

CULTURAL NORMS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA, A CASE STUDY OF NAMANYONYI SUB COUNTY, MBALE DISTRICT.

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ABSTRACT

Cultural variables are incorporated into a baseline endogenous economic growth model. Cultural attitudes toward achievement and thrift have a positive effect on economic growth. Cultural attitudes concerning post materialism have a negative effect on economic growth. Ordinary least squares regression is used to test economic and cultural models of growth on a cross section of 25 countries. The encompassing principle is used to resolve competing theoretical specifications and to generate a final parsimonious model. A variant of Leamer's Extreme Bounds Analysis (EBA) is used to evaluate the sensitivity of parameter estimates. The conclusions are further supported by nonparametric methods including robust regression and bootstrap resampling. The data for the analysis are from the World Values Survey (1990) and from Levine and Renelt (1992). An empirical model that incorporates both cultural and economic variables is superior to an explanation emphasizing one set of these variables.

Key words: cultural norms, socio-economic development and communities

Background of the study

The 1995 Constitution guarantees a right to culture, and evidence increasingly tells us that, for equitable and sustainable development, the cultural aspect of any activity must be harnessed as an essential driving force. At the same time, we must acknowledge that each culture is unique and valued by its people, and exploit the strength of cross-cultural interaction in our diversity. By so doing, we will create multiple patterns of development that better reflect the complexity of our identity and our response in a global arena (Joventá et al., 2023). Cultural and creative industries are in a strategic position to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in all European Union (EU) regions and cities, and thus contribute fully to the Europe 2020 Strategy, which is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. While some EU regions have been very good at tapping into this extraordinary potential as a way to promote socio-economic transformation - including through the use of EU Structural Funds it however appears that many others have not been making most of this potential (Ronald et al., 2023b).

According to Olawoye, (2008) it's important to better sensitize local, and Cultural Norms in their communities of the potential of cultural and creative industries in boosting regional and local development (Moses et al., 2023). This intends to help them in formulating local, regional and national strategies for cultural and creative industries (Lydia et al., 2023). This evolution reflects global thought on the place of culture in development processes. At the same time, valuable traditional principles and norms that could provide a basis for sustainable solutions to development challenges have continued to be disregarded as 'negative' and 'backward' (Akankwasa et al., 2022). Some cultural institutions in Uganda provide the resources for running their organizations, in which case they may be operated as personal ventures, in terms of organization and some cultural institutions are better structured to stimulate socio economic transformation through the leadership of these institutions (Isaac et al., 2023).

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Statement of the problem

Cultural Norm ship is crucial to realizing any huge step taken in pursuit of socio-economic transformation, anywhere in the world, Uganda is not an exception and is generally believed that socio-economic transformation and development is not the sole responsibility of government alone, especially in situations where government fails in its duties to promote development (Moses et al., 2023). Development efforts are initiated and carried out by communities at the local levels to complement government efforts (Rashid et al., 2023). There is the feeling among Ugandans that positive leadership remains vague in the country especially in the area of local administration and management of resources without full participation of cultural institutions (Ssekabira, 2016). Identification and nurturing of positive Cultural Norm ship is key to ensuring socio economic transformation at the grassroots where the majority of people live and is seen as the cradle of development (Ntirandekura & Samwuel, 2022). As a result of Uganda's ethnic diversity, perceptions of culture tend to be fragmented and 'ethnic culture' prevails, as opposed to a national notion. In the absence of a single common language, national identity, or combined cultural thinking, dealing with issues of culture is perceived as a sensitive and enormous task by so many Ugandans. Sometimes, culture is perceived as a hindrance to socio-economic development and some Cultural Norms are being seen as primitive and irrelevant to socio-economic contexts because they support traditional rituals and practices especially those considered oppressive like witchcraft and inheritance of widows while positive aspects like community labour (Sylvia & Peter, 2023), the spirit of community responsibility and accountability and informal moral education are rarely recognized. Hence Cultural Norms still have a huge duty to play as all these stimulate social and economic development (Cathrine, 2015). It is therefore along with this background that the researcher is to conduct this study to investigate the influence of Cultural Norms on socio-economic transformation in Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District Uganda (Ninsiima et al., 2023).

Specific Objective

1. To examine the role of Cultural Norms on social behavior of the people of Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District.
2. To recognize the changes of culture-specific perspectives and values embedded in language behavior in Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District.
3. To identify the challenges imbedded in transformation Cultural Norms amidst socio- economic changes in Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District.

Research Questions

1. To what extend do Cultural Norms influence socio-economic transformation of communities, in Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District.
2. What roles do cultural norms play on social behavior on the people Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District.?
3. What challenges do Cultural Norms face while participating in socio-economic transformation Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District?

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Methodology

Research Design

Research design in this study was a descriptive survey method. This method was suitable for this study because the study aimed at describing the role of Cultural Norms in communities and how they influence socio economic transformation Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District. This design was found to be appropriate as it helped to gather data from a large population currently present in the area at a particular time. Nevertheless, survey was cheap to use and gathers large information within a specified time frame. In addition, this study also used qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Study Population

The study was mainly focused on the local people Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District. It also involved the participation of local government officials, the elderly and Cultural Norms in the area. This diversity in the study population helped the researcher to generate a wide range of ideas and information which enabled the researcher to make comparison in views possible hence having comprehensive results at the end of the study.

Sample size

The study used a sample size of 100 respondents and this was determined by Krejcie and Morgan, table for determining sample size for research activities. The study considered local council authorities, local people particularly the elderly who were assumed to be knowledgeable about culture and Local government officials because they coordinate most of the activities concerned socio-economic development.

Table 1: Distribution of the Categories of Respondents Targeted

CATEGORY OF POPULATION	TOTAL	SAMPLING TECHNIQUE
SAMPLED		
Local citizens	30	Simple random sampling
Local council authorities in the area	5	Purposive sampling
Government officials	3	Simple Random Sampling
Elderly	8	Purposive sampling
Cultural Norms	4	Purposive sampling
TOTAL	50	

Source: Primary Data, 2021

Sampling Techniques

The researcher developed a list of all Parishes and zones in Namanyonyi Sub County, Mbale District Parish or zone a representative sample will be sampled according to the number of occupants. The researcher made a survey of the Division and found out the Cultural Norms under the local government and the elderly such that they could also be sampled.

Simple random sampling was used to select a representative number of local people from the selected Parishes and zones. Local people were allocated numbers according to the names on uniform cards which were put into the container, shaken well to mix and the researcher picked the numbers randomly until the sample number was obtained. This was important to avoid bias and give each respondent an equal chance to participate in the study.

Research Methods and Instruments

Considering that the community in an urban setting, the assumption is that they are both literate and semi-illiterate. Therefore, the main tools for data collection shall be interviews and questionnaire.

Questionnaires:

The researcher used questionnaire to get data from the respondents and the information gathered through questionnaires was easy to analyse, responses could be coded and themes assigned to them easily. Nevertheless, this method for data collection is intended to collect data from the respondents within the area of study. This method is advantageous because questionnaires gave the researcher the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick pace of time.

Interview Guide

An interview was a flexible way of getting information from the respondents; it was necessary for this study because it provided an in-depth inquiry of the information needed. This approach sought to address the hidden characteristics of the respondents which revealed the truth of the matter at a given time. This was so because; the Researcher noted down the responses from the respondents on spot. Equally so, this tool was relevant in the context of the respondents who may not know how to read and write (illiterate). The researcher used this method because it helped to give firsthand information through direct interactions with the respondents. The interview schedules enabled the Researcher to explore commendable information through face-to-face interaction. Interviews scheduled were used to key informants like Local council authorities, Cultural Norms and the elderly persons within the study area.

Data analysis

Data was analysed in form of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Role of cultural norms on socio-economic development.

Table 1: showing the role of cultural norms on socio-economic development.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Fostering unity	17	17.0
Promotion of health care	15	15.0
Mobilization	18	18.0

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Job creation	17	17.0
Enhancing gender equity	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

Fostering Unity

Over 17% of the research findings clearly indicated the contribution of cultural norms on fostering unity in the communities as one way to boost the economic development of the populace. Culture has literally had ways to resolve disagreements, reconcile members of the community through observing social norms and point them towards engaging in activities that can grow and develop better hence reminding them the values of cultural norms and traditions, for instance, the Emori-mor of Teso region

Promotion of Health Care

Cultural norms have fronted the health care campaigns in various ways through cultural leaders. This is shown by the fraction of over 15%. They stressed the need for prioritization of vaccination against immunizable and preventable diseases like polio (Mark & Jacob, 2023), cancer, TB, etc. and in so doing, population value has been realized. 'Health is wealth' - culture have contributed to the wealth of the country thus socio-economic development (Lydia et al., 2023).

Mobilization

18% of this research finding denoted that cultural norm through cultural ambitious leaders played a big role in mobilizing their respective communities toward socio-economic development (Gracious, 2023). Leaders ask members to participate in recourse contributions, formation SACCOS and small investments clubs that could help enhance personal income, attending seminars and workshops on modern agriculture and giving towards advancement of the social course like that of the **Kasubi Tombs as well as the 'tafaali' fronted by the Katikiro of Buganda, Charles Mayiiga**. The resultant effect was better infrastructure leading to first rate tourism realization and a boost in the economy of the country (Racheal et al., 2023).

Job Creation

Cultural norms under their institutions also played a role worth 17% in causing socio-economic development. This indicated the absorption of the unemployed who were members of a cultural norm to help facilitate institution with their valid skills. The Teso kingdom administration itself is an employing body right from the support staff to the technical and management boards. This is a notable contribution to economic development (Christopher et al., 2022).

Enhancing Gender Equity

Cultural norms contributed 13% to socio-economic development by ensuring gender fairness in accordance to the cultural norms and values. For example, both men and women are considered developers and they are thus given equal benefit

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despite the traditional beliefs contrasting the modern ideology of man being greater than woman (Zowena et al., 2023). The cultural norms in Teso are such that men have a distinct role to play as do women, and none overrides the other, they are equally important. So cultural leaders encouraged men to play their part best and women as well and when merged, great social economic development was the harvest. In fact, they considered socio economic development a shared responsibility (Musaibah et al., 2023).

Table 2: Challenges cultural norms face in influencing socio-economic development of Namanyonyi sub county, Mbale district.

The study attempted to identify the challenges cultural norms face while participating in socio economic development of Namanyonyi Sub- County.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Political Interference	40	40
Limited resources	35	35
Religious belief	15	15
Mixed Cultures	10	10
Total	100	100

As clearly indicated by the percentages on the table above, cultural norms faced the challenge of political interference that ranged at 40%, some of the political leaders used their positions to block beneficial socio-economic programs and swaying them to build their own names and gain political grounds, 35% of their challenge came from limited and sometimes acute lack of resource to stir up development, some traditional beliefs were also seen to be a challenge especially in such cases as promotion of healthcare where some of the religious institutions deterred their members from certain vaccination rendering them satanic, then there was a challenge posed by the cultural mix carried by members who hailed from different parts of the country and world. This contributed up to 10%-affecting mobilization for resources to better socio-economic development in Namanyonyi Sub-County, Mbale District (Phionah et al., 2023).

Possible solutions to the challenges faced by cultural norms while promoting socio-economic development.

Reponses	Frequency	percentage
Cultural independence	25	25
Sensitization	30	30

Involving another stakeholder	20	20
Moral and cultural education	15	15
Starting individual project	10	10
Total	100	100

25% of the respondents agreed that if given freedom to operate as cultural norms under the leaders of their own choosing, managing their cultural institutions independent of political interference, socio-economic development would be easily achieved. They should be whole authority as cultural leaders engaging their communities in development (Mercy et al., 2023). There was also need to equip the populace and bring them aboard mass civic education and sensitization on their role and contribution to socio-economic development; this could be done through appropriate use of the communication channels like, radios, televisions, newspapers and social media, cultural meetings etc. 30% of the findings indicated so. Involving other stakeholders especially religious leaders would also increase the rate of socio-economic development in the area. This is particularly in cases where certain religious beliefs limit its members from accessing medical care, yet this is vital for individuals to participate in the development (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022).

There was also need to carry out moral education to show the community the value of culture and intercultural communities around Teso region to help them appreciate the value of each other's' culture so that they could freely be part of it and contribute towards socio-economic development. This was evidenced in the 15% of the findings. 10% of the respondents accepted the fact that self-help initiatives would actively engage members of Mbale district in socio-economic development (Ronald et al., 2023a).

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, cultural norms are a very indispensable factor in socio-economic development. They are frontiers in social welfare, health care and are a viable muscle of the economy. They should be allowed to operate in accordance with the culture of their society for sustainable socio-economic development.

Recommendations

The cultural workers and relevant authorities should adopt the strategies raised by the researcher such as increased funding and adopting the development perspective to fully operate with minimal challenges. The fact that cultural norms contribute to community development, the researcher recommends for an extension of the contribution from cultural to socio-economic so as to empower the people in the community with skills to voluntarily participate in development activities.

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