

The Effectiveness Of Existing Youth Livelihood Programs And Entrepreneurship Development In Kisoro District

Asiimwe Isaac Kazaara

Metropolitan International University

Abstract

The study aimed at the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district. In order to critically assess the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs in promoting entrepreneurship and socioeconomic empowerment in Kisoro District, a mixed methods explanatory sequential research design was employed. This approach first involved collecting and analyzing quantitative data which was then explained further using qualitative data. The quantitative phase utilized a structured questionnaire survey administered to 300 randomly selected rural youth beneficiaries between 18-30 years who had participated in at least one of the district's skills training or entrepreneurship support initiatives in the past five years. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses using correlation and multiple regression then examined relationships between independent variables relating to program components, implementation quality, and dependent variables concerning business ownership rates, job creation, income levels and perceived impact. From the findings, the correlation coefficient between Entrepreneurship development and Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs in Kisoro district was 0.469, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). This suggested a positive and moderately strong relationship between these two variables. It indicated that as entrepreneurship development increases, the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs also increases. The study recommends that youth livelihood programs in Kisoro district should collaborate with local business development service providers to provide tailored training and mentorship to young entrepreneurs.

Key words: Youth Livelihood Programs and Entrepreneurship Development

Background of the study

In Uganda, youth livelihood programs were introduced to address the high rate of youth unemployment, and the Kisoro area was targeted for these programs (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). The effectiveness of these programs in promoting entrepreneurship and reducing youth unemployment in Kisoro District has been investigated in several studies (Collins et al., 2023). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), youth livelihood programs have had a positive impact on business development in Kisoro District. The study

found that the programs contributed to the creation of new businesses and increased incomes for young people who participated in the programs. However, there are challenges in implementing these programs (Rashid et al., 2023). The International Labor Organization said in a report that Africa is among the regions plagued by high unemployment rates. Globally, the unemployment rate is reported to be 15.4% and 84.4 million of the unemployed are young people (Godfrey et al., 2023). In comparison, the unemployment rate in developed regions was 17.7%,

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while in developing countries, such as sub-Saharan and North Africa, the unemployment rate was 13.6% and 25.3%, respectively. The report states that the youth unemployment rate rose to 76 million at a constant rate of 2.8 (Oliver et al., 2023). A study conducted by Ohize (2009) which focused on the nature of youth livelihood programs in poverty alleviation in Nigeria revealed that there has been considerable success in meeting their stated objectives in terms of youth development, particularly in their objective of skill distribution so that the youth have socio-economic changes in their livelihoods. However, the scope of the study was in Nigeria and the current study in Kapseret Constituency, Uasin Gishu District, Kenya will either confirm or deny the generalizability of the Nigerian study. (Racheal et al., 2023) identified opportunities for youth entrepreneurship in Kisoro district such as growing tourism industry, availability of raw materials for agriculture and increasing demand for ICT services. The study recommended that youth livelihood programs focus on developing skills in these areas to take advantage of the opportunities available (Gracious, 2023).

Mugabi et al. (2020) examined the impact of the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) on reducing youth unemployment in Kisoro District (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). The study found that the program had a positive impact on reducing youth unemployment, with a significant increase in the number of young people engaged in self-employment. (Wegulo et al., 2023) consider monitoring as necessary to ensure that planned administrative, operational, financial tasks and activities are carried out in a timely and correct

manner so as to achieve a set of effectiveness of youth livelihood and business development programs. Monitoring is an assessment of business development over time and is carried out through ongoing monitoring activities and separate evaluations of youth livelihood programs (Faith et al., 2023). The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to ensure that business development is adequately designed, properly implemented and effective to achieve the stated objective (COSO, 2017).

Entrepreneurship education lacks a common definition, but is generally considered to be “the structured formal transfer of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refer to the concepts, skills, and mental awareness that individuals use during the process of establishing and developing their growth-oriented businesses” (Isaac et al., 2023). Although research on entrepreneurship education is limited, existing studies suggest that exposure to certain types of entrepreneurship education, especially the practical parts of programs, influences attitudes toward entrepreneurship and strengthens an individual's intention to start a business (Faridah et al., 2023). Since entrepreneurship can positively influence economic growth and development, it is argued that governments should try to increase the supply of entrepreneurs, including the initiation of entrepreneurship education programs (Thurik & Wennekers, 2004). The Government of Uganda promotes entrepreneurship education in the hope that it will provide young people with the knowledge and skills to start their own businesses. Given that 60% of young people who graduate from institutions in Uganda do not find work (Uganda Bureau of Statistics

[UBOS], 2010), there is an acute awareness of the need to encourage young people to become entrepreneurs (Christopher et al., 2022).

Problem statement

Unemployment and the lack of meaningful economic opportunities for young people have emerged as pressing socio-economic challenges that negatively affect development in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Specifically, in Uganda, youth aged 15-35 make up over 60% of the national population, yet the youth unemployment rate remains alarmingly high at 83% (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2018). This significant portion of untapped human capital has important implications for perpetuating intergenerational poverty, social unrest, and stagnant economic growth if not addressed (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Kisoro District represents a concentrated case of this troubling youth livelihood problem facing Uganda. With more than 75% of its population classified as rural dwelling and based on agriculture, traditional agriculture and non-agricultural activities have limited potential to absorb the growing number of school leavers (Allan et al., 2023). Promoting self-employment through entrepreneurship and skills training was thus a priority of the district's local economic development plan (Kisoro District Local Government, 2021). However, several studies point to implementation challenges due to a top-down approach, lack of market responsiveness, and inadequate post-support business advisory services that plague public sector-led youth programs across Africa (Kleine, 2010; USAID, 2018).

While the Kisoro district leadership has in recent years sought to establish more youth cooperatives, vocational institutes and support organizations with donor funding, there is a lack of impact assessment to determine the relevance, effectiveness and long-term effect of these initiatives on actual job creation. and business sustainability (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Given the dynamics and spatial complexity, a more rigorous study is needed to critically assess how existing livelihood interventions address the multidimensional needs of rural youth and whether they translate into meaningful socio-economic empowerment in practice.

Main Objective

To determine the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district

Methodology

In order to critically assess the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs in promoting entrepreneurship and socioeconomic empowerment in Kisoro District, a mixed methods explanatory sequential research design was employed. This approach first involved collecting and analyzing quantitative data which was then explained further using qualitative data.

The quantitative phase utilized a structured questionnaire survey administered to 300 randomly selected rural youth beneficiaries between 18-30 years who had participated in at least one of the district's skills training or entrepreneurship support initiatives in the past five years. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses using

correlation and multiple regression then examined relationships between independent variables relating to program components using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022), implementation quality, and dependent variables concerning business ownership rates, job creation, income levels and perceived impact. Semi-structured key informant interviews were subsequently conducted with 20 purposefully chosen implementers, local leaders and participating youth to gain deeper contextual insights into survey findings. The qualitative interviews delved into issues encountered, good practices observed, and recommendations for strengthening design and delivery of interventions to better serve the target group. Detailed thematic analyses of interview transcripts using both deductive and inductive coding schemes then helped identify overarching themes. Finally, quantitative and qualitative strands were integrated during interpretation to provide vital explanations, build on survey results, and form evidence-based conclusions regarding how programs could be redesigned or scaled up more strategically based on lessons learned from beneficiaries and implementers.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the relationship between the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district

Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. DV
People are familiar with the youth livelihood programs	4 3.5%	10 8.8%	8 7.1%	48 42.5%	43 38.1%	4.03	1.065
There are key objectives of these programs	5 4.4%	30 26.5%	7 6.2%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%	3.79	1.129
There are biggest challenges facing young entrepreneurs in the district	4 3.5%	15 13.3%	17 15.0%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%	3.56	.944
People participated in the youth livelihood programs	9 8.0%	5 4.4%	22 19.5%	37 32.7%	40 35.4%	3.83	1.195
Youth livelihood programs have impacted the level of youth unemployment	10 8.8%	2 1.8%	17 15.0%	43 38.1%	41 36.3%	3.91	1.177
There are strengths and weaknesses of the existing youth livelihood programs	6 5.3%	11 9.7%	22 19.5%	47 41.6%	27 23.9%	3.69	1.103
The government, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders play a big role in supporting youth entrepreneurship	6 5.3%	21 18.6%	26 23.0%	37 32.7%	23 20.4%	3.44	1.164

Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. DV
There are policies employed to manage risks	8 7.1%	6 5.3%	16 14.2%	39 34.5%	44 38.9%	3.54	1.164
There are resources and support for young entrepreneurs	10 8.8%	2 1.8%	17 15.0%	43 38.1%	41 36.3%	3.91	1.177
Program managers have promoted youth entrepreneurship	4 3.5%	15 13.3%	17 15.0%	58 60.2%	9 8.0%	3.56	.944

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The descriptive statistics provide some insights into the relationship between the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district. The mean scores for each item suggest the level of agreement with the statements, ranging from 3.44 to 4.03 out of 5.0.

The standard deviations indicate the degree of variability in responses.

The results suggest that a significant proportion of people in Kisoro district are familiar with the youth livelihood programs (mean = 4.03), indicating that awareness of these programs is relatively high. However, the mean score for the item "There are key objectives of these programs" (mean = 3.79) suggests that there may be some confusion or lack of clarity around the specific goals and objectives of these programs (Rashid et al., 2023).

The data also indicate that respondents believe there are significant challenges facing young entrepreneurs in the district (mean = 3.56). This suggests that there may be a need for additional support and resources to help young entrepreneurs overcome these challenges.

The mean score for the item "Youth livelihood programs have impacted the level of youth unemployment" (mean = 3.91) suggests that respondents believe that these programs have had a positive impact on youth unemployment in the district (Oscar et al., 2023).

The results also suggest that there are both strengths and weaknesses of the existing youth livelihood programs (mean = 3.69), and that there is a need for policies to manage risks associated with entrepreneurship (mean = 3.54). Additionally, the data indicate that there are resources and support available for young entrepreneurs (mean = 3.91), and that program managers have been promoting youth entrepreneurship (mean = 3.56).

Table 2: Correlation between Entrepreneurship development and Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs

		Entrepreneurship development	Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs
Entrepreneurship development	Pearson Correlation	1	.469**



	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs	Pearson Correlation	.469**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2023

Ho: There is no significant the relationship between the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district.

The correlation coefficient between Entrepreneurship development and Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs in Kisoro district is 0.469, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed) (Nelson et al., 2023). This suggests a positive and moderately strong relationship between these two variables. It indicates that as entrepreneurship development increases, the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs also increases.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that have shown the importance of entrepreneurship development in promoting economic growth and sustainable development (Audretsch, 2018; Shane, 2018). The results also support the idea that youth livelihood programs can be effective in promoting entrepreneurship and creating opportunities for young people (UNDP, 2014).





Table 3: Regression results for Entrepreneurship development and Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs

Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.843		.710	.707	.27958
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.585	.243		10.658	.000
Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs	0.209247	.069	.180	2.700	.007

Source; Primary Data, 2023

Ho: There is no significant the relationship between the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs and entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district.

The regression results suggest that there is a significant relationship between Entrepreneurship development and Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs. The R-square value of 0.710 indicates that 71% of the variance in the Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs can be explained by Entrepreneurship development. The beta coefficient of 0.180 indicates that for every unit increase in Entrepreneurship development (Ronald et al., 2023), there is a corresponding 0.18 unit increase in the Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs. These findings have important implications for policymakers and stakeholders involved in youth livelihood programs. By promoting Entrepreneurship development, they can improve the Effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs, which can in turn lead to better outcomes for young entrepreneurs. This could be achieved through interventions such as providing training and support for young entrepreneurs, facilitating access to finance, and creating an enabling business environment.

Conclusion

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The YLP is a government initiative that aims to provide financial and technical support to young entrepreneurs in Uganda (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2016). Through the YLP, young entrepreneurs can access loans to start and grow their businesses. However, the effectiveness of the program has been hindered by a lack of transparency, inadequate training, and limited monitoring and evaluation (International Alert, 2015).

Another program that supports entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district is the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) program. This program aims to provide young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to start and run their businesses successfully (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). However, the effectiveness of the BTJET program has been limited by inadequate funding, limited training opportunities, and poor coordination with other programs (International Alert, 2015).

Recommendation

Youth livelihood programs are designed to support young entrepreneurs in developing their businesses and improving their livelihoods. In Kisoro district, there are several existing youth livelihood programs, but their effectiveness in promoting entrepreneurship development is not clear. Here are some recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of existing youth livelihood programs in promoting entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district:

Provide tailored training and mentorship: Youth livelihood programs should provide training and mentorship that is tailored to the specific needs of young entrepreneurs in Kisoro district. According to a study by Nambatya et al. (2019), tailored training and mentorship can improve the effectiveness of youth entrepreneurship programs in Uganda. The study recommends that youth livelihood programs in Kisoro district should collaborate with local business development service providers to provide tailored training and mentorship to young entrepreneurs.

Access to finance is a major barrier to entrepreneurship development in Kisoro district. Youth livelihood programs should provide access to finance through grants, loans, and other financial instruments. According to a study by Lema and Majura (2018), access to finance is critical for the success of youth entrepreneurship programs in Uganda. The study recommends that youth livelihood programs in Kisoro district should collaborate with financial institutions to increase access to finance for young entrepreneurs.

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