community projects important in the Wajir East district, Wajir County?
2. What factors may influence the participation of youth in decision making processes in community projects in your community?
3. In your opinion, has the Wajir East district in your county offered the youth an ample opportunity to participate in decision making on community projects?
4. If No in No 3 above, what do think are the major hindrances preventing the youth from participating fully in decision making on community projects, specifically in Wajir East district, Wajir County?
5. In your opinion, do gender issues play a role in determining the level of youth participation in decision making in community projects in Wajir East district, Wajir County? If yes, how?
6. Briefly explain how the following factors may influence youth participation in the Wajir East district, Wajir County
   a) Government policies
   b) Education level
   c) Community culture
7. As a leader, how do you think youth participation in decision making in community projects can be improved in Wajir East district, Wajir County in future?

Thank you for your participation