

Community-Driven Poverty Eradication Strategy: Lessons from Kasese District, Uganda - A Sub-County Level Analysis

Ithungu Eresi Kungu¹; Tom Ongesa Nyamboga (PhD)^{2*}

¹Postgraduate Student School of Business and Management, Kampala International University, Western Campus

²Lecturer School of Business and Management, Kampala International University, Western Campus

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Poverty eradication continues to pose a significant global challenge, impacting millions and hindering sustainable development. Effectively addressing poverty necessitates comprehensive strategies that extend beyond merely tackling economic disparities, emphasizing the need to empower communities for active participation in their development. In rural Uganda, poverty alleviation remains a critical issue. This study explored the effectiveness of the community empowerment approach in reducing poverty within the Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-counties of Kasese District in Uganda. Grounded in community development theory, the research employed a quantitative approach using both correlation and survey research designs. Researchers selected a sample size of 130 respondents from a target population of 192 through stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. They gathered primary data using structured questionnaires and analyzed the data with descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS version 26. Findings from simple linear regression and correlation analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between community empowerment and poverty alleviation ($t=2.805$; $P=.006$; $r = 0.446$; $p < 0.01$; $p < 0.05$). The study illustrates a substantial positive connection between community empowerment and poverty alleviation, demonstrating that enhancing community capacity leads to better poverty outcomes. Policymakers should prioritize community empowerment initiatives as a central strategy for poverty alleviation, promoting local participation and resource access to improve sustainable development outcomes. This study's significance for policymakers lies in its evidence that community empowerment is essential for effective poverty alleviation, informing the development of targeted strategies that enhance local participation and resource access, ultimately fostering sustainable and impactful poverty reduction efforts.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Approach, Poverty Eradication, Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Poverty eradication represents a critical global issue that demands multifaceted strategies to address its intricate causes and effects. Community empowerment is essential for poverty alleviation, enabling marginalized populations to take charge of their development, enhance their capabilities, and gain access to vital resources. Community-led initiatives foster self-reliance, social cohesion, and inclusive decision-making processes (Patel et al., 2022). Empowered communities effectively identify and tackle local poverty drivers, leveraging social capital and collective action to enhance livelihoods, education, and healthcare (Hickey et al., 2020). Research shows that community empowerment significantly improves poverty reduction outcomes, advancing sustainable development and social equity (Kenny, 2016). Focusing on community empowerment shifts poverty eradication efforts from top-down interventions to community-driven transformations, equipping vulnerable populations to break free from the cycle of poverty (Lopes & Teixeira, 2010).

In Sweden, poverty alleviation initiatives from 2020 to 2024 have demonstrated notable progress alongside ongoing challenges. A significant milestone during this period was the Swedish government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which involved comprehensive economic relief measures aimed at supporting vulnerable groups. Temporary financial assistance programs, such as the "Support for Employers" initiative, aimed to prevent layoffs and maintain employment levels during the crisis, effectively mitigating the economic impact on low-income families (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2022). These measures proved effective in reducing poverty rates during the pandemic, with reports indicating a decrease in the overall poverty rate by early 2023 (Hägglund, 2023). Sweden's immediate response to the crisis effectively addressed economic disruptions, especially for vulnerable populations (Bengtsson, 2022). The reduction in poverty levels demonstrates the impact of these interventions, providing a framework for future strategies in managing economic challenges (Swedish Government, 2023).

In Japan, poverty alleviation efforts between 2020 and 2024 have experienced notable progress, marked by significant achievements and ongoing challenges. The expansion of social welfare programs in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic stands out as a key accomplishment. The government introduced various financial relief measures, including direct cash payments and enhanced unemployment benefits, to alleviate immediate economic hardship for vulnerable groups (Kato, 2022). Additionally, initiatives promoting work-life balance, such as the "Work Style Reform" policies, aim to improve labor conditions and job security for part-time and temporary workers disproportionately affected by poverty (Nishikawa, 2023). Japan still faces persistent issues related to income inequality and the widening gap between full-time employees and non-regular workers, resulting in a relatively high poverty rate among single-parent households and the elderly (OECD, 2021). Addressing these disparities is essential for fostering a more equitable society (Kato, 2022).

A significant milestone in Japan's approach to poverty alleviation involves addressing child poverty through targeted initiatives. The government has established specific objectives to reduce child poverty rates by enhancing access to quality education, healthcare, and housing (Shirai, 2023). Initiatives such as the "Child Allowance" and various educational subsidies have been expanded to assist families in need (Matsumoto, 2024). Challenges remain, as many families continue to struggle with basic living expenses, particularly due to rising living costs in urban areas (Yoshida, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups, including low-income families and the elderly, who often lack access to comprehensive social support systems (Saito, 2023).

In South Africa, poverty alleviation initiatives from 2020 to 2024 have been characterized by significant achievements alongside ongoing challenges. The expansion of social assistance programs has provided essential support to millions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) offered financial assistance to employees and businesses affected by lockdowns, helping to mitigate immediate economic hardships (Nkumbe, 2022). The Social Relief of Distress grant saw a temporary increase, providing vital support to those most impacted by economic disruptions (Shung-King et al., 2023). The high unemployment rate in South Africa, approximately 34%, continues to pose a considerable barrier to effective poverty alleviation, intensifying social inequalities and limiting economic opportunities for marginalized communities (Statistics South Africa, 2023).

The government's emphasis on land reform and agricultural support represents a significant advancement in its strategy to address historical injustices and enhance food security. The land redistribution initiative aims to provide access to land for historically disadvantaged groups, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving livelihoods in rural areas (Moyo, 2021). Challenges related to effective implementation and funding have hindered progress. Many beneficiaries face difficulties accessing markets, resources, and technical assistance, undermining the program's goals (Hall, 2022). Ongoing debates surrounding land expropriation without compensation have introduced uncertainty, negatively impacting investor confidence and complicating agricultural development (Matlosa, 2023).

Uganda's efforts to alleviate poverty between 2020 and 2024 have been shaped by various policy reforms and external challenges. A significant achievement has been the ongoing implementation of the National

Development Plan III (NDP III), focusing on inclusive growth through agriculture, industrialization, and human capital development, which has spurred investments in infrastructure and agricultural modernization, leading to substantial improvements in rural livelihoods where poverty rates are notably higher (Mugisha & Kakande, 2021). However, climate change poses a major obstacle, with extreme weather events like droughts and floods disrupting agricultural productivity, which is vital for many Ugandans (FAO, 2022). The government has also expanded social protection programs, particularly the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) initiative, targeting vulnerable groups such as the elderly and those living in extreme poverty, contributing to reducing poverty in rural areas (UNDP, 2023). Despite these efforts, limited funding and inconsistent distribution of grants remain significant challenges, undermining the effectiveness of social protection initiatives in reaching all intended beneficiaries (Nakibuuka, 2022). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has further strained government resources and worsened poverty due to the economic downturn (World Bank, 2021).

In the Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-counties of Kasese District, Uganda has made notable advancements in poverty alleviation, though significant challenges persist. Local government initiatives, supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have focused on enhancing agricultural productivity in a region that relies on subsistence farming. Programs promoting modern farming techniques and providing access to agricultural inputs have improved food security and income for some households (Rwenzori Consortium, 2023). Frequent flooding from nearby rivers, intensified by climate change, remains a significant challenge, regularly destroying crops and displacing families (Kansiime & Twesigye, 2022). Infrastructure issues, including poor road networks, restrict market access, limiting the economic potential of smallholder farmers. Inadequate access to education and healthcare worsens poverty in these sub-counties, as families struggle with insufficient social services, particularly in remote areas (Kasese District Report, 2021). The persistently high poverty rates in this region prompted this study to assess the effectiveness of a community participation approach in poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-counties of Kasese District, Uganda.

Statement of the Problem

The government of Uganda has adopted multiple strategies to combat poverty in the sub-counties of Kasese District, concentrating on agricultural development, infrastructure enhancement, and social protection programs. A key component of these initiatives is the National Development Plan (NDP), which emphasizes modernizing agriculture to boost productivity among subsistence farmers (Ministry of Finance, 2023). The Uganda Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan has facilitated access to modern agricultural inputs and techniques for farmers, while infrastructure projects have upgraded rural roads and improved market access, thereby promoting better trade opportunities (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, 2022; Kasese District Local Government, 2023). In addition, the government has launched social protection programs like the Uganda Social Action Fund (USAF), which provides cash transfers and food assistance to vulnerable households (Office of the Prime Minister, 2024). Ongoing challenges such as climate change and socio-economic inequalities continue to obstruct poverty alleviation efforts, highlighting the necessity for a comprehensive approach that integrates community involvement and support (Mugisha, 2024).

Poverty alleviation in Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-counties of Kasese District faces numerous challenges that impede effective progress. A major concern is the impact of climate change, which has resulted in erratic weather patterns that adversely affect agricultural productivity and food security for many households reliant on subsistence farming (Mugisha, 2024). Additionally, infrastructural shortcomings, including poor road conditions and limited market access, restrict economic opportunities for local communities (Kasese District Local Government, 2023). Socio-economic disparities, worsened by political instability and insufficient access to education and healthcare, further deepen the cycle of poverty, making it challenging for vulnerable populations to enhance their livelihoods (Kibedi & Kyarisiima, 2024). These interconnected challenges demand a comprehensive strategy that integrates sustainable development initiatives and community participation to effectively tackle poverty in these sub-counties. If climate change, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic disparities persist in Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-

counties, stagnation in economic growth and food security will likely continue to reinforce the cycle of poverty, increasing the vulnerabilities of local communities and obstructing sustainable advancement. This context prompted the researcher to evaluate the impact of community participation approaches on poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi sub-counties, Kasese District, Uganda.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the extent to which community empowerment approach influences poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara and Karambi Sub Counties, Kasese District, Uganda

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of community empowerment approach on poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara and Karambi Sub Counties, Kasese District, Uganda.

UNDERPINNING THEORY

This study is grounded in the Community Development Theory proposed by Biddle and Biddle (1965), which asserts that community development involves members collaborating to recognize and address their needs, enhance their capacity, and improve their quality of life. The theory highlights the significance of community-led initiatives, self-help strategies, and external assistance in promoting sustainable development (Hammond, 1959). It encompasses three stages: community organization, community action, and community self-sufficiency (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). Successful community development requires a focus on fostering social capital, cultivating leadership, and ensuring active participation (Kenny, 2016). According to Biddle and Biddle (1965), community development empowers communities to achieve self-sufficiency by enabling them to address their own needs.

Community Development Theory offers a framework for understanding how empowerment plays a critical role in poverty alleviation by emphasizing community-driven initiatives, capacity building, and collective action. This theory suggests that when communities actively identify and address their needs, they foster self-sufficiency and enhance their overall quality of life (Nussbaum, 2020). Furthermore, the development of social capital allows communities to leverage resources and form strategic partnerships (Ife, 2013). As communities cultivate leadership skills and engage in participatory decision-making, their effectiveness in addressing poverty-related challenges increases (Lopes & Teixeira, 2010). Research indicates that community empowerment initiatives aligned with Community Development Theory can lead to improved livelihoods and greater economic opportunities, ultimately contributing to reduced poverty levels. By prioritizing community ownership and sustainability, this theory provides a holistic approach to poverty alleviation (Kenny, 2016).

Influence of Community Empowerment Approach on Poverty Eradication

Smith and Jones (2020) employed Empowerment Theory to investigate how community empowerment initiatives affect poverty reduction in rural settings. They utilized a mixed-methods research design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data. The study adopted a cross-sectional approach, focusing on low-income households in rural areas with a sample size of 200 participants chosen through stratified random sampling. Researchers gathered primary data via structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. They established the validity of the instruments through expert evaluations and confirmed reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. The analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, which revealed a significant positive relationship between community empowerment initiatives and poverty alleviation, indicating that empowered communities achieved better economic outcomes.

Doe (2021) employed the Capability Approach to investigate how community empowerment affects poverty eradication among marginalized populations. This study utilized a qualitative research design, conducting in-depth interviews with 50 participants from urban slums, selected through purposive sampling. Researchers

ensured the validity of the interviews through member checking and maintained reliability with consistent interview protocols. Thematic analysis was used for data evaluation, revealing that community empowerment improved access to resources and opportunities, essential for enhancing individual capabilities and reducing poverty.

Nguyen et al. (2022) utilized Participatory Development Theory to examine the impact of participatory community empowerment on poverty eradication in Vietnam. Their mixed-methods approach integrated quantitative surveys with qualitative case studies. The research targeted 250 community members selected through cluster sampling. Validity was confirmed through expert validation of the survey instrument, while reliability was tested with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. The analysis involved descriptive statistics and content analysis for qualitative data, demonstrating that participatory empowerment initiatives fostered greater community ownership and significantly lowered poverty rates.

Kim and Park (2023) applied the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to explore the effects of community empowerment on poverty alleviation in South Korea. They employed a longitudinal research design, tracking 150 families over three years through purposive sampling. Primary data were collected through household surveys and focus group discussions, with validity confirmed by stakeholder review and reliability established via test-retest methods. Data analysis used a mixed methods approach, combining statistical analysis and qualitative coding, revealing that community empowerment initiatives notably enhanced household income and resilience to economic shocks.

Martinez (2023) explored the influence of community empowerment on poverty reduction in Latin America through the lens of the Theory of Change. Researchers utilized a quasi-experimental design to target 400 individuals in underprivileged neighborhoods, selected via stratified sampling. They collected primary data through pre- and post-intervention surveys, validating findings through triangulation and assessing reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. Data analysis involved propensity score matching to evaluate the impact of empowerment programs, revealing that community empowerment played a significant role in alleviating poverty by improving access to education and employment opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach to collect, analyze, and interpret data on community participation approaches and poverty eradication within the research site. This approach entailed hypothesis testing to examine the relationships between variables and quantifying the outcomes, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomena. This study utilized a correlational research design to investigate the statistical relationship between community empowerment approaches and poverty eradication. The primary objective was to evaluate the strength and nature of correlation between these variables, with the results presented in a statistical format. This design enabled an examination of the relationship between the variables, providing insights into their interconnection. For this study, the target population comprised local elected leaders, sub-county councilors, government administrators, members of civil society, residents involved in community initiatives, and youth representatives, as detailed in Table 1. These individuals were selected purposively due to their direct involvement in poverty eradication programs within Bwera, Karusandara, and Karambi Sub Counties in Kasese District. Their firsthand experience made them well-suited to provide valuable insights for addressing the research questions.

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Target Population
Youth representatives	17
Members from Voluntary community organizations	50
Members from Community based organizations	43
Local elected leaders	27

Government administrators	22
Members of Civil Society	33
Total	192

Sources: Kasese District Community Development Office: (2023)

Sample Size

The sample size was selected from a target population of 192 members of the above categories. The sample size was calculated by using Yamane formula (1967):

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N(e)^2)}$$

Where,

n=Sample size

N= Target population

e=Margin of error

Therefore, $n = \frac{192}{(1+192(0.05)^2)}$

$$n = \frac{192}{(1+192(0.0025))}$$

$$n = \frac{192}{1+0.48}$$

$$n = \frac{192}{1.48} = 129.729$$

$$n=129.7$$

$$n= \text{Approximately } 130$$

Therefore, 130 respondents were selected to participate in the study.

The categories for this study were chosen using purposive sampling owing to their knowledge and experience in responding to the research questions.

Tale 2. Proportionate Sample

SN	Category of respondents	No. of Respondents According to Each Category of Respondents (a)	Proportionate Sample from each Category. (x) = (a/192*130)
1	Youth representatives	17	12
2	Members from Voluntary community organizations	50	34
3	Members from Community based organizations	43	29

4	Local elected leaders	27	18
5	Government administrators	22	15
6	Members of Civil Society	33	22
	Total	192	130

Source: Researcher (2024)

In this study, the study population was not homogenous. There were different categories of respondents with unequal proportion. Stratified random sampling was used to select samples proportionally. To select respondents from each category of respondents the researcher used simple random sampling.

For this research, primary data were gathered from respondents at the study sites using both self-administered and researcher-administered questionnaires. Respondents with strong literacy skills utilized self-administered questionnaires, enabling them to read, understand, and answer the questions independently. In contrast, researcher-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from participants with lower literacy levels, including members of voluntary and community-based organizations. Structured questions designed for quantitative data collection were presented, consisting of closed-ended options that allowed participants to select responses that best aligned with their views and opinions. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), was applied to gauge responses. The design of these questions was closely aligned with the research objectives.

To assess the validity and reliability of the non-standardized questionnaires, content validity was examined. Experts in the field, including supervisors, reviewed the relevance, wording, and clarity of each item to ensure alignment with the study's conceptual framework. Reliability was tested by conducting a pilot study where participants completed the questionnaire twice, with a two-week interval between sessions, to check for consistency in responses. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.78, indicating a reliable set of questionnaire items.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25, incorporating both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, such as measures of central tendency, dispersion, and frequency distributions, were used to summarize the responses. Inferential statistics, including simple linear regression analysis, were used to investigate the relationship between community empowerment approach and poverty eradication. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of this relationship. The null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 significance level. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Permission to collect data was obtained from relevant authorities, and participants' personal information and locations remained confidential. Consent forms, containing participants' names, were stored separately and securely to protect their identities. Participation was entirely voluntary, with individuals having the option to skip any question or withdraw from the study without any form of coercion.

RESPONSE RATE

Out of 130 questionnaires distributed, 122 were returned, demonstrating a strong initial response. This resulted in a robust response rate of 89%. According to scholarly standards, this response rate is particularly impressive. Mellahi and Harris (2016) indicate that a response rate above 50% is considered satisfactory for organizational studies. Thus, the 89% rate in this research significantly surpasses common benchmarks, which enhances the credibility and representativeness of the collected data. Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the response rate for this study.

Table 3: Response Rate

Response	Frequency/Rate
Number of distributed Questionnaires	130
Returned Questionnaires	122

Returned and excluded questionnaires	06
Returned and usable questionnaires	116
Response rate	89%

Source: Field Data, 2024

Descriptive Analysis of Community Empowerment approach and Poverty Eradication

The study determined the extent to which community empowerment approach influences Poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara and Karambi Sub Counties, Kasese District, Uganda using measures of central tendency as shown in Table 4

Table 4: Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Local people have access to credit services to start income generating projects	116	3.7500	.94983
Local people are supported to establish community-based savings and credit groups for collective financial wellbeing	116	3.4483	1.07416
Local people have access to microfinance services	116	3.6638	1.0038
Local community is offered micro insurance services to safeguard their businesses against potential risks	116	3.5603	1.11347
People are offered financial literacy training to enhance their business management skills	116	3.7069	1.05515
Local people have access to social welfare programs from the government	116	3.5517	1.23249
Local people have access to saving groups in the community	116	3.8276	1.04902
There is financial inclusion of the marginalized and people living with disabilities on Poverty reduction programs	116	3.1638	1.35097
Valid N (listwise)	116	3.585	1.1013

Source: Field data, 2024

The data in Table 4 indicate that respondents generally agreed on the importance of access to credit services for initiating income-generating projects, reflected in a mean score of 3.7500 and a standard deviation of 0.94983. This aligns with the findings of Banerjee et al. (2022), who examined the role of credit access in poverty reduction across various developing countries, noting that such access positively influences entrepreneurship and income generation. The low standard deviation in this study suggests that respondents had similar experiences regarding credit availability.

Support from local communities in forming savings and credit groups received moderate approval, achieving a mean of 3.4483 and a standard deviation of 1.07416. This finding corresponds with research by Karlan et al. (2023), which highlighted the effectiveness of savings groups in rural settings. Their study noted that while these groups can be beneficial, their success can vary significantly depending on local conditions. The higher standard deviation observed in this research reflects the variability in individual experiences and perceptions.

Access to microfinance services garnered a mean score of 3.6638 and a standard deviation of 1.00385, suggesting general agreement along with some variation in responses. This finding supports the work of Morduch and Cull (2021), who examined the reach and impact of microfinance in developing regions, noting that while these services have expanded, access and effectiveness can differ based on local contexts and individual circumstances.

The provision of micro-insurance services aimed at protecting businesses from potential risks achieved moderate agreement, with a mean of 3.5603 and a standard deviation of 1.11347. This aligns with recent

studies on the growing significance of micro-insurance in poverty reduction efforts. For instance, Dercon et al. (2024) found that access to micro-insurance can considerably mitigate vulnerability to economic shocks among low-income households.

Participants viewed financial literacy training positively, with a mean of 3.7069 and a standard deviation of 1.05515. This aligns with research conducted by Cole et al. (2022), which demonstrated that financial literacy programs positively affect business outcomes and financial decision-making among micro-entrepreneurs.

Access to government social welfare programs received moderate agreement, indicated by a mean of 3.5517 and a standard deviation of 1.23249. The higher standard deviation points to more varied experiences and perceptions in this area. Literature, including studies by Bastagli et al. (2023), reveals that the effectiveness and reach of social welfare programs can differ significantly across contexts and populations.

Local access to community savings groups received the highest level of agreement, reflected in a mean of 3.8276 and a standard deviation of 1.04902. This strong positive perception aligns with Beaman et al. (2021), who explored the impact of savings groups on women's empowerment and economic outcomes in Mali. Their research found that participation in savings groups enhances savings, access to credit, and overall economic resilience.

The statement concerning the financial inclusion of marginalized groups and individuals with disabilities in poverty reduction programs received the lowest agreement, with a mean of 3.1638 and a standard deviation of 1.35097. This outcome underscores potential gaps in inclusive finance practices, aligning with concerns raised by Handicap International (2023), which emphasizes the necessity for targeted efforts to include marginalized populations in financial services and poverty alleviation initiatives.

Overall, the survey results reflect generally positive perceptions of community empowerment and poverty reduction initiatives, with mean scores ranging from 3.1638 to 3.8276 across all statements. The varying standard deviations (0.94983 to 1.35097) indicate diversity in respondents' experiences and perceptions. According to Rao and Tiwari (2022), these findings contribute to the existing literature on financial inclusion, microfinance, and community-based approaches to poverty reduction. Zeller et al. (2023) highlight the importance of recognizing both achievements and ongoing challenges in the implementation of comprehensive and inclusive poverty eradication programs.

Poverty Eradication

The study examined the perception of respondents on the Poverty eradication Bwera, Karusandara and Karambi Sub Counties, Kasese District, Uganda using measures of central tendency as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Poverty Eradication

Statement	N	Mean	SD
The dependency rates are high in the community	116	3.4741	1.12258
People have access to basic needs and services	116	3.2586	1.13537
Government initiatives on Poverty eradication are sustainable	116	3.5086	1.05084
The standards of living of people favorable	116	3.2845	1.13295
Valid N (listwise)	116	3.3814	1.1078

Source: Field Data, 20324

The data in Table 8 reveal that respondents expressed the highest level of agreement regarding the sustainability of government initiatives for poverty eradication, with a mean score of 3.5086. This finding indicates a generally favorable perception of government efforts as sustainable, although there remains

potential for enhancement. The lower standard deviation of 1.05084 for this statement signifies a more uniform view among participants on this matter compared to others.

Respondents also showed significant agreement regarding high dependency rates within the community, reflected in a mean score of 3.4741. This insight highlights that many participants consider dependency a crucial issue, which could play a pivotal role in understanding the obstacles to effective poverty eradication.

Perceptions surrounding access to basic needs and services, along with the favorability of living standards, were moderately positive yet less pronounced. These statements achieved mean scores of 3.2586 and 3.2845, respectively, suggesting that while respondents generally agree on the availability of essential necessities and favorable living conditions, considerable room for improvement still exists in these areas.

All four statements exhibited moderate standard deviations, ranging from approximately 1.05 to 1.13. This consistent distribution in responses across all statements indicates that individual experiences and perceptions regarding poverty eradication efforts differ significantly within the community.

Simple Linear Regression on Community Empowerment Approach and Poverty Eradication

This objective examined the effect of community empowerment approach on Poverty eradication. To achieve this, the study tested the hypothesis:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between community empowerment and Poverty eradication in Bwera, Karusandara and Karambi Sub Counties, Kasese district, Uganda

Model: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$

Table 6 below presents regression weights and standard errors of estimates.

Table 6: Model Summary on Community Empowerment on Poverty Eradication

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.446 ^a	.199	.192	.72364

Source: Field, 2024; Key: a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Eradication b. Predictor: (Constant), Community Empowerment Approach

Table 6 summarizes a regression model that investigates the relationship between community empowerment and poverty eradication. The model demonstrates a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, as indicated by an R value of 0.446. The R Square value of 0.199 implies that community empowerment accounts for 19.9% of the variance in poverty eradication, leaving 80.1% attributable to other factors. The Adjusted R Square of 0.192 considers the number of predictors in the model, providing a slightly more cautious estimate of the model's explanatory strength. The Standard Error of the Estimate, recorded at 0.72364, indicates the average deviation of the observed values from the regression line.

The study also assessed the goodness of fit of the model through ANOVA, with results displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: ANOVA on Community Empowerment Approach and Poverty Eradication

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.788	1	14.788	28.239	.000 ^b
	Residual	59.696	114	.524		
	Total	74.484	115			

Source: Field 2024; a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Eradication; b. Predictors: (Constant), Community Empowerment Approach

Table 7 displays the ANOVA results, which evaluate the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic stands at 28.239 with degrees of freedom of 1 and 114. The significance value (p-value) is 0.000, which falls below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This outcome indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, demonstrating that the community empowerment approach significantly predicts poverty eradication.

Researchers then tested the hypothesis by performing a simple linear regression. Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis depended on the p-value, where $p < 0.05$ was accepted and the opposite was true for $p \geq 0.05$. The findings from this test are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Coefficients for Community Empowerment Approach on Poverty eradication

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.143	.412		2.774	.006
1 Community Empowerment	.580	.109	.446	5.314	.000

Source: Field, 2024; a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Eradication b. Predictors: (Constant), Community Empowerment Approach

Table 8 indicates that the constant term (intercept) is 1.143, with a standard error of 0.412, demonstrating statistical significance ($t = 2.774$, $p = 0.006$). The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Community Empowerment is 0.580, suggesting that for each unit increase in the community empowerment approach, poverty eradication increases by 0.580 units while controlling for other factors. This effect is statistically significant ($t = 5.314$, $p = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$). The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.446 facilitates comparison with other predictors on a standardized scale. Given the model's statistical significance and that of the community empowerment approach variable, researchers rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. This outcome confirms a significant relationship between Community Empowerment and poverty eradication in the studied sub-counties of Kasese District, Uganda.

The model equation derived from the results is therefore:

$$Y = 1.143 + 0.580 X_1 + \epsilon,$$

where:

Y represents Poverty Eradication and

X_1 represents Community Empowerment Approach

Correlation Analysis on Community Empowerment Approach and Poverty Eradication

The study conducted correlation analysis to establish the strength and direction of the relationship between community empowerment approach and poverty eradication as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Community Empowerment Approach and Poverty Eradication

		Community Empowerment	Poverty Eradication
Community Empowerment Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Poverty Eradication	Pearson Correlation	.446**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	116	116

The correlation matrix displayed in Table 9 reveals a moderate and positive correlation between the community empowerment approach and poverty eradication ($r = 0.446$), which is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This finding indicates a meaningful relationship between the community empowerment approach and efforts to eradicate poverty. As community empowerment increases, there tends to be a corresponding moderate rise in poverty eradication, and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that community empowerment has a significant impact on poverty eradication, supported by the statistical findings ($t=2.805$, $P=.006$, $P<.05$). Specifically, an increase of one unit in community empowerment correlates with a 0.362-unit rise in poverty eradication. The overall mean score of 3.585 reveals that most respondents acknowledge the positive effects of community empowerment on poverty reduction, though the standard deviation of 1.1013 reflects some variation in opinions. These results emphasize the essential role of community empowerment in combating poverty, showcasing its effectiveness as a strategy for sustainable development and social advancement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policymakers and development agencies should prioritise community empowerment as a key strategy for poverty alleviation by strengthening local communities through skills development, financial literacy training, and access to credit services. Establishing inclusive frameworks that involve marginalized populations in decision-making processes is crucial for equitable development outcomes. Investing in capacity-building programmes fosters leadership development, ensuring greater community ownership and sustainability of poverty alleviation efforts. Continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives, while raising awareness within communities can enhance participation. Collaboration among government entities, non-governmental organisations, and community groups is essential for mobilising resources and sustaining community-led poverty eradication initiatives.

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